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SBC Cooperative Program gifts down nearly 9 percent in March

Baptist Press 4/2/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for March were down 8.97 percent compared to the same month a year ago, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

March gifts totaled \$11,148,016 compared to \$12,246,492 in March 1992, or a difference of \$1,098,476. The 1992-93 SBC monthly basic operative budget requirement is \$11,683,366. The current year's SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget is \$140,200,395.

The year-to-date totals for the Cooperative Program dropped below last year: \$69,908,521 compared to \$70,200,901, for a \$292,380 difference which is .42 percent. The SBC fiscal year is Oct. 1 through Sept. 30.

Designated gifts for March, however, were up: \$15,496,772 compared to \$14,704,765 for a difference of \$792,007 or 5.39 percent. Total designated gifts for the year were still slightly below the previous year: \$80,426,372 compared to \$80,918,178 for a difference of \$491,806 or .61 percent.

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 Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter 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 distributions is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

Masons still organizing to attend SBC in Houston

By Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP)--Masonic leaders are continuing to urge Masons who belong to Southern Baptist churches to attend the upcoming Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Houston.

They are doing so despite their favorable response to a recommendation adopted by Southern Baptist Home Mission Board directors March 17 to be made to the SBC on the issue of Freemasonry's compatibility with Christianity.

"Despite the Board's positive report," John W. Boettjer, managing editor of The Scottish Rite Journal, said in a statement after the HMB action, "the danger remains that a small extremist faction within the SBC will manipulate the Convention itself and reverse the Board's year-long study.

"For this reason, the Scottish Rite still urges Masons who are Southern Baptists to attend the Convention and to exercise their democratic right to vote for approval of the Board's report," Boettjer said.

The HMB report ends with this recommendation to the SBC focusing on individual conscience in regard to Masonic membership:

"In light of the fact that many tenets and teachings of Freemasonry are not compatible with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine, while others are compatible with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine, we therefore recommend that consistent with our denomination's deep convictions regarding the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church, membership in a Masonic Order be a matter of personal conscience. Therefore, we exhort Southern Baptists to prayerfully and carefully evaluate Freemasonry in light of the Lordship of Christ, the teachings of the Scripture, and the findings of this report, as led by the Holy Spirit of God."

Lee Porter, longtime SBC registration secretary, told Baptist Press April 1 he has received hundreds of phone calls from Southern Baptist laypersons who belong to Masonic lodges inquiring how to become messengers to the SBC meeting.

The calls have "died down" since the HMB directors' action March 17, said Porter, associate pastor and administrator of St. Andrew Baptist Church in Panama City, Fla. Most of the calls, Porter said, came from January through mid-March.

From his conversations with the callers, "I think a number of them are planning to attend" -- but whether they will be elected as messengers from their churches is another question, Porter said.

Porter said he plans to release his annual projection of the number of messengers to the SBC by mid-April.

Boettjer, in an April 1 interview with Baptist Press, said "there's no way to tell" how many Masons will attend the June 15-17 SBC meeting in Houston.

The Scottish Rite Journal devoted its February issue to the issue of Freemasonry's compatibility with Christianity, especially targeting an SBC study then under way by the HMB's interfaith witness department. The study was assigned to the HMB by messengers at the 1992 SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis.

One writer in the February Scottish Rite Journal issue -- Fred McPeake, education chairman of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee and a Southern Baptist layman -- wrote it is "urgently important" for Masons to attend the 1993 SBC.

Boettjer noted, "We have received a very enthusiastic response from our members regarding the February issue. But we have no idea whatsoever to what degree Mason Baptists will participate in the convention."

The push for Masons to attend the SBC was underscored in a March 1 memorandum from C. Fred Kleinknecht, Washington-based sovereign grand commander of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction, to "Actives, Deputies, Personal Representatives, Secretaries, Editors of Masonic Publications" across the United States.

Kleinknecht wrote: "It is crucial that Masons who are Southern Baptists become messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention . . . If unchecked, the extremist anti-Masonic faction within the Convention could manage a vote condemning Freemasonry. Such a vote would be very harmful to all Freemasons and all Southern Baptists."

Kleinknecht urged that an enclosed article by McPeake listing 12 steps for Masons as messengers to the SBC be printed "in your local Scottish Rite publication at your earliest opportunity"

McPeake, in his article, instructs Masons to make hotel reservations in Houston; "Let your pastor know you desire to be a messenger;" "Attend the business meetings of your local church;" "Be present when messengers are selected;" "Obtain the necessary card of authorization signed by your pastor or your Church clerk;" "Get your book of official ballots and instructions" at the SBC registration desk; and "Be in your seat at the opening of the Convention on Tuesday, June 15, stay through every session, and have your ballots with you."

"The fate of Freemasonry today depends on you!" McPeake concludes.

McPeake's article also will appear in the May issue of The Scottish Rite
Journal, Kleinknecht said.

Kleinknecht's memo was circulated to Baptist Press and Baptist state papers by James "Larry" Holly, a Beaumont, Texas, physician who initiated the Freemasonry issue at the 1992 SBC in Indianapolis.

Concerning the "extremist" tag used by Kleinknecht and Boettjer, Holly responded: "To argue that opposition to Freemasonry is 'extremist' is to ignore that until now every Christian denomination that has examined the teachings of Freemasonry has condemned the Masonic Lodge." He cited the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Presbyterian Church in America, Assemblies of God and Church of the Nazarene as examples.

"In the context of the larger Christian community," Holly said, "an 'extremist' position would be a favorable statement on Freemasonry."

Holly reiterated his support for the HMB recommendation to the SBC, noting, "The SBC should expect no campaign from me to strengthen the trustee recommendation; the SBC should accept no campaign from Masons to make the Convention an ally of the Lodge."

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Spurgeon to retire early from FMB; says trustee decisions political

Baptist Press 4/2/93

By Mary E. Speidel

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Charging that board trustees no longer base their decisions on what's best for global evangelization, Harlan Spurgeon has announced he will retire early as the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's vice president for mission personnel.

Spurgeon's retirement will be effective June 30, his 62nd birthday. A 25-year veteran of foreign missions, he is the board's third vice president in the past 15 months to announce early retirement because of disagreements with trustees. Former FMB President R. Keith Parks, who had hoped to remain until 1995, also retired last October under similar circumstances.

Spurgeon, a missionary to Taiwan from 1957-72, oversees departments handling enlistment, selection and training of new missionaries and volunteers. Also in his portfolio are missionary furlough study, missionary health and board relationships with children of missionaries, former missionaries and black and ethnic Baptists. He has been in his current role 10 years.

In a March 30 letter to interim board president Don Kammerdiener, Spurgeon said he was "grieved to see controversy and political struggle replace missions and evangelism as the main business of Southern Baptists." He wrote: "It grieves me that the question of 'How will this affect world evangelization?' is no longer the deciding factor in decisions made by our trustees."

Spurgeon said he was especially saddened by the likelihood that Southern Baptists would not reach their Bold Mission Thrust goal of having 5,000 missionaries overseas by A.D. 2000.

Trustee chairman John Jackson, asked for a reaction, said Spurgeon had served "loyally and effectively" as a missionary and vice president. "His resignation will come as a shock to trustees. To my knowledge, no trustee has called for his resignation," said Jackson, a pastor in Fairfield, Calif.

Jackson refused to discuss specifics of Spurgeon's charges against trustees. "I have the highest respect for his commitment and love for missions. Although I disagree with his assessments, it would not enhance the work of the kingdom to enter into an open discussion of the trustees' interpretation of his complaints," he said.

Spurgeon, in his letter, wrote, "We have pled with trustees to be sensitive to the fact that (missionary) candidates would not commit to lifetime service during uncertain times," citing Foreign Mission Board statistics showing a decline in the total missionary force in two of the past four years.

"In theory, our board will still appoint missionaries from the broad spectrum of Southern Baptists. In fact, many young people are convinced either that they cannot be appointed or that they would not be comfortable serving with a board with such a single-minded political agenda," said Spurgeon, adding that the Bold Mission Thrust goal "has become a casualty of the controversy."

From 1988 to 1989 the board's missionary force fell from 3,867 to 3,780, a 2.25 percent drop. The total climbed 2.19 percent to 3,863 in 1990 and rose to 3,906 in 1991. However, last year the mission force fell again to 3,893. The total includes career and associate missionaries and International Service Corps workers and journeyman serving overseas for two years.

Kammerdiener said he agreed with Spurgeon's assessment that the Bold Mission Thrust missionary goal is a "casualty" of the denomination's political struggles. However, he added, "I would not focus on one side of the controversy. I think war is caused by two sides who agree that they are going to battle. There is no question in my mind that the intent of Bold Mission Thrust and the spiritual vitality of what we've been doing has been drained off by excessive energy going into the controversy and to fighting the wrong enemy. But I would disagree with those who think it's one-sided."

Kammerdiener praised Spurgeon for his "magnificent" contribution as a Foreign Mission Board administrator and "exemplary" service as a foreign missionary in Taiwan. He noted that Spurgeon showed excellent judgment as an administrator, and as a missionary was known for his mastery of the Mandarin language.

"I feel that he is one of the better managers at the Foreign Mission Board. I am most grateful for what he's done. I'm very sorry to see him go," Kammerdiener

Spurgeon, in his letter, also voiced grief over "the losses we have suffered because of the trustees' preoccupation with being politically correct We have lost heart, causing this great agency to move at a snail's pace."

He wrote that he felt in danger of losing his integrity if he stayed at the board under current circumstances. He said he prayed that "by God's sovereign grace this board will soon return to its only agenda, that of seeking to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone in the world who has never heard. I no longer see how this can happen in my lifetime."

Spurgeon's letter cited several examples of trustee decisions he felt were politically motivated. These included the trustees' October 1991 action to cancel funding promised to the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland; their refusal to affirm Parks' leadership through 1995; and the turning of a February 1993 dialogue with Woman's Missionary Union leaders into a "tense confrontation."

He pointed out that Woman's Missionary Union had helped the Foreign Mission Board raise more than \$1 billion for missions in the auxiliary's 105-year history. "If the board had acted in the interest of our missionaries and world evangelization, they would have strongly commended the WMU for their tireless and sacrificial efforts on behalf of missions and sought ways of continued cooperation," he said.

Spurgeon further charged that trustees had violated Foreign Mission Board policy by bringing in their own candidates for board-elected staff positions. Current personnel policy says trustee committees are to select such staff based on

recommendations by the president.

He also cited the trustees' recommendation that a consulting firm begin a study on the effectiveness of the agency's organization before a new president is in place. The study would likely be conducted by a secular firm with little knowledge of the board's purpose at a cost of "hundreds of thousands of dollars," Spurgeon noted, charging the study "appears to have little to do with missions."

Spurgeon said he has made no decisions about his future plans. "We (he and his wife, Joann) honestly don't know what we're going to do," he said.

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(BP) photo (mugshot) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

FMB vice president Compton says 'stayers' also have integrity

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press 4/2/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--In the wake of yet another "retirement in protest" announcement at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, one top staff member who plans to stay on says he and others like him also have integrity.

Alan Compton, a missionary for 23 years and board vice president for communications since 1988, sent a memorandum April 2 to interim president Don Kammerdiener, copying to other high-level administrators, communications staffers and Baptist Press. In it, he said his own daily decision to continue serving the Foreign Mission Board is a "matter of integrity" based on "my call and commitment to Christ and his mission in the world," family members and almost 3,900 missionaries.

The statement came two days after an announcement by Harlan Spurgeon, board vice president for mission personnel, that he will retire early. Also a former veteran missionary, Spurgeon charged that board trustees no longer base their decisions on what's best for global evangelization but on "a single-minded political agenda."

Southern Baptists' goal of having 5,000 missionaries overseas by A.D. 2000 also "has become a casualty of the controversy," Spurgeon said, because a broad range of mission candidates don't believe they can be appointed.

Spurgeon wrote that he felt in danger of losing his integrity if he stayed on at the mission board. He is the third vice president in the past 15 months to announce early retirement because of disagreements with trustees. Former President R. Keith Parks also retired last October for similar reasons.

In his memorandum, Compton said he remains committed not only to missions but to "those sincere brothers in Christ in the local churches of this convention and the trustees they have elected to represent them. They are challenged by the same Scriptures and the Holy Spirit's work in the body of Christ as I. Many are committed to missions. They are our convention.

"It is because of my commitment to the staff of the office of communications and the FMB staff in general that I am here today. The measure of their commitment is no less than any other. They are in it with our Lord for the long haul."

His integrity, Compton said, is not based "just on principles. Principles are very important for me as missionaries, staff and trustees can testify. I have not been silent. (But) for me integrity is based on commitment also."

In an interview with Baptist Press, Compton said he spoke out because several of the executives who have announced departures from the mission board in the last year, including Spurgeon, indicated their integrity was at stake if they stayed.

"I just felt like there are others of us around here who are also making our decisions daily based on integrity," Compton said. "And I also wanted to say that for me personally -- and I can't speak for anybody else -- integrity does relate to our principles but it also has to do with our commitment. You have to balance those off sometimes. You maybe even have to give a little on some of the principles in order to fulfill the commitment I have not compromised principles or commitment."

He emphasized he was not committed to the mission board "no matter what" but "for now" and could change based on how the Lord leads. His only absolute commitment, he stressed, is to Christ.

Compton said he had not been asked to make a statement by anyone and had not considered doing so until he reflected on Spurgeon's announcement -- and past announcements like it -- at home the night of April 1.

"The thought just came into my mind, 'Why haven't we had a chance to explain where we stand -- those of us who are still with our board and working every day? Why haven't we had a chance to say what we feel about our interpretation of integrity?'" he explained. "I prayed about it and just felt led to write that statement, and I felt good after I had written it. Maybe I should have written it to myself and filed it, but I didn't do it that way because I felt I needed to be heard. I speak only for myself and not anyone else."

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Stewardship Commission names committee for 'self study'

Baptist Press 4/3/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--A "self study, evaluation and plans for the future" are the guidelines for a special strategy planning committee appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention's Stewardship Commission during its recent annual meeting in Nashville.

The three areas assigned by the SBC in 1959 to the commission -- stewardship development, Cooperative Program promotion and endowment/capital giving -- will be a focus of the seven-member study group.

The commission's present work and projects moving into the 21st century will be examined, according to a commission spokesman.

"(The commissioners) are excited about the future of the SBC," the spokesman said. "Because of the need to fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord, the future of the Cooperative Program is crucial. In recognizing the need to continue to be effective, the commission appointed the strategy planning committee to review the past and plan for the 21st century."

Commission chairman Roy Moody, of Topeka, Kan., appointed the seven-member committee. It includes Robert Ross, chairman, Oklahoma City; Carlisle Driggers, Columbia, S.C.; Lawrence Wood, Scott Depot, W.Va.; Douglas Pilot, West Pittston, Pa.; Allen Watson, Dickson, Tenn.; James Trammell, Bakersfield, Calif.; and Gene Parrott, Lakewood, Colo.

No timetable for meetings or a date for the committee's report to be completed were released although the next meeting of the commission is in March 1994.

Pre-SBC Music Conference offers series of concerts

HOUSTON (BP)--A series of concerts, preaching by Russell Dilday and various workshops will be featured during the June 13-14 Southern Baptist Church Music Conference

The conference will meet at Champion Forest Baptist Church in northwest Houston prior to the June 15-17 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The concerts will be performed by musical groups representing local churches, denominational organizations and educational institutions, said Bob Hatfield, conference president and minister of music at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala.

Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, will preach during worship services at 7 p.m. June 13 and 7:15 p.m. June 14 centering on the conference theme, "Find Us Faithful."

Use of drama and instrumental music in worship will be among workshops offered to participants, Hatfield said.

The conference also will offer exhibits by various publishers, music equipment suppliers and educational institutions.

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Southern Baptist Church Music Conference Annual Meeting June 13-14, 1993 Champion Forest Baptist Church Houston Theme: "Find Us Faithful"

Sunday afternoon

1:15 Registration opens

1:45 Piano prelude -- Gerald Aultman, associate professor of music, New Orleans
Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans

Opening hymn

Call to order -- Bob Hatfield, president, Church Music Conference, minister of music, Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala. Greetings -- Damon Shook, pastor, Champion Forest Baptist Church,

Houston

- 2:15 Concert -- Texas Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Band; Loyd Hawthorne, choir director, director of choral activities, Hardin Simmons University, Abilene, Texas; Scott Mather, band director; director of bands, Hardin Simmons University, Abilene, Texas
- 3:00 Exhibit break
- 3:30 Concert -- Second Voice, Second Baptist Church, Houston, Matt Marsh, associate minister of music, director
- 4:00 Special Interest Groups: Drama in Worship, Instrumental Music for the Church,

Favorite Anthem Reading Session

5:00 Dismiss

Sunday evening

- 6:45 Pre-Service Concert -- Sanctuary choir, Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas, Joe Carrell, minister of music, director
- 7:00 Worship with Champion Forest Baptist Church -- Russell Dilday, president, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, preaching; Bob Hatfield, music

Missionary Testimony/Prayer Time; Drama vignette

8:15 Reception -- hosted by church music department, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Monday morning

- 8:45 Concert -- Handbell Choir, First Baptist Church, West Monroe, La., Lonnie Stewart, minister of music, director
- 9:15 Organ Recital -- Al Travis, professor of organ, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas
- 9:45 Exhibit break
- 10:15 Concert and choral demonstration -- Houston Children's Chorus, Steve Roddy, director
- 11:15 Annual business session
- 12:00 Dismiss

Monday afternoon

- 1:15 Arkansas MasterSingers and Arkansas Singing Women, Lester McCullough, director of church music, church music department, Arkansas Baptist Convention, director
- 2:00 Divisional meetings: election and special interest sessions
- 3:30 Exhibit break
- 4:00 Christine Anderson and the Medallion Ringers, First Baptist Church, Houston
- 4:30 Concert -- East Texas Baptist University choir, Charlie Fuller, director of choral activities, East Texas Baptist University, Marshall, Texas
- 5:00 Dismiss

Monday evening

- 7:00 Pre-service concert -- Champion Forest Baptist Church choir and orchestra,
 Michael Burt, minister of music, director
- 7:15 Heritage Night -- Russell Dilday, preaching; Bob Hatfield, music
- 8:45 Recognition of outgoing officers; introduction of new officers; presentation of Hines Sims Award and Honorary Life Memberships
- 9:00 Benediction

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Reighard to be nominated for Pastors' Conference

Baptist Press 4/2/93

ATLANTA (BP)--Dwight "Ike" Reighard, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., will be nominated by Jerry Vines as president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference when the conference holds its annual session in June.

Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Pastors' Conference, said, "I feel a liberty from the Lord" to nominate Reighard.

Vines said Reighard, who has served the Fayetteville church for 17 years -- 15 as pastor -- "is a fine young pastor with a real ministry to young people who has built a strong and growing church. He is a Bible-believing, soul-winning, young preacher."

Vines added Reighard represents a link between two generations. "Ike shows continuity between my generation of pastors and younger preachers who want to see churches grow."

Reighard, who served two terms as Georgia Baptist Convention president (1988-1990), said, "Dr. Vines has been my mentor for a long time and to have him nominate me to such a great office is beyond any expectation I might have had."

Under Reighard, New Hope Baptist Church has been recognized as one of the fastest-growing congregations in the Southern Baptist Convention. It now has about 5,000 members. Reighard is a trustee of the SBC Home Mission Board.

It is not yet known if others will be nominated for the conference presidency.

The Pastors' Conference, one of numerous meetings prior to the June 15-17 SBC in Houston, is slated June 13-14, with its first session at Second Baptist Church and subsequent sessions at the George R. Brown Convention Center. -30-

Golden Gate taps Korea native to become dean of students

Baptist Press 4/2/93

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Kon Hwon Yang, pastor of Fairfield Korean Baptist Church in Suisun City, Calif., has been named dean of students at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He begins his new post at the Mill Valley, Calif., seminary Aug. 1.

Yang will have immediate responsibility for the student body, relating as both an administrator and adviser.

"Kon is one of the most highly respected individuals in the seminary family and is the most competent person I can think of to oversee this vital area of seminary life," said Mike Thompson, vice president for student affairs at Golden Gate. "We always need the focus of a pastoral heart, and having Kon here will intensify that emphasis."

Yang, 34, a master of divinity graduate from Golden Gate, will complete comprehensive examinations for a doctor of philosophy from the seminary in May. He was president of his graduating class in 1989.

Yang, a native of Seoul, Korea, was ordained in 1989 by Concord Korean Baptist Church in Martinez, Calif., where he was minister of youth and choir director.

He also was minister of youth at Berendo Street Baptist Church in Los Angeles, and music director for the Costa Meda Baptist Association in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Yang's wife, the former Patricia J. Putnam, a Connecticut native, is a 1989 master of church music and master of religious education graduate of Golden Gate.

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