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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**SBC Cooperative Program gifts  
up more than 4 percent in May**

**Baptist Press  
6/4/93**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for May were up more than 4 percent compared to the same month a year ago, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

All gifts to the SBC, Cooperative Program and designated, are above last year at this eight-month period of the SBC fiscal year: \$198,142,660 compared to 1992 of \$198,071,136, or a .04 percent increase.

"The healthy increase in the Cooperative Program receipts for May is another good sign of the great spirit which exists among Southern Baptists," Chapman said.

May CP gifts totaled \$11,135,016, compared to \$10,680,560 for May 1992, a difference of \$454,455 or 4.25 percent. Year-to-date 1992-93 CP gifts also are ahead of last year: \$92,909,910 compared to 1991-92 of \$92,469,555, a \$440,354 difference and a .48 percent increase.

Designated gifts dropped in May compared to a year ago: \$15,498,080 to \$15,961,706, or a 2.9 percent decrease. The year-to-date totals for designated gifts are \$105,232,750 compared to \$105,601,581, or a .35 percent decrease.

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 distribution is at the discretion of each state or regional convention.

Morris Chapman states opposition  
to Lloyd Elder's SBC proposal By Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP)--It's unwise and unneeded, reacted Morris H. Chapman to a proposal by Lloyd Elder for changes in how the Southern Baptist Convention nominates trustees to denominational entities and conducts its annual meetings.

Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said in a written statement June 3: "Lloyd Elder is attempting to introduce a polity (form of governance) into this Convention which is a total departure from time-honored, historic Southern Baptist practice."

Elder, professor of biblical studies and preaching at Nashville's Belmont University who was SBC Sunday School Board president from 1983-91, calls in his proposal, circulated since mid-May, for state Baptist conventions to elect half of the trustees for the SBC's various boards, commissions and other committees.

Chapman, disagreeing with the idea, stated: "For state conventions to have authority to select any officials for the Southern Baptist Convention or its agencies implies that the SBC should have authority to select some officials for state conventions. Either application of that concept, commonly called connectionalism, has been strongly rejected from the beginning of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Chapman also stated: "If the Southern Baptist Convention were to adopt the policies suggested by Elder, it would drive the controversy deeper into the state conventions," referring to the theological-political controversy in the SBC which broke into the open at the annual meeting in 1979 in Houston.

"Instead of one struggle," Chapman added to Baptist Press, "you would have 36 state Baptist convention struggles throughout the SBC."

Elder's proposal, titled "Calling the Family Back Together: A Research Report to the Southern Baptist Family," has been circulated to several thousand national, state and local Baptist leaders. Herschel Hobbs, 85, an oft-quoted retired Oklahoma pastor and former SBC president, publicly endorsed the proposal June 3. Elder and Hobbs have invited state Baptist convention presidents and other leaders to a June 14 meeting in Houston to discuss the proposal.

Chapman cited a book by James L. Sullivan, BSSB president from 1953-75, "Baptist Polity As I See It," in which Sullivan writes that for one Baptist body, such as a state Baptist convention, to insist on nominating persons to another Baptist body, such as the SBC, "is a trend toward a hierarchical structure and should be discouraged."

"This should be seen as a gross violation of Baptist polity," Sullivan writes. "For autonomous bodies to remain autonomous, they must nominate and elect their own officers as a matter of ongoing policy."

Chapman also took issue with Elder's stated motivation that, in making his proposal, he hopes to reverse downturns in SBC missions giving, membership and baptisms. Elder, in his proposal, added charts to illustrate downturns in each area.

"He (Elder) is crying 'wolf' and 'the sky is falling,'" Chapman stated. "But, our house is not collapsing, and our sky is not falling. Southern Baptists are on the mend. We are moving forward."

"There are some unhappy trends among the happy trends, but those trends have been in effect since the 1950s. Lloyd Elder fails to mention this, for obvious reasons."

"You will search his brochure in vain for word that giving to SBC causes is up this year, as are foreign mission applications. You will not read that Annie Armstrong (Offering for home missions) was a record, that while most other denominations are declining, Southern Baptists add 2,400 new members and 4 new churches each week. He neglected to mention that overseas baptisms were at a record high, that black church starts were up 50 percent and that Brotherhood involvement is the highest it's been in 25 years. The list goes on and on."

Chapman added to Baptist Press, "It is my prayer that God will bring sweeping renewal to the Southern Baptist Convention in the days ahead -- in baptisms, church growth and home and foreign missions -- as we stand firm in the Scriptures and continually seek his face in prayer."

Concerning a claim Hobbs made June 3 that it's "papacy" for an SBC president to make decisions as he thinks best for the convention, Chapman stated: "I was shocked when he (Hobbs) characterized my statement by saying, 'That's papacy.' Nothing could be farther from the truth. I have since spoken to him by phone and shared with him my concern that he would give that interpretation to my comment. I explained I simply meant that every SBC president does his best to do, under the leadership of God's Spirit, what he believes to be best for the Convention. Hopefully that would be true about every individual ever elected to that position."

Chapman added: "My wife (Jodi) served with Dr. Hobbs on the Peace Committee. He has preached for me when I was a pastor, and we both love him and consider him a dear friend. Unfortunately, Dr. Hobbs and I are in disagreement about his alignment with Lloyd Elder's proposal."

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Study group affirms '63 BFM,  
targets theological revisionism      By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
6/4/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Baptist Faith and Message is "the normative expression of Southern Baptist belief," a Southern Baptist Convention theological study committee has declared in an initial draft of its report.

But: The committee cited "several issues of contemporary urgency," such as everyone-will-be-saved universalism, feminist theologies and the New Age Movement, that require a fresh assertion of Southern Baptist conviction.

The theological study committee is one of nine study groups created by SBC President H. Edwin Young last fall to do a sweeping study of the convention. The study groups are still working and no formal action on the SBC-wide review is expected at the June 15-17 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston.

The theological study committee's co-chairman, Timothy George, dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala., and Roy L. Honeycutt, outgoing president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in releasing an initial report June 4, wrote in a cover letter to Young:

"... we acknowledge the fallible character of our best efforts and earnestly seek constructive critique and additional counsel concerning the report. We shall consider carefully all input received during this process of reception and submit a final draft of our report to you prior to the 1994 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando."

George and Honeycutt said reactions to the report may be mailed to either of them at their respective institutions.

The committee, in its report, said it "affirms and honors The Baptist Faith and Message, as overwhelmingly adopted by the 1963 Convention, embraced by millions of faithful Southern Baptists and their churches, affirmed by successive convention sessions and adopted by SBC agencies, as the normative expression of Southern Baptist belief."

But the committee, in a section on "Holy Scripture," also:

-- stated: "Southern Baptists have affirmed repeatedly and decisively an unswerving commitment to the divine inspiration and truthfulness of Holy Scripture, the Word of God revealed in written form. We believe that what the Bible says, God says. What the Bible says happened, really happened. Every miracle, every event, in every one of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments is true and trustworthy."

-- stated: "We commend to all Baptist educational institutions and agencies the (SBC) Report of the Peace Committee (1987), the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978) and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics (1982) as biblically grounded and sound guides worthy of respect in setting forth a high view of Scripture."

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-- reiterated the Peace Committee's listing of such central Southern Baptist beliefs as Adam and Eve as real people; authorship of biblical writings by the authors stated in Scripture; biblical miracles as factual events; and the historical accuracy of the Bible's various narratives.

-- quoted James M. Frost, the first president of the SBC's Sunday School Board, as saying in 1900: "We accept the Scriptures as an all-sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice, and insist upon the absolute inerrancy and sole authority of the Word of God. We recognize at this point no room for division, either of practice or belief, or even sentiment."

Elsewhere in its report, the committee:

-- affirmed "the priesthood of all believers," but said: "Being Baptist means faith as well as freedom. Christian liberty should not become a license for the masking of unbelief." The committee said "doctrinal minimalism and theological revision" must not be "left unchecked." In another section of the report, the committee said: "... the priesthood of all believers is exercised within a committed community of fellow believers-priests who share a like precious faith." That priesthood "should not be reduced to modern individualism nor used as a cover for theological relativism."

-- targeted feminist-oriented theology, stating: "Baptists affirm that God has revealed himself as the Father of the redeemed. Jesus characteristically addressed God as His Father, and instructed His disciples to do the same. We have no right to reject God's own name for Himself, nor to employ impersonal or feminine names in order to placate modern sensitivities."

-- targeted "process theology" and its view of God as limited by history and space. "We reject any effort to redefine God as a limited deity," the committee said.

-- squarely reminded: "All human beings -- in all places and of all ages -- are lost but for salvation through Jesus Christ. He is the only hope of salvation and the only Savior. ... Baptists must reject any and all forms of universalism ... and reject calls -- ancient and modern -- for redefining Christ's reconciling work as merely subjective and illustrative."

On eternal matters, the committee added: "... the redeemed shall be forever with the Lord in heaven, a place of light and glory beyond description, and the lost shall be forever with the devil in hell, a place of utter darkness and inexpressible anguish."

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Lottie Moon giving drops  
second time in three years

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press  
6/4/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Giving to Southern Baptists' Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions fell to \$80,980,881 in 1992, a decrease of about \$378,000 from 1991.

The total, tallied when the books closed May 31, reflects the second time in three years the offering has dropped from the year before.

The shortfall is about \$3 million less than the Foreign Mission Board expected when it planned its 1993 budget last October, but it didn't equal the \$1.5 million decrease the board projected earlier.

It comes at a time Southern Baptists' unified giving plan, the Cooperative Program, also shows signs of leveling. The Cooperative Program fell in 1991 and 1992. Through April, it shows a slight decrease compared to the same period in 1992.

Increasing costs and leveling revenue led in May to a downsizing of Foreign Mission Board programs at the home office and a jobs cut that affected 37 jobs and 27 people. Because the board uses all Lottie Moon receipts in its overseas budget, a shortfall required that funds be shifted from the home office, which led to the staff reduction, said Carl W. Johnson; vice president for finance.

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The Lottie Moon offering and receipts from the Cooperative Program are budgeted to pay for 84 percent of Southern Baptists' \$184 million foreign missions program in 1993. Investment income and hunger gifts account for an additional 11 percent of the board's expected income.

Interim FMB President Donald R. Kammerdiener said he was "gratified" the downturn was no sharper than it was, given economic factors and "the degree of turmoil that has marked our denomination over the last year."

Kammerdiener, the board's executive vice president, took over the reins of Southern Baptists' foreign missions program after former President R. Keith Parks retired Oct. 31, 1992, citing differences with board trustees. Shortly afterwards Parks agreed to lead the missions program of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Even before that, the CBF criticized the Foreign Mission Board in mailings promoting its own offering to Southern Baptist churches at the time churches usually promote the Lottie Moon offering.

"I think a whole lot of Southern Baptists have looked at the options, the criticisms and the reality of the way their foreign mission dollars are being spent overseas and have come back to support this particular foreign missions channel (the FMB)," said Kammerdiener. "I think we ought to celebrate those who are faithful and loyal. I'm frankly overwhelmed that Baptists continue to back their foreign missions program the way they do."

Depending upon how the Foreign Mission Board allocates funds, effects of the shortfall on existing missions work could be limited. Most affected will probably be capital needs such as new construction, equipment and mission vehicles. Trustees budgeted about \$7.6 million in capital for 1993, \$1.2 million of which is budgeted to come from Lottie Moon receipts.

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Baptist nursing school in Gaza  
to become United Nations facility

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6/4/93

GAZA (BP)--Southern Baptists have leased their nursing school in Gaza to the United Nations, a turning point in a ministry that has endured more than 40 years in one of the world's most troubled areas.

In a renewable agreement signed May 27, facilities belonging to the Baptist School of Allied Health Sciences in Gaza City were leased rent-free to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. The U.N. agency is expected to begin its own program of nurse training in November.

The Gaza Strip has been the scene of almost daily violence in recent years as Palestinians have resisted Israeli occupation. But the school was given up by Southern Baptist representatives because their Foreign Mission Board has been unable to secure the trained professionals needed to fully staff the school, reported Gaza representative Nancie Wingo.

The Southern Baptist workers stressed giving up the nursing school doesn't mean a retreat from ministry in Gaza. Plans call for ministry in health and education to continue, Wingo said.

Seven Southern Baptist workers assigned to Gaza will continue working there. Two volunteers will continue work in a school for deaf children and a mental health clinic through June. Also, two new workers are expected to arrive in September. Other requests have been made for additional workers in health and educational ministries.

Southern Baptist workers will be able to teach nursing at the U.N. school under a secondment arrangement. Worker Paul Lawrence will begin a continuing education program for nurses throughout Gaza. Surgeon Dean Fitzgerald will continue to work at the Ahli Arab Hospital, formerly Baptist Hospital.

Southern Baptists also will teach in other social service institutions in Gaza and will continue to minister through the local Baptist church, said Dale Thorne, who directs Southern Baptist work in the Middle East.

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The Baptist nursing school graduated its final class of seven women and seven men April 1. The graduates completed a three-year program amid the Palestinian uprising against Israel called the Intifada. Their studies had been interrupted by constant rounds of strikes that shut down most enterprises in Gaza.

Palestinians in Gaza are saddened over the closing of the Baptist school, fearing the new school will not have the same compassion expressed by the Baptist workers, Wingo said. Those familiar with the school agree it established high standards for excellence in nursing education and is passing along a strong foundation to the new school, she said.

"There would be no caring, skillful nursing in Gaza today if it hadn't been for the Baptist nursing school," one graduate told the workers.

"Over and over we are hearing, 'What a loss, what a pity!'" Wingo said. "But we accept the closure as God's leading and ask Southern Baptists to pray that UNRWA can start a bachelor of science nursing school, a school long wanted and needed here." The Baptist workers who served at the school feel pride and gratitude for what it accomplished through the years, she added.

"Working in Gaza has meant serving God among a largely refugee population, people who are discouraged from years of conflicts and war, people who feel misused and neglected," she said. "The nursing school may be closing but we want people to know we're not leaving here."

In 1954 Baptists began operating a hospital in Gaza City, which they turned over to the Anglicans in 1981. The nursing school grew out of a program started there to train young women to work as nurses. At first many students were Christians from Egypt and Lebanon. But following the Six Day War in 1967, Israel took over Gaza and travel between Gaza and other parts of the Middle East was ended. Since 1967 all nursing students attending the school have been Muslims.

Graduates of the Baptist school now practice nursing in hospitals in Gaza and across the Middle East, Europe and the United States. Most nurses in leadership positions in Gaza are graduates of the school.

The school also helped win public recognition for nursing as a career in its own right. In the late 1960s Southern Baptist representative Ava Nell McWhorter, who directed the school, began a program to educate Gaza families about nursing, partly so parents would permit their daughters to study nursing.

A Foreign Mission Board administrator once said Baptists in Gaza were "creating islands of love in a sea of hatred." The school also has served as an island of Christianity amid a Palestinian population estimated to be about 99 percent Muslim. It offered Bible courses as part of the required curriculum and weekly assemblies at which Southern Baptist workers shared their Christian faith with students, faculty and staff.

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Baptist workers: elections  
bring new hope to Cambodia

By Lounette Templeton

Baptist Press  
6/4/93

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)--A Southern Baptist humanitarian worker said Cambodia's May elections were "a momentous event for millions of Cambodians" who braved threats and violence to vote on their future.

"Many wondered if the elections would really happen. They did," said Bruce Carlton, Cambodia program director for Cooperative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization.

Vote counts showed the opposition royalist party, associated with Prince Norodom Sihanouk, running ahead of the government party. The government threatened to reject the results, alleging voting irregularities. But news reports June 3 said Sihanouk announced a bipartisan agreement for a coalition government, but withdrew from the agreement the next day.

As the political drama plays out, Carlton said the Cambodians he works with remain hopeful.

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They "all seem to believe that peace and stability are dawning in this land which has known nothing but war and killing for the past 20-plus years," reported the Southern Baptist worker from Georgetown, Ky.

One million Cambodians are thought to have died at the hands of the communist Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1978. The Khmer Rouge, infamous for its "killing fields," was ousted by invading Vietnamese forces but remains powerful in the countryside. It refused to take part in the United Nations-supervised elections and threatened to disrupt them with violence. Yet despite harassment, intimidation and the death of 200 people leading up to the elections, nearly 90 percent of voters turned out to decide their future.

Southern Baptist humanitarian work in the country slowed down before and during the elections, Carlton said. Travel to outlying areas wasn't possible.

"In terms of what will happen with our work (in the future), we can only guess that a new government will allow us to continue providing aid and assistance to the Cambodian people," he said.

Cooperative Services International assistance in Cambodia includes teaching, training and primary health care. The agency maintains a relationship with the government ministry of industry, working with Kbal Thnol Dispensary, a health care unit responsible for a large percentage of the country's factory workers and families. CSI workers provide nutrition, health, industrial safety and workers' training classes.

Cambodian churches held special prayer services before the election.

"Christians gathered together to pray and fast for their country," Carlton said. "It was a joy and thrill to see them humble themselves before God and ask that he bring peace to their land and their people. I'm convinced that the lack of violence in the election process is because God answered the prayers of his people here and around the world."

Churches in the capital of Phnom Penh have grown from 10 house churches in 1990, when Carlton and his family arrived in the country, to 30 congregations with several meeting in public "worship centers."

"Churches in the rural areas are also multiplying," he said. "At last count, it was nearly 60."

Besides Carlton and his wife, Gloria, Southern Baptist volunteer Sue Farley teaches English as a second language at the University of Phnom Penh and Tep Pranam Secondary School.

Farley, of Fayetteville, Ark., echoed Carlton's assessment of a new sense of hope in Cambodia.

"They've just not had a lot of hope in their lives," she observed. "And now things are turning around for them."

The young students she teaches particularly want to build a new Cambodia.

"They want to learn English. They want to be able to communicate with the world," Farley said. "It gives you an opportunity to build relationships and get to know them. They're eager to learn. It's a teacher's dream come true."

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13 Southern Baptists to receive  
Royal Ambassador Award of Merit By Steve Barber

Baptist Press  
6/4/93

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Thirteen Southern Baptists will receive the fourth annual Awards of Merit presented by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's International Legion of Royal Ambassador Leaders.

The awards will be presented at the National Brotherhood Breakfast in Houston June 16.

The ILRAL supports Royal Ambassador work around the world and its Award of Merit is the highest RA leadership award given by the Brotherhood Commission.

Royal Ambassadors is the Brotherhood Commission's missions education program for boys in grades one through nine.

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"The Award of Merit is given to those outstanding RA leaders whose commitment to missions education is exemplary," said James D. Williams, Brotherhood Commission president. "One reason why the missions spirit endures among our people is the faithfulness of those who teach our children and youth what it means to be Great Commission disciples."

The Award of Merit was begun in 1990 to recognize RA leaders around the world for their lifelong commitment to missions education for boys.

This year's recipients represent a variety of levels of work in Royal Ambassadors and represent hundreds of years of service. They are:

Paul M. Harvey, 66, Jefferson City, Mo., Brotherhood director for the Missouri Baptist Convention, 1976-92.

Alvin Hatton, 73, Warren, Ark., first RA secretary in Arkansas, later a foreign missionary who organized and directed the National RA Camp in Brazil for 40 years.

Paul McCullough, 65, Oklahoma City, associate director of Brotherhood for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1974-92.

James Paul Maxwell, 65, Shawnee, Okla., director of missions for the Pottawatomie-Lincoln Baptist Association.

Milton Schmidt, 65, Irving, Texas, RA counselor/director, First Baptist Church, Dallas.

Glenn Shows, 44, Greenwood, Miss., Royal Ambassador counselor, First Baptist Church, Greenwood, and associational RA director and coordinator.

Bob Swearingen, 44, Mount Vernon, Ill., member of camp staffs at Lake Sallateeska and Streator, 1978-92.

Charles Tarter, 41, Springfield, Mo., worker for Brotherhood department, Missouri Baptist Convention, and former church and associational RA director.

DeWayne Williams, 58, Arlington, Texas, RA director at South Oaks Baptist Church and associational RA co-director.

John Winters, 67, Pineville, La., Brotherhood director for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, 1979-1992.

Mazie Winters, 62, Pineville, La., director of Lad RAs at First Baptist Church, Pineville, and a Lad RA counselor/director 1969-79.

Posthumous awards will also be given in memory of:

James "Pete" Baxter, formerly of Central City, Ky., program director at Camp Jonathan Creek, Hardin, Ky., RA counselor at First Baptist Church and state RA trainer.

Truman L. Smith, formerly of Tolono, Ill., served on camp staff at Lake Sallateeska and Streator and as state campcraft instructor.

Recipients are nominated by state Brotherhood department directors and associates from across the SBC to the advisory board of the ILRAL. The advisory board reviews all nominations and makes recommendations to the Brotherhood Commission trustees, who vote to either approve or reject the recommendations.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Specials on individual recipients have been sent to state Baptist newsjournals by the Brotherhood Commission.

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