

# (BP)

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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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December CP falls  
behind last year

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
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NASHVILLE (BP)--The SBC Cooperative Program received 5.51 percent less in December 1991 compared to the same month last year, according to Harold C. Bennett, Executive Committee President/Treasurer.

The Executive Committee received \$10,575,202 in December which was \$617,005 less than the amount received in December 1990. For the SBC budget year, October through December, the total received was 2.46 percent less than the first quarter of the 1990-91 budget year: \$33,472,910 compared to \$34,315,488.

The 1991-92 monthly basic operating budget requirement for the SBC is \$11,725,856.

Designated gifts were also down, by 4.80 percent, for the month compared to a year ago: \$3,113,555 to \$3,270,528. For the year-to-date, designated gifts were nearly the same compared to a year ago: \$6,885,997 to \$6,887,196 or a .02 percent decrease.

Designated contributions include the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, the Home Mission Board's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

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

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Colorado pastor victim  
of apparent drive-by shooting

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
1/2/92

ATLANTA (BP)--A Southern Baptist pastor in Colorado spent 10 days in the hospital following an apparent drive-by shooting Dec. 19 in Colorado Springs.

Michael R. Grebenik, pastor of Rockrimmon Church in Colorado Springs, was with another pastor on a golf driving range when the shooting occurred, said Charles Aiken, director of missions for the Pikes Peak Baptist Association. The two pastors were putting their golf clubs in their car when Grebenik was shot, apparently by someone in a car on a nearby highway, Aiken said.

The bullet from a small calibre gun went through Grebenik's stomach and intestines before lodging near his hip, Aiken said.

Grebenik, who suffered internal bleeding, was in intensive care at Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs following the shooting. He was released from the hospital Dec. 28.

Grebenik, a Tennessee native, is a trustee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. He is a graduate of Carson-Newman College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

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Hope flickers as Nela Williams  
returns to war-torn Yugoslavia By Kathy Fogg Berry

GRAY, Ga. (BP)--As Swiss Air flight 121 crossed the Atlantic from Atlanta to Zurich Jan. 1, foreign mission representative Nela Horak Williams began her 19-hour journey home to civil war-torn Yugoslavia.

Despite repeated cautions to leave, this native Yugoslavian from Zagreb, capital of Croatia, chose to stay. She chose to return, too, following two weeks in the United States for Christmas with her children.

A single parent of three, Williams also chose to make this bittersweet return journey alone.

Her children -- Tanja, 20; Kresimir, 18; and Ian, 13 -- remained in the United States attending school near their paternal grandparents, Archie and Katherine Williams, in Gray, Ga. Williams' husband, Jim, former Southern Baptist foreign missions representative, died in a car accident in Yugoslavia in 1978.

Williams had met Jim while he was an exchange student from Georgia Tech University to the University of Zagreb. The daughter of Josip Horak, former president of the Baptist Union of Yugoslavia, she is a graduate of the University of Zagreb and the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

After completing a furlough last summer, Williams returned to Yugoslavia without Tanja and Kresimir, who began attending stateside colleges. And when Yugoslavia's largest republic of Serbia aggressively opposed the republics of Slovenia and Croatia's declarations of independence on June 25, she painfully, and prematurely, emptied her nest further in September. She sent Ian to the United States, too.

"Now is really the time for missionaries to be here ... for credibility and for testimony," Williams says. "I see the Lord opening opportunities all the time." With communism's demise within that country early in 1990, evangelistic endeavors flourished for the first time since World War II.

"Although it is at times dangerous -- like when there are air raids -- the Lord has preserved us in all this," Williams says. "Since other people are suffering, I think I should be here also."

In a letter to Keith Parker, Foreign Mission Board area director for Europe, Branko Lovrec, president of the as-yet-unofficial Baptist Union of Croatia, sought Williams' return.

"We know that it is tempting to leave if one has a chance," he said, "... but to remain here to be with the people at this time is a test of Christian trust and reliable witness, which we could lose for the future."

During the Christmas holidays, family and friends in Yugoslavia hopefully informed Williams by telephone that Zagreb had remained quiet Dec. 24 and 25. But hopes of an imminent cease-fire were dashed as war once again escalated. Repeated negotiations among warring factions had failed to stop the fighting.

Williams, a third generation Yugoslavian Baptist, works alongside national Baptists and other Christians. Her message of peace and her quiet ministry of presence kindles flickering hopes.

Now some hope flickers again for an end to war. The day Williams left for Yugoslavia, news reports indicated both sides in the civil war apparently had accepted a United Nations plan to send peacekeepers to secessionist Croatia.

Since fighting began, much Yugoslavian Baptist mission work has been put on hold as Baptists try to help that country's ever-growing refugee population, Williams says. And much of her personal ministry now involves working with her church, Zagreb's 150-member First Baptist Church, as it assists that swollen city's 500,000 refugees.

The church sponsors a humanitarian organization called My Neighbor which distributes such items as clothes, food, medicine and diapers to refugees. Individual Christians, such as Williams, have taken refugees into their homes.

"It was hard for me in September without the children," she said. But God helped her through her separation anxiety, she said, when an elderly married couple from Novogradiska and college student siblings from Petrinja came to live with her. All four now have no other home.

"Since they've come," she adds, "we can be together and pray." The elderly couple are Catholic and the college students are Baptist. She rejoices that they can share one another's company while anxiously awaiting war's end in local bomb shelters.

Sitting in a bomb shelter's candlelit darkness one night (many homes house these cellar hideaways), they heard a neighbor timidly knock and inquire, 'Could you take me into your shelter? It's safer than mine.' Although some were skeptical about letting a stranger in, they prayed and trusted God while opening the door.

"We found out that this student was renting a room next door and didn't know where to hide," Williams recalls.

He'd heard Williams' house number announced on "On The Way," a radio program she helps First Baptist produce each Thursday evening.

Aside from helping with that program and meeting refugee needs, Williams teaches seventh and eighth grade Sunday school. New-found religious and political freedoms have recently caused religious instruction to become an optional part of public school curriculum. She helped get Sunday school upgraded and accepted as a legitimate place for this instruction to occur. She also regularly visits homes for refugees in Zagreb like the one where a blind woman, Anica, lives.

Before her husband's death, the Williamses taught at the Baptist Theological School in Novi Sad and produced radio programming for Trans World Radio. Since his death, she has maintained and enlarged these ministries, has led numerous home Bible study fellowships, and has published a Serbo-Croatian Greek grammar book they began -- "Greek Language of the New Testament."

Throughout the country, people of varying nationalities continue to peacefully worship God inside Baptist churches. Former students in Novi Sad, where she cannot presently teach because of severe travel limitations, got word to Williams they are praying for her.

"I was moved when the students said they are all praying for me; they're all Serbs," said Williams, a Croat.

"All this we need to stress now when people are so divided and there are so many walls of hate. Many fine people who are involved on both sides, are praying for each other and wishing good for each other, that needs to be emphasized," she asserts.

"In Christ, there is no Serb or Croat ... no east or west!"

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

HMB helps churches  
start pregnancy centers

By Ferrell Foster

ATLANTA (BP)--Young women come to crisis pregnancy centers to find an answer to a question: Am I pregnant?

Before they leave, they have the answer and have received counseling. "Crisis pregnancy center" is a "generic" name used for such services provided in communities throughout the country, according to Sylvia Booth, coordinator for Alternatives to Abortion Ministries at the Home Mission Board.

All such centers are not alike. But the Home Mission Board has developed a plan for establishing crisis pregnancy centers that provide a Christian witness as well as the standard service.

"Crisis pregnancy centers usually are located in a neutral setting outside of the church building," Booth said in a telephone interview. "They offer free pregnancy tests and confidentiality."

Young women come primarily for the pregnancy test, she said.

The HMB program offers the woman a choice of counseling presentations while she waits for the test results. Usually she will view a 26-minute video called "Your Crisis Pregnancy," produced by James Dobson's Focus on the Family, Booth said.

Whatever her choice of presentation, the woman will be told about the development of the "pre-born," procedures used in abortions and about emotional problems associated with having an abortion.

"It's not a film that has dead babies in a bucket," Booth said of the Dobson video. "It has a profound impact on those who view it without the gore. "We are trying to educate her ... on the ramifications of her choices," she said. "We don't force anyone to see a film." By giving them the choice "they are in control of the situation."

Women view the video in a private room, and Booth said she has never had a client stop it.

After the test results are known, more counseling is offered.

If the test is positive, "some women just fall apart," Booth said. "Others just sit there."

"We try to communicate with her that whatever her need is we can help her through that."

About 60 percent of women tested are not pregnant, she said. But counselors still have the "opportunity to talk to them about lifestyle."

Booth said the counseling "provides a wonderful opportunity to present the gospel."

"We have done training for 30 crisis pregnancy centers in the past two years," she said. "Last year they reported over 600 salvation experiences."

HMB provides a \$50,000 budget for Alternatives to Abortion Ministries. The goals of the ministry are "to educate, motivate and equip Southern Baptists to be actively involved in crisis pregnancy ministries," Booth said.

The response has been "overwhelming," she added.

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There are four HMB trainers involved in the ministry, and Booth projects openings of 10 pregnancy centers each year.

"Everything we do is free" to Southern Baptist churches or interdenominational ministries supported by them, she said. That includes help in getting started and training of workers. However, "we ask churches that are able," to support the ministry.

She encourages churches interested in operating such a ministry to "take the time and lay a strong foundation. ... It's not unusual for it to take 18 months to two years to put it all together.

"A lot of people get emotional about this issue, and they want to do something," Booth said. But a crisis pregnancy center should be viewed as a long-term ministry.

The biggest challenges most centers face are finances and volunteers, she said. "Usually the director is paid and everyone else is a volunteer."

The average annual cost is a minimum of \$25,000-\$30,000, Booth said. It can get as high as \$60,000-\$100,000.

Once a center gains "legitimacy," it becomes easier to get financing, she added.

Booth has been in her HMB post for nearly four years. Before that, she worked in a pregnancy center in Oklahoma City.

"This is a ministry in which God brings the mission field to you," she said.

"We encourage our volunteers to see each individual as a precious creation of God."

Booth got involved in this type ministry because she "really wanted to be a part of healing and be a positive person" on the abortion issue. "I wanted something more than picketing. I wanted something that would really be long term."

The toll-free phone number for HMB Alternatives to Abortion Ministries is (800) 962-0851.

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Leavell challenges  
grads to be grateful

By Erin Price

Baptist Press  
1/2/92

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Beginning his charge to December 1991 graduates of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, President Landrum P. Leavell referred to the account of the ten cleansed lepers found in the 17th chapter of Luke in which Jesus healed 10 people, only one of whom returned to thank him.

"When we read this experience from the life of Jesus, most of us rather piously conclude that we would have been the one to return, giving thanks to God."

When taking a candid look at the scripture, Leavell said he "probably would have been one of the nine; so exuberant with the gift that I forgot the giver." Leavell then asked the audience to imagine being one of the ten lepers who was suddenly healed: "What would you have thought about? Would you have concentrated on the one who was responsible, or the result?"

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When acknowledging the accomplishment made by the graduates, Leavell warned them not to forget "the one who made it possible." Although they received a degree from a graduate school with some of the "highest academic standards available," he encouraged the graduates to remember graduation is a means to an end, and God saved them, called them, led them to seminary, kept them at seminary, and ultimately brought them to the graduation commencement.

Leavell then asked, "Are you grateful enough to say 'thank you' to him?"

Turning to another reason to be thankful, Leavell mentioned their quality seminary training had been provided for a "minuscule cost." Reminding the graduates the average tuition cost at the accredited seminaries in the United States and Canada is \$10,000 per year, Leavell said, "Because of the generosity of Southern Baptists and our Cooperative Program, you have paid not one dime of tuition."

Thirdly, Leavell encouraged the graduates to be thankful to those who had provided monetary support to them throughout their seminary training. "I don't think we have a student on this campus who has not received help from somebody or some organization," Leavell said. He then asked if they were grateful enough to thank those who had provided support at one time or another.

Fourthly, Leavell mentioned the importance of thanking their spouses, and warned of the danger of allowing an educational gap come between a married couple. "I have known those in whose lives the gap has been so great educationally after the student finished his degree, that he became a little ashamed of the wife who didn't have the kind of education he now has, and has turned his back on her," Leavell said, comparing such a person to the nine ungrateful lepers. He then suggested the graduates express their love for their spouses daily.

Lastly, Leavell mentioned the faculty at New Orleans Seminary, and their contribution to the lives of the December 1991 graduates.

"Wherever you go, you in part will be a product of those that taught you," Leavell said. Referring to the faculty of the seminary as a "theological brain trust," Leavell commended the preparedness and training of the professors. "They've been good role models. Take an opportunity just to shake someone's hand, and tell that one you are grateful for what each has meant to you," he said.

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