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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

(BP)

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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VIRGINIA -- Tentmakers, Baptists Abroad, CEO programs eliminated by job cuts; photo.

CYPRUS -- Money shortage threatens radio program reaching North Africans.

VIRGINIA -- Two trips to Kazakhstan canceled; visas slow.

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ARIZONA -- Yeary answers call to North Phoenix.

Tentmakers, Baptists Abroad, CEO programs eliminated by job cuts By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press
5/24/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Three mission programs for lay volunteers living and traveling abroad have become casualties of the recent downsizing at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The Tentmakers program will phase out as participants end terms of service. The other two -- Baptists Living Abroad and the Creative Evangelistic Opportunity (CEO) network -- will cease operation May 31.

Board officials have notified 37 tentmakers in nine countries, 289 Baptists living abroad in 63 countries and 81 people who had expressed interest in the still-forming CEO network.

Other cuts in the office responsible for the board's missionary appointment process at this point include the department enlisting pastors as missionaries and a position handling relationships with ethnic Southern Baptists other than African Americans.

In job cutbacks announced May 5, the board cut 37 jobs throughout the organization to reduce expenses. That's 8 percent of its 450 home office staff. The reduction was needed because of shortfalls in Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions giving and a decline in investment income caused by the decline in interest rates, said Don Kammerdiener, the board's interim president.

The three mission programs for lay people were cut after the office of mission personnel analyzed its work "in light of the board's overseas strategic purpose, evangelism that results in churches," said Thurmon Bryant, interim vice president for mission personnel. The analysis concluded "Tentmakers, Baptists Living Abroad and CEO could be cut with the least detriment to the board in fulfilling its purpose," Bryant said.

At the same time, administrators decided several key functions cut from the mission personnel office could be channeled into other departments.

Functions handled by the director of ethnic church relations, a job vacant since late 1991, will move to the public affairs office. It will enlist staff members to work in a liaison role with major Southern Baptist ethnic groups, according to Sam Pittman, acting executive director of public affairs.

He said enlisted staffers will be people who "have an affinity for a particular ethnic group," such as a former missionary who speaks their language. They will attend the ethnic group's annual meeting and maintain contacts with its leaders.

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Some functions of the missionary enlistment department will move to the board's personnel selection department. The enlistment department was formed in 1984 to respond to growing needs for pastors to fill church planting jobs overseas. Since then it has worked in tandem with the personnel selection department, which processes career and associate missionary applications.

Bryant said enlistment functions retained will include missionary enlistment assistants -- furloughing missionaries who travel in the state where they live encouraging pastors and others in church-related vocations to consider missions. With the reorganization, enlistment assistants will do the same thing but relate directly to a candidate consultant assigned to their area through the personnel selection department.

The Tentmaker program was started in 1989 to involve in missions Southern Baptists who live and work overseas either in secular jobs or as salaried staff members of English-language congregations. Tentmakers earn their own financial support from their jobs and commit themselves to minister overseas through the Foreign Mission Board. Their screening process is similar to that of the board's International Service Corps, volunteers filling assignments ranging from four months to two years.

The board will still honor its written commitments with the 37 Southern Baptists assigned through Tentmakers until these agreements expire, Bryant said. However, it will not renew them or seek new tentmakers. It will relate to existing tentmakers through its international service department.

The Baptists Living Abroad program involves lay people living and working overseas in ministries alongside missionaries or on their own. However, this program does not include a formal relationship with the organization of missionaries in a country, according to Carol Clarke, transnational adviser for the three discontinued lay programs. She will remain in that role until May 31; her position is one of the 37 home offices jobs eliminated.

The Creative Evangelistic Opportunity (CEO) network was approved by trustees in 1990 for Southern Baptist lay people who travel overseas regularly and contact high-level leaders in government and business. Its purpose is to help these people find opportunities for ministry while overseas. The recently revised program was still in its formative stages.

In other changes, administrators in the missionary enlistment department will be reassigned to positions in the mission personnel area, Bryant said.

Bill Morgan, missionary enlistment department director, has been named assistant vice president for mission personnel, a position open since the January 1993 retirement of Charles Beckett. Morgan will direct a new program -- the Creative Access Project (CAP) -- planned before the downsizing. He will involve larger Southern Baptist churches in a variety of mission efforts.

"Many larger (Southern Baptist) churches have gotten very serious about missions and have large and aggressive mission programs," said Morgan, a former missionary to Brazil from Memphis, Tenn. "We hope to enable them to reach into much of the world that hasn't yet been reached, to directly involve them in global evangelization through the Foreign Mission Board."

Bob McEachern, enlistment department associate for western United States since 1987 and a former missionary to South Korea, will transfer to the volunteers in missions department. McEachern, from Groves, Texas, will be associate for the department's Asia and Pacific section.

Herman Russell, enlistment department associate for eastern United States since 1990, will be a candidate consultant in personnel selection. A former missionary to Malawi from Aberdeen, N.C., Russell will work with missionary candidates in a region to be announced later. He also will coordinate the missionary enlistment assistants program. Regions handled by the seven other candidate consultants will be revamped with changes effective July 1.

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In other shifts, the board's program for medical volunteers will move from the missionary health department to the volunteers department. Alvinia Michalec will continue to work with medical volunteer enlistment but will add to her duties secretarial support and enlistment assistance for the Asia and Pacific section of the volunteers department. Van Williams, director of missionary health, will remain a consultant in medical volunteer enlistment.

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

Money shortage threatens radio programs reaching North Africans By Mike Creswell

Baptist Press
5/24/93

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)--Lack of funds may kill Southern Baptist support for two weekly radio programs reaching the Sous Berbers of North Africa, a people group considered to be one of the most closed to the gospel in the world.

Southern Baptists have contributed \$90,000 each of the last two years to fund its part of a cooperative effort with 23 other Great Commission Christian groups.

The programs have led to many conversions in the region and the formation of fellowship groups for worship, said Pete Dunn, director of Southern Baptist media work in the Middle East. One university student has been witnessing in his home village deep in the Sahara Desert and now has a group of seven who meet with him, he said.

About 6.25 million people speak the language of the Sous Berbers, one of the largest of four main Berber groups across North Africa. Almost all are Muslim and considered one of the most difficult groups to reach for Christ.

A Christian North African pastor of Sous Berber background answers letters from listeners, "shares Christ with them" and gives out Scriptures, Dunn said. "He's baptized several people in the past two years. These are people who have never heard the gospel preached before."

But Dunn said that despite the promising results Southern Baptist participation in the program may be forced to stop this year when a special funding appropriation runs out.

The Foreign Mission Board has been forced to make budget cuts this year because of shortfalls in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Cooperative Program. In May the board slashed 37 staff positions at its Richmond, Va., office. In 1994 the budget for the Middle East and North Africa administrative area which supports the radio broadcasts will be cut 11.7 percent from 1993 levels.

The \$90,000 contributed annually by the Foreign Mission Board to pay for broadcast time for the Sous Berber broadcasts has not covered all parts of the radio program ministry, Dunn said. He records messages delivered by a Berber believer and sends the tapes to a media center in Europe sponsored by the Gospel Missionary Union. A technician there adds Sous Berber music and sends it to Trans World Radio for broadcast from Monaco.

Other Christian groups also help by providing or transporting Bibles, Dunn said. One group has well-trained media workers but a "so-so" studio, while another has a world-class recording studio but nobody to operate it.

"Cooperation is the key," Dunn said.

He is now talking to other groups about the possibility of developing audio and video cassettes along with a decentralized theological education program Southern Baptist representatives in the Middle East are putting into place. When a curriculum-based program of Bible teaching is set up in each country, it will increase opportunities to use media products tailored to the area in tandem with outreach efforts, he said.

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"Earlier we considered media as just removing stones from the field so others can plant seeds. Now we hope to use media to actually plow ground and work with local churches to develop new ones," Dunn said. Through media Baptists hope to start 20 new churches in each of five countries in the region by the end of the decade, he said.

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Two trips to Kazakhstan
canceled; visas slow

By Marty Groll

Baptist Press
5/24/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists have canceled two volunteer trips to Kazakhstan and might have to cancel two others because government officials have slowed the release of entry visas to a trickle.

In addition to the visa slowdown, host families for the volunteers are growing scarcer as the former Soviet republic continues to slide deeper into the economic turmoil that emerged when the region began shifting from communism to capitalism.

Kazakh hosts were much easier to find on earlier friendship tours. "Families who were happy to host Americans for the novelty of the experience now want to be paid, if they are willing to be hosts at all," said a communique from Alma Ata, Kazakhstan.

Workers are trying to determine why visas have become so hard to get, said James Hampton of Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist aid organization. CSI officials fear volunteers will lose by booking flights and then being denied visas.

Southern Baptists staged the first widespread cultural exchange trip to Kazakhstan in 1991, before the breakup of the Soviet Union. About 300 Kazakhs, including cabinet members and government officials, visited the United States last spring in the return exchange.

But as a newly emerging world power, Kazakhstan is struggling now to hold steady amid strong nationalistic and religious forces. Most people in the Central Asian nation descended from Turks and consider themselves Muslims.

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Baylor regents vote to open
Truett Seminary in fall 1994

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
5/24/93

DALLAS (BP)--Pledging to create an ethnically inclusive school with a strong mentoring program, not a duplication of existing seminaries, Baylor University board of regents voted unanimously May 21 to open the George W. Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas, with the fall 1994 semester.

"We're not competing with any of the existing seminaries," said Herbert H. Reynolds, president of Baylor University. "We are very interested in seeing what we can do in a distinctive kind of way."

But Scotty Gray, executive vice president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, said the two schools less than 100 miles apart may not compete for the same students, but there will be significant competition for donor dollars.

Meeting at the Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, the regents agreed to launch the new seminary in response to "a new day with new needs and new realities," according to chairman Daniel Vestal, pastor of Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston.

"From the very beginning, this seminary will be committed to a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-ethnic diversity," Vestal said, noting that the board of regents includes black and Hispanic members and both laity and clergy.

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"If we are going to evangelize the world, it's going to have to be done in a genuine partnership with all racial and ethnic groups. So this seminary is committed to multi-cultural, multi-ethnic diversity."

Robert Sloan, dean of Truett Seminary, emphasized the new school's niche as a practical training ground for ministry that will rely heavily upon local church ministers as mentors and guides.

"We intend to place a heavy emphasis on mentoring, apprenticeships and internships," Sloan said.

"It's not just a field education requirement tacked onto an existing program, but an integral part of the curriculum."

Seminary classes and administrative offices will be located at First Baptist Church in Waco but the administration plans to build a multi-purpose building on the Baylor University campus within the next 10 years, Reynolds explained. Enrollment will be limited to 50 students the first year with a maximum enrollment of 150 projected after three years.

The all-Baptist -- but not necessarily all-Southern Baptist -- faculty will include about a half-dozen professors, expanding to more than 15 within three years, Reynolds said.

Early on, Reynolds had indicated the seminary would not be launched until it had a strong financial base, emphasizing that it would not be allowed to drain resources from the university's operations. But "two major gifts," in particular, made possible the fall 1994 starting date.

Within 10 years, Reynolds said he anticipates no less than a \$14.5 million endowment. The operating budget for the first year of seminary operations will be roughly \$1 million.

Anticipated student cost at the seminary will be half of the Baylor University tuition cost which is currently \$215 per semester hour.

Although Truett Seminary is included in the giving plans of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, John Boyd of Amarillo, Texas, chairman of the regents' seminary committee, said anticipated income from the CBF was not a part of the seminary's financial plan.

The CBF is an Atlanta-based organization of moderates who have become disenchanted with the conservative leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Baylor University reserved the name, George W. Truett Theological Seminary, in 1990, honoring the longtime pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas and champion of religious liberty.

In March 1991, Baylor's board of regents approved the incorporation of the Truett Seminary and elected its first trustees. The articles of incorporation of the seminary provide for a 15-member, all-Baptist board of trustees elected by Baylor's regents.

University regents initiated proceedings to establish the seminary explaining the school would begin operations if it were determined that the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries were being led away from their historic purpose by their boards of trustees, controlled by conservatives.

Last year, Russell H. Dilday Jr., president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a faculty delegation from Southwestern formally asked Baylor to delay opening the Truett Seminary.

Reynolds and Sloan both underscored their belief that Truett Seminary would not be in direct competition with Southwestern and they stressed the cordial relationship between the two Texas schools.

Southwestern's Gray also said he hoped that the good relationship between the schools would continue but expressed concern about the Baylor action.

"We have some degree of disappointment that they see the need for another seminary this close, particularly in light of all they we have been able to achieve in recent years with our trustees," Gray said. "We do not perceive the need for another seminary, and we are disappointed that they do. We still consider ourselves very much in the mainstream of Southern Baptist life."

Southwestern would not anticipate any fierce competition for students from the much-smaller Truett Seminary, Gray said, but the Fort Worth school could feel a pinch in competition for development funds from potential donors.

"In the current climate, we could expect some donors to feel more comfortable contributing to the seminary at Baylor," he acknowledged.

Ironically, Southwestern Seminary grew out of the Baylor Theological Seminary, established in 1905 after more than a decade of organized theological instruction in Waco. In 1908, the name was changed to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the school moved 90 miles northwest to Fort Worth in 1910.

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Yeary answers call
to North Phoenix

By Elizabeth Young

Baptist Press
5/24/93

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Dan Yeary, pastor of University Baptist Church in Coral Gables, Fla., the past 18 years, has accepted the call as pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church. He will begin his new duties on or before Aug. 1.

In a fax read to the North Phoenix congregation May 23, Yeary said he accepted "the church's call with enthusiasm and unbridled joy, believing that, together, by God's grace, we can do something yet grander and greater for God."

The Florida pastor preached in view of call Wednesday, May 19, at North Phoenix, the largest Southern Baptist congregation in the West. The church voted to call him as pastor on a 97 percent vote, 1,884 to 81.

"I have spent 18 years of my life urging a church to do something great for God," Yeary told the North Phoenix congregation. "I've never had an opportunity to say to a church, 'Let's do something greater for God.'"

Yeary, 54, succeeds Richard Jackson, who was named pastor emeritus upon his retirement Jan. 31 after 25 years as pastor of North Phoenix. Jackson, 54, is continuing his ministry through the Richard A. Jackson Center for Evangelism and Encouragement, located on the Grand Canyon University campus in Phoenix.

During Yeary's tenure in Coral Gables, a suburb of Miami, University Baptist Church grew from 300 members to about 4,000. This was during a time when population changes in the Miami area produced a drop of 23 percent in Baptist residents. The church flourished by opening its doors to the cosmopolitan city, blending cultures and ethnic groups within its fellowship.

"To minister in Miami, you need a missionary heart and a non-traditional approach," Yeary told MissionsUSA several years ago.

Now, he's promised change for the 21,000-member North Phoenix church as well.

"Jesus' gospel will not change, but our methods must change," he told the congregation May 19. "This church could well become the distinctive flagship into the 21st century."

An Oklahoma native who grew up in Texas, Yeary is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He previously was associate pastor with responsibility for single adult ministry at South Main Baptist Church in Houston and was university minister at First Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas. He also was assistant pastor and youth minister with other Texas churches while in college and seminary. He served a two-year stint as an associate in the Baptist student department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Yeary is the author of several books, including "Direct Access: Priesthood of the Believer" and "Make Up Your Mind," both published by Convention Press.

He has his wife, Melinda, have three grown children and one grandchild.

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