

(BP)

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, 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 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

September 22, 1993

93-159

VIRGINIA -- News advisory.

NASHVILLE -- Executive Committee urges prayers for Clinton, approves SBC study.

NASHVILLE -- Credentials guidelines adopted for church challenges at SBC.

NASHVILLE -- SBC leaders step up efforts to boost Cooperative Program.

NASHVILLE -- Planned Parenthood stock issue pending on Annuity Board stance.

NEW MEXICO -- Southern Baptists to start more black congregations; graphic.

NEW MEXICO -- Resources attracting black churches to SBC.

TENNESSEE -- Vietnamese Baptist leader begins new life in U.S.; photo.

NASHVILLE -- SBCNet adds adult, youth resources.

NASHVILLE -- Correction.

NEWS ADVISORY

on Russian President Yeltsin's dissolving of Parliament:

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The foreign bureau of Baptist Press is in the process of gathering reactions from Moscow about Russian President Boris Yeltsin's dissolving Parliament 9/21/93. Staff writer Marty Croll, meanwhile, is in Washington, D.C., where Russian Orthodox priest Gleb Yakunin, leading opponent of Parliament's recent restrictions of religious liberty, is meeting with various U.S. officials. A story by Croll is anticipated 9/23 outlining reaction to Yeltsin's actions and potential impact on religious freedom in Russia. (BP) photos of Yakunin also to be released this week.

Executive Committee urges prayer
for Clinton, approves SBC study

Baptist Press
9/22/93

By Herb Hollinger & Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP)--In unanimous voice votes and show of hands, the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee approved 37 items of business during its Sept. 20-21 meeting, from a 40-day call to prayer for President Bill Clinton to a re-examination of responsibilities assigned to each SBC agency.

Also adopted without opposition were stances refusing to use the SBC constitution as a means to challenge churches that ordain women and continuing to question SBC investments with companies making corporate contributions to Planned Parenthood and other pro-abortion groups.

And, in a straightforward push for consensus, Executive Committee leaders urged a Cooperative Program giving goal for SBC churches of at least 10 percent of undesignated offerings they receive each week.

--more--

"Some churches in our convention give well over 20 percent" to Southern Baptists' longstanding channel of financing home and foreign missions, said Morris H. Chapman, Executive Committee president. "Others give 2 to 3 percent," while the SBC-wide average stands at 9.3 percent, he said.

"Hopefully those churches which give lesser percentages will prayerfully determine to increase giving gradually, if not immediately, through the Cooperative Program to help support our Southern Baptist missionaries," Chapman said. He commended Executive Committee members for heading toward the 10-percent mark in their churches' CP giving, noting the average now has risen to 7.23 percent.

"A new determination has emerged to build an even stronger convention ... with unequivocal biblical convictions," Chapman said. "But if these strong convictions lead us to an independent mentality and away from a cooperative spirit in financially supporting missions, we will ultimately fail because one of our great strengths has been the desire and ability to do together what we could not otherwise do separately."

The Executive Committee's call for prayer for President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore followed a lively account by SBC President H. Edwin Young of a Sept. 16 White House meeting involving himself, Clinton, Gore, Chapman, Rex M. Horne Jr., pastor of Clinton's home church in Little Rock, Ark., and Wendell Estep, a Columbia, S.C., pastor.

Young, pastor of Houston's Second Baptist Church, recounted giving Clinton a copy of "Pray for the President, a 40-Day Intercessory Prayer Plan," a booklet recently developed by the SBC Brotherhood Commission.

Accepting an invitation to jog with Clinton the following day, Young said the president told of reading the booklet and appreciating its call to prayer in his behalf.

Young urged SBC churches to begin a 40-day period of prayer Jan. 1 for Clinton and Gore, using Brotherhood's "Pray for the President" booklet.

"There is a heart there -- a spiritual cross-pull -- in the life of our president," Young said of Clinton's apparent sensitivity to spiritual matters. "Who knows what the Lord will do?" The SBC, in its June annual meeting in Houston, urged Clinton and Gore "to stand for biblical morality" and reverse their stances for special rights for homosexuals and for abortion.

Brotherhood Commission President James Williams told Executive Committee members he and Young will co-author a letter to each pastor in the SBC to announce the call to prayer and tell how copies of the booklet can be ordered.

The booklet includes a Scripture reading for each day; a line to "Identify a key current news event or topic" of prayer; and added focused prayers for Clinton and Gore, such as "Model of Christian leadership," "Wisdom" or "Courage to stand for what is right."

The study of SBC agency responsibilities, called "program statements," will entail "taking a hard look" at the SBC boards and commissions, said Fred Wolfe, Executive Committee chairman and pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala. The study committee was first proposed in a motion to the SBC in Houston by C.B. Hogue, California Southern Baptist Convention executive director-treasurer.

Beyond seeking to increase the flow of dollars to the Cooperative Program, Wolfe said the study will examine "how we might be more cost-efficient with the ones we already have" and where various program statements need to be updated.

Executive Committee members approved as chairman of the study committee Mark Brister, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La.; four Executive Committee members for the study, Ronnie W. Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church in Springdale, Ark.; attorney Rex M. Terry, a member of First Baptist Church in Fort Smith, Ark.; businessman William K. Hall, a member of Capistrano Valley Baptist Church in San Clemente, Calif.; Robert L. Sorrell, associate pastor at Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn.; and, along with Brister, two other study committee members, R. Albert Mohler, the new president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; and businessman Greg Horton, a member of Temple Baptist Church in Simpsonville, S.C.

Executive Committee action to "decline to recommend" changing the SBC constitution to exclude churches that have ordained women was just one of 10 such votes by the committee on referrals from the SBC annual meeting in Houston.

Wolfe said most Executive Committee members probably would be opposed to ordaining women but would regard it as a local church matter. "I do think our convention has spoken" against women's ordination through resolutions adopted at previous SBC annual meetings, Wolfe added.

Among "declined to recommend" referrals were limiting of agency severance benefits; Executive Committee member qualifications requiring minimum Cooperative Program contributions by their churches; tying the SBC Committee on Committees to people nominated by state conventions; requiring the SBC parliamentarian to be a member of a Southern Baptist church.

Other declined referrals involved vacancies on boards and agencies taking effect at the time resignations are announced; a change in messenger credentials verification; changes in the availability and publisher of the SBC Book of Reports; and churches becoming eligible for SBC representation if constituted during the current fiscal year.

Concerning its request last February that the SBC Annuity Board divest stocks of companies supporting Planned Parenthood, the Executive Committee voted to "reserve further comment" until the Annuity Board's response to a motion from the SBC in Houston to "divest itself forever" of stocks of companies with practices in "conflict with the teachings, commands, and spirit of the Holy Bible." The Annuity Board will respond to that motion in its report at the SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., in June 1994.

Annuity Board President Paul Powell, in an August letter to the Executive Committee, cited several reasons why the committee's request "must respectfully" be declined, including state and federal laws requiring trustees to handle investments for the exclusive benefit of plan participants and their beneficiaries. Other considerations are permissible, Powell wrote, only if they are "incidental and have no adverse effect on the fund's performance." Powell said the Executive Committee request likely would increase the investment risk or reduce the investment return for the 70,000-plus participants in the Annuity Board's pension plans.

Powell also cited the Annuity Board's own policy barring investments in any company whose "products, services or activities are publicly recognized as being incompatible with the moral and ethical posture of the Annuity Board . . ." He said the board diligently applies the policy and does consider abortion as incompatible with its moral and ethical posture.

--30--

Credentials guidelines adopted
for church challenges at SBC

Baptist Press
9/22/93

By Herb Hollinger & Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP)--A challenge to the seating of messengers from President Bill Clinton's home church at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting last June in Houston prompted Executive Committee action Sept. 21 to establish guidelines for responding to such challenges.

National publicity followed the challenge by a messenger from Florida who objected to seating messengers from Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., because of Clinton's stand on homosexuality.

Following consultation with the SBC Credentials Committee and SBC registration secretary Lee Porter, the Executive Committee approved an eight-point set of guidelines.

The step-by-step process calls for a meeting with the challenger to assure that a valid challenge exists. If so, a Credentials Committee hearing is held with the challenger and the challenged church's messengers in which two principles are considered:

--more--

1) The SBC constitutional test of "friendly cooperation" with the convention and being "sympathetic with its purposes and work" is a test of the church and not a test of its members. A church is not disqualified because of a position held by one of its members.

2) A church acts only by an official vote of the congregation.

After the committee has heard both parties, it "may withdraw to deliberate the information in private." Upon reaching a decision, it is then reported to the convention.

In other action during its Sept. 20-21 meeting, the Executive Committee:

-- delayed a request to change the location of the 1999 SBC annual meeting from Atlanta to Denver, after Executive Committee members were told a contract had not been signed with the Atlanta Convention Center for a previously approved annual meeting in 1995 in Atlanta.

The request stemmed from Atlanta city council action last November to bar any city-funded travel to Denver because of Colorado voters' passage of a constitutional amendment prohibiting the passage of and enforcement of laws and ordinances protecting homosexual rights.

In his last meeting before his term of service was completed on the Executive Committee in June, Colorado pastor Kenneth R. Barnett asked the committee to consider moving the 1999 convention from Atlanta to Denver.

With some concern any action taken now might cause problems with a contract for the 1995 meeting in Atlanta, Executive Committee members delayed any decision on the 1999 meeting until their February meeting.

-- released \$300,000 in capital funds to the Christian Life Commission upon notification that CLC's trustees had signed a contract to purchase a building in Washington.

The Executive Committee action is the final chapter in a debate over capital funds set aside in 1964 for "public affairs" in the nation's capital.

At one time the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a multi-denominational religious liberty lobby organization, claimed the funds but eventually the sum was approved for the CLC, which was designated the SBC's religious liberty channel when the convention severed ties and defunded the BJC.

Because the original intent of the capital funding was for the purchase of facilities in Washington, the Executive Committee held the funds in trust until the CLC found a building. The CLC's new building is near the nation's capitol and was purchased for \$495,000 on Sept. 15.

-- approved a feasibility study of a proposed Southern Baptist Cooperative Program television news program.

The proposal would consider a "fast paced, short segment television news program to be aired over our cable networks with suggested emphases on the sharing of timely, factual accounts of agencies' successes using Cooperative Program funds."

A cooperative venture, the proposal would solicit investment of resources from the Radio and Television Commission and other SBC agencies.

Mark Coppenger, vice president for convention relations for the Executive Committee, will coordinate a study of the proposal and is expected to give a progress report at the February meeting.

-- retained the complex and detailed Seminary Funding Formula for disbursing Cooperative Program funds for the convention's six seminaries.

The committee heard a final report from its Seminary Funding Formula Study Committee which, after several years of study, recommended the formula continue but using only qualified Southern Baptist students in the calculations. Most of the seminaries have some non-Southern Baptist students in their enrollments.

Also, the Executive Committee was asked to acknowledge special concerns in the Northeastern and Pacific West parts of the United States, with a priority review of the program of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

Presidents of the six seminaries also affirmed "our unreserved support of the Cooperative Program" and pledged to "continue and expand Cooperative Program education, support and promotion through classroom instruction and special programs"

-- honored Martha Gaddis for her 25 years as administrative assistant to the president/treasurer of the Executive Committee, a job in which she became a vital part to each annual meeting of the SBC and all the details before and after. Gaddis, who has weathered heart problems and is now on medical disability, started with the committee under the late Porter Routh. She credited her husband of 42 years, Bob, for his support. "I could not have done this job without him," Gaddis said. "He never complained about cooking or looking after the children Whatever had to be done, he did it, always happy to do it."

--30--

SBC leaders step up efforts
to boost Cooperative Program

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
9/22/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--With Southern Baptist Convention agencies requesting more funds each year to tackle 21st-century challenges and opportunities, Executive Committee leaders are starting with themselves in an appeal to bolster the SBC's Cooperative Program.

Executive Committee chairman Fred Wolfe told fellow Executive Committee members Sept. 21 he would lead an increase in his church's CP giving of a half-percent a year for national and international Southern Baptist causes.

"I saw with amazement that some of your churches are giving 24 percent, 25 percent" of their undesignated offerings through the Cooperative Program, Wolfe said.

The increase at his church, Cottage Hill Baptist in Mobile, Ala., will be added each year, Wolfe said, until it reaches at least the 10-percent mark in CP giving.

Currently, Wolfe told Baptist Press, his church's CP giving, while increasing in dollar amount yearly, has been roughly 5 percent of undesignated offerings.

Challenging increases are the only way the SBC will fund its agencies' ever-increasing requests to meet the world's ever-increasing spiritual needs -- requests, for example, for \$145.3 million for the 1994-95 fiscal year, up \$7 million or 5 percent over the current SBC budget of \$138.2 million.

CP giving so far this year, however, is some \$2.4 million below the 11-month point in the SBC budget.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the SBC. State and regional conventions retain a percentage of CP 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.

Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman, in his comments during the committee's Sept. 20-21 meeting in Nashville, joined Wolfe in urging a CP giving goal for SBC churches of at least 10 percent of their undesignated offerings.

"Some churches in our convention give well over 20 percent" to Southern Baptists' longstanding channel of financing home and foreign missions, said Morris H. Chapman, Executive Committee president. "Others give 2 to 3 percent," while the SBC-wide average stands at 9.3 percent, he said.

"Hopefully those churches which give lesser percentages will prayerfully determine to increase giving gradually, if not immediately, through the Cooperative Program to help support our Southern Baptist missionaries," Chapman said. He commended Executive Committee members for heading toward the 10-percent mark in their churches' CP giving, noting the average now has risen to 7.23 percent.

"A new determination has emerged to build an even stronger convention ... with unequivocal biblical convictions," Chapman said. "But if these strong convictions lead us to an independent mentality and away from a cooperative spirit in financially supporting missions, we will ultimately fail because one of our great strengths has been the desire and ability to do together what we could not otherwise do separately."

--more--

Chapman issued an appeal to pastors, explaining, "Education about the Cooperative Program is vital" and cannot be done "without the enthusiastic help of our pastors."

His "growing impression," Chapman said, is that church members who are middle-aged and younger "have very little knowledge about the Cooperative Program and, therefore, little or no allegiance to this method for funding missions which has been so highly successful."

"God honors a faithful steward," Chapman said. "I believe he would equally honor the church which takes the initiative to increase her undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program."

For the 1994-95 fiscal year, SBC agencies seeking the largest increases are the Christian Life Commission, 28 percent; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 12 percent; Brotherhood Commission, 10 percent; Historical Commission, 9.1 percent; Southeastern Seminary, 8 percent; Stewardship Commission, 8 percent.

The Foreign Mission Board is requesting a 5.23 percent increase; the Home Mission Board, 3.6 percent.

Agencies not seeking an increase are the Education Commission and Golden Gate Seminary. Most other agencies' requests are roughly 5 percent.

Of the challenge ahead, new FMB President Jerry Rankin told the Executive Committee: "One thing that excites me is that God continues to call out his people to serve overseas, to fulfill his purpose, to evangelize a lost world. At the end of August we had 3,953 missionaries, rapidly moving toward 4,000 and on to 5,000 missionaries. Our personnel selection department says that they are now actually dealing with 2,690 files of missionary candidates in some stage of the process moving toward appointment. ...

"The challenge is to all of us," Rankin said. "Will the resources be there to support these missionaries?"

"We had to downsize our home staff this past year," he said. "Because of the level of missionary support required for the increasing numbers of missionaries, operating budgets were cut by 12 percent overseas."

"Our administrators are saying, 'How can we continue to absorb a continuing flow of new missionaries if we don't have the budget to provide housing, cars and basic budget?'"

"But I am committed to sending out the missionaries that God is calling," Rankin said. "As (19th-century pioneer missionary) J. Hudson Taylor said, 'God's work done in God's way will never lack for God's supply.' And I am confident that God has raised up Southern Baptists to provide the resources to send out the personnel and to provide the support so this world can come to Jesus Christ as Savior."

In other CP news from the Executive Committee meeting:

-- Presidents of the six SBC seminaries affirmed "our unreserved support of the Cooperative Program" and pledged to "continue and expand Cooperative Program education, support and promotion through classroom instruction and special programs ..."

-- The Executive Committee declined action on a motion referred from the SBC annual meeting in Houston calling for a minimum church CP contribution for committee members. The committee explained "that while the Executive Committee has endorsed the Cooperative Program as a God-inspired channel of missions support and encouraged all churches to prayerfully consider increasing missions support through the Cooperative Program, individuals and not churches are eligible for election (to the committee), individual church members may not feel the same about the Cooperative Program as do the majority of church members, churches give through the Cooperative Program on a voluntary basis, and the Cooperative Program is not referenced in Article III of the SBC Constitution (as a basis of SBC participation)."

--30--

Starla Peek and Polly House contributed to this story.

Planned Parenthood stock issue
pending on Annuity Board stance By Herb Hollinger

NASHVILLE (BP)--A confrontation between the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee and Annuity Board over investments related to Planned Parenthood was averted Sept. 21 when the Executive Committee voted to wait and see how the Annuity Board responds to a motion referred from the Houston SBC meeting in June.

In a reply to a February request from the Executive Committee, the Annuity Board said it declined the committee's request to identify "any company in its portfolio that is contributing to Planned Parenthood or any other provider or advocate of legal abortion" The Executive Committee also asked for the Annuity Board to divest itself of the stocks of those companies and report its action at the September Executive Committee meeting.

An August letter from Paul W. Powell, president of the Annuity Board, to the Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman, however, said there were several reasons why the request "must respectfully" be declined.

Powell said the SBC, from its own constitution and bylaws, cannot force an agency to "act and carry out its affairs in conflict with the law of the state of its incorporation." Also, he wrote, the SBC bylaws specifically prohibit the Executive Committee from having any authority "to control or direct the several boards, agencies and institutions of the convention. This is the responsibility of trustees elected by the convention."

In addition, Powell cited Texas law and laws in other states and federal laws which require trustees to handle investments for the exclusive benefit of plan participants and their beneficiaries. Other considerations are permitted, Powell wrote, only if they are "incidental and have no adverse effect on the fund's performance." There are more than 70,000 participants in the Annuity Board's pension plans.

"Complying with the Executive Committee's request would, in all reasonable probability, increase the investment risk or reduce the investment return of the Annuity Board's pension plan funds because the portfolio could not be properly diversified with the limited number of stock that would be available," Powell said. "That could potentially cause the Annuity Board to be in violation of its common law fiduciary duties as a pension plan trustee."

Powell then cited the Annuity Board's own investment policy which precludes investments in any company whose "products, services or activities are publicly recognized as being incompatible with the moral and ethical posture of the Annuity Board"

"The Annuity Board and its investment committees and managers are diligent in applying this policy and consider abortion as incompatible with the moral and ethical posture of the Annuity Board," Powell said.

However, at the June annual meeting of the SBC in Houston, a motion was made and then referred to the Annuity Board which would direct the board to "divest itself forever of any and all stockholders in any and all entities whose business endeavors conflict with the teachings, commands, and spirit of the Holy Bible." The Annuity Board must respond to that motion in its report at the SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., in June of 1994.

In light of the referred motion, the Executive Committee voted Sept. 21 to "reserve further comment until the Annuity Board responds to the motion," making it unlikely that debate on the matter between the Executive Committee and Annuity Board would continue until after the 1994 annual meeting.

**Southern Baptists to start
more black congregations**

By David Winfrey

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Southern Baptists should more than double their annual number of new congregations in African American communities within two years, said the Home Mission Board's director of black church extension.

"By the end of 1995, we'll (have) over 300 new black congregations a year," predicted Willie McPherson during Black Church Week at the Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

In 1992, Southern Baptists gained 117 new black works, a 48 percent increase compared to 1991 when they had 79 new works.

While an earlier goal of 5,000 total black congregations by the year 2000 has not been abandoned, McPherson said it is more reasonable to expect more than 3,000 congregations by then.

Currently, 1,353 predominately black Southern Baptist congregations exist, and 15 black church starters received assistance from the HMB last year, he said.

Before 1989, the Home Mission Board housed a black church relations department, which networked with mostly black non-Southern Baptist denominations and churches. In 1989, the board transformed that department into black church extension, with an emphasis on starting black Southern Baptist churches.

Anglo churches are showing a greater awareness for the need to spread the gospel in African American communities, said McPherson and others. "Most black (Southern Baptist) church starts are being sponsored by white congregations," he said.

Added Dick Brogan, director of black church extension for the Mississippi Baptist Convention, "It's happening in Mississippi in places I never thought it would happen."

While some white pastors still harbor paternalistic instincts, many churches are working "brother-to-brother," McPherson said. "People are just purely concerned about lost folk and they don't care who they are."

That attitude differs from 1951, when Community Baptist Church in Santa Rosa, Calif., became the first black church in the contiguous 48 states to petition a Southern Baptist association for membership.

Community Baptist started as a mission church for African Americans who weren't welcome at the sponsoring Anglo church, said James Coffey, church pastor since 1960. "There's a lot of hard history," Coffey said. "They really didn't want us there, so in order not to have us there they formed a mission for us."

Three years before school integration, Community petitioned the association for membership, sparking a bitter debate, he said.

Amid threats to Cooperative Program giving, a tie vote was broken by the moderator to accept the church, Coffey said. "People called him from Atlanta and Nashville and told him he had set Southern Baptists back 100 years."

Despite criticism, the moderator was convicted to vote for the church because he had recently received a letter from a missionary to Africa asking him how to respond to new believers who wondered if they would be accepted in Southern Baptist churches in America, Coffey said.

Although they have a relatively short history, black Southern Baptist churches already are showing signs of strength, said Tom Kelly, director of black church extension for the California Southern Baptist Convention. He noted 15 of California's 25 leading churches in baptisms last year were predominately black.

Starting churches in black communities is no different from starting them in white communities, said HMB black church extension associate director Michael Thurman.

"There's not a lot of difference in people. When you talk about church planting, you're talking about reaching people where they are," he said. "People are hurting, black, white, Oriental, Hispanic. People lose their jobs. People's marriages crumble."

--more--

Coffee said he hopes Southern Baptists can move beyond their history to a future that's bright for all races.

"Southern Baptists as a convention don't really like to remember a time before '51 when everybody wasn't welcome," Coffee said. "I think it's time for us to say we forgive and it's time to move on with our work of kingdom building."

--30--

(BP) graphic of new Southern Baptist black congregations mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

Resources attracting
black churches to SBC

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
9/22/93

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Although a Southern Baptist for only a month, Hansford Worline says he's already impressed by his new denomination.

As pastor of the predominately black Calvary Resurrectional Missionary Baptist Church in Compton, Calif., Worline says Southern Baptists offer more assistance and better resources than he received from previous denomination affiliations.

"I've experienced more fellowship since I've been (Southern Baptist) than I have in 15 years," says Worline, 44, who attended Black Church Week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. "I love the way the people share themselves and their knowledge with one another."

From Glorieta conferences to Sunday school materials and church loan opportunities, Southern Baptists' resources are attracting Calvary and other black churches to join the historically white denomination, say workers in black church starting.

Of the 22 new black Southern Baptist works in California last year, about half were already existing churches that approached the association or state convention for membership, says Tom Kelly, director of black church extension for the state convention.

Kelly, who is black, boasts his office provides the greatest return on Southern Baptists' investment. "I get a 500-member church and it doesn't cost us a nickel," he says with a laugh.

While transfer churches offer Southern Baptists a chance to spread the gospel in predominately black communities, church starting leaders say they must work to avoid offending National Baptists and other black non-Southern Baptist churches in the area.

"They're already suspicious," says Willie McPherson, director of the Home Mission Board's black church extension division.

"They're saying that the Home Mission Board is trying to swallow up the black conventions," he says. "Of course, we know this is not true. Southern Baptists are concerned about carrying out God's Great Commission to reach all people."

Charles Chaney, HMB vice president for church extension, agrees. "We have no program to go out and recruit National Baptist churches," he says. "What we're wanting to do is tap into that community where there is that spiritual hunger."

Kelly estimates as many as 75 percent of black Southern Baptist churches in California are dually aligned with another black Baptist group.

"Many of those pastors of the Southern Baptist black churches serve in leadership roles in National Baptist" conventions, he says. "When we strengthen the black Southern Baptist church we're also helping the National Baptists."

Some Southern Baptists question the motives of churches joining the convention, fearing pastors will siphon resources without educating their congregations about Southern Baptist activities and involvement, Kelly adds.

"We still have some black Southern Baptist churches on the rolls and only the pastor knows that church is Southern Baptist," he says. In such cases, he blames convention leadership for not detailing Southern Baptist expectations along with opportunities.

--more--

"Right now we're in a corrective mode in a lot of situations," he says. "We need to help them understand what it means to be a Southern Baptist church."

At Calvary Resurrectional, Worline said his members' questions about becoming Southern Baptist were answered during a church meeting with representatives of the California Southern Baptist Convention.

Founded in 1947, Calvary has always been a "missions-minded church," but the new alignment has energized the congregation to greater involvement, says Worline, who grew up in the church and has been its pastor 15 years.

"I can see the change in the church even now. They're more excited. They're eager to learn," he says. "I'm excited about wanting to give because of what we receive."

Kelly adds Southern Baptists must take measures to ensure new black churches are full participants in their association and state convention work. "If we don't do anything with that new black church in six months, we can log them off. We don't meet their expectations."

--30--

Vietnamese Baptist leader
begins new life in U.S.

By Jim Burton

Baptist Press
9/22/93

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--With more than 40 people waiting to celebrate their arrival at the Memphis International Airport, the tearful family of Nguyen Son recently completed their long journey from communism to freedom.

The former business manager of the Vietnam Baptist mission looked healthy and hopeful as he greeted the former Southern Baptist missionaries with whom he once worked. He then met representatives of the Speedway Terrace Baptist Church in Memphis, which is sponsoring his family.

The Nguyens' arrival marked the end of a 10-year effort by many people to help the family, said James Kellum, director of refugee ministries with Memphis Leadership Foundation, Inc.

"It hasn't been easy," said Kellum, a Southern Baptist missionary to Vietnam from 1972-75. "It required some trips (by Southern Baptist missionaries and others) to the Vietnam Embassy in Thailand on their behalf."

Led to Christ in 1960 by now-retired Southern Baptist missionary Herman Hayes, Nguyen says he was the only Christian among his Buddhist family. He soon began working for the Vietnam Baptist mission in various capacities ranging from secretary to accountant to business manager. His responsibilities included handling Southern Baptist missionary housing, visas and transportation.

Southern Baptist missionaries remained in Vietnam until April 1975 when South Vietnam surrendered to communist North Vietnam to end the Vietnam War. Following the war, South Vietnam's "liberation" began.

That liberation meant two years of intense hardship for the Nguyens. Because of their association with the Vietnam Baptist mission, and more specifically with Americans, the communists considered them suspect, Nguyen said. Through 1977, he was unable to get a job.

Besides seizing all church property, much of which has Nguyen's name on the deeds, officials repeatedly required Nguyen to write his "personal data."

"I wrote that the missionaries came to Vietnam just to preach the Bible, and they were good to me," Nguyen said. "The communists wanted me to write a bad report of the missionaries."

"I did not change my idea," Nguyen said.

To buy food for the family, which included three small children, he sold all their household possessions, except their Bible, and nylon and plastic, which they used for bedding, Nguyen said. Then in 1978, a friend helped him get a job at an ice company.

--more--

He began as a laborer. Nguyen believes that because he worked hard and proved to be an honest man, company officials promoted him to clerical and administrative positions. Eventually, he became the secretary of federal labor at the ice plant.

"That meant I had to take care of the workers' lives," Nguyen said.

There, in his marketplace of communist Ho Chi Minh City, Nguyen lived out his faith.

"Most of the laborers in the ice company knew that I am a Christian and because they know my life when I leave with them (after work)," Nguyen said in English. "I don't smoke or drink alcohol. They can tell I am a Christian because I am always smiling and trying to do things for them (as secretary of labor)."

Then from 1990 until his departure, Nguyen worked as the representative of missions agencies seeking to start social programs in Vietnam.

The employment stabilized his family, but other hardships persisted. With all church property seized, the communists only allowed one church in Ho Chi Minh City, Grace Baptist Church, to keep their property and meet. Officials closed all other churches.

Officials also required the Nguyen children to attend public schools, which taught communist doctrine, including the worship of Ho Chi Minh, Nguyen said.

His daughter Tu, now 21, said that though the school taught there was no God, she learned about God at home. At 15, she became a Christian.

Still, the hardships have taken a toll. With one daughter now married to an Australian businessman and living in Ho Chi Minh City, the Nguyens decided they wanted to live where they could have more freedom and opportunity. But for Nguyen, the focus will still be Vietnam.

His dream is to someday return to Vietnam and help the mission reclaim its properties. With only one official church in Ho Chi Minh City, many Vietnamese Christians meet illegally in homes. For years, pastors of home churches faced persecution. Though it is still illegal to worship in homes, the government has not been enforcing that law, Nguyen said.

For now, with the help of Kellum and James H. Smith, former Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission president who is pastor of Speedway Terrace Baptist Church, the Nguyens begin their new life in Memphis. Nguyen has one simple request of Southern Baptists: "Please pray for my family."

--30--

(BP) photo available upon request from the Brotherhood Commission.

SBCNet adds adult,
youth resources

Baptist Press
9/22/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Adult Bible Book Series and youth discipleship supplements are scheduled to be added to SBCNet, the data communications network for Southern Baptists, effective with October lessons.

According to David Haywood, SBCNet coordinator, Adult Bible Book supplements will be posted on Thursdays, 10 days prior to the Sunday the material will be used.

"Instant Imagination," the monthly youth discipleship supplement on SBCNet, will become a weekly offering using the name "DiscipleLife Plus." Included in the new resource, also to be posted on Thursdays 10 days prior to use, will be supplementary material for both "Youth Disciple" and "Baptist Youth," announcements of upcoming youth events and a quarterly edition of "Youth Prayer Corps Newsletter."

Other information available on SBCNet includes Baptist Press, the official Southern Baptist news service; News Room, offering news and feature stories from Southern Baptist agencies and state conventions; Facts and Trends, the Sunday School Board's newsletter for church staff members and other denominational leaders; Facts and Trends Information Service; news briefs from the Sunday School Board, Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board with usage suggestions for church newsletters.

--more--

Also included is Clip Art, a collection of ready-to-use art pieces; Bold Mission Prayer, requests for prayer from home and foreign missionaries; youth, adult and collegiate Sunday school supplemental teaching helps; and Minister's Corner, a collection of sermons and illustrations.

SBCNet may be accessed by using a computer, modem and a membership kit distributed by the Sunday School Board. Cost of the kit, available in both DOS and Macintosh versions, is \$20. The kit includes CompuServe Information Manager software, account information and a \$15 credit toward usage. Kits may be ordered by calling 1-800-458-2772.

Additional information about SBCNet and CompuServe may be obtained by calling Haywood at 1-800-325-7749, ext. 2895.

A reduction in rates for SBCNet users was announced in August, bringing user cost to a flat rate of \$7.95 monthly, plus CompuServe charges. Users must choose between CompuServe's standard plan, which provides unlimited access to 35 basic services at \$8.95 monthly, or the alternate plan at \$2.50 monthly, plus time on line.

With more than 1,050 church and individual customers signed with SBCNet in mid-September, Haywood said the number of network users is continuing to grow each month.

--30--

CORRECTION: In (BP) story "CBF council appoints 6 new missionaries, cites growth," dated 9/17/93, please make the following correction:

In paragraph 12, James Slatton is incorrectly identified. He is pastor of River Road Church in Richmond, Va., not First Baptist Church.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

So. Baptist Library & Archives
901 Commerce
Nashville, TN 37203

HOUSE MAIL