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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Historical Commission, SBC  
Nashville, Tennessee

SBC Cooperative Program gifts  
up for month, below budget

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for the first month of the 1993-94 fiscal year were .46 percent above receipts for October of last year, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

However, the \$10,879,698 total for October was below the new budget requirement for the month of \$11,519,561, or a 5.55 percent deficit. October 1992 CP total was \$10,830,045.

Designated gifts for October totaled \$1,531,826 compared to October 1992 of \$2,100,758 or a 27.08 percent reduction.

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.

**SBC leaders tell Disney  
of concern over 'NYPD' ads**

**By Herb Hollinger**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Two top Southern Baptist Convention officials have sent a letter to the chairman of The Walt Disney Company asking the company to reconsider its sponsorship of the controversial television show, "NYPD Blue," or the SBC might reconsider its plans to promote Walt Disney World at the SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., in June.

The Oct. 22 letter was signed by H. Edwin Young, Houston pastor and president of the SBC, and Morris H. Chapman, president and CEO of the SBC's Executive Committee. It was sent to Michael Eisner, chairman of The Walt Disney Company and parent company of Touchstone Films which advertises one of its movies on NYPD Blue.

Although Eisner has not responded to the SBC officials' letter as yet, Greg Albrecht of Walt Disney Attractions told the Houston Post Oct. 30 that Touchstone Pictures and Walt Disney World should not be viewed as offering the same products.

"Families and family values are our No. 1 priority. But we're two separate brands," Albrecht told the newspaper. "Disney World will not advertise on NYPD Blue. Walt Disney attractions are the finest in family values."

SBC officials had been negotiating with Disney officials to offer Magic Kingdom tickets at discount rates for Baptists attending the annual meeting in Orlando next summer. An estimated 20-25,000 messengers and guests are expected for the June SBC meeting.

"Using the guise of realism, (NYPD Blue) introduces into the living rooms and family dens of America the persons (law enforcement officials) children have been taught to respect freely using profane and vulgar language and participating freely in sexual dalliances. The nudity, the language and the glamorizing of promiscuous sex further the deterioration of America's family values," reads the letter sent by Chapman and Young.

"Basic to the cause of our strong objection to your sponsorship of NYPD Blue is the fact that for years we have believed that our families could trust Disney Productions to provide and support family value programming and we had hoped this confident endorsement could continue.

"Since the earliest days of our consideration of Orlando as a convention site, the availability of Disney World and Epcot was a major factor. We have begun negotiations with your marketing people to promote attendance at Disney World and Epcot on several days.

"Regrettably, we must now reconsider our immediate plans for promoting attendance at your Orlando venues and, more seriously, inform Southern Baptists that they must be suspect of promotions of The Walt Disney Company's entertainment offerings.

"We urge you to reconsider the position of The Walt Disney Company in relation to NYPD Blue and other entertainment forms designed to denigrate Judeo-Christian morality and family values," Chapman and Young's letter reads.

"We are disappointed with the television show advertisement by Disney," Chapman told Baptist Press, "but we are trying to help Disney understand how important these values are to Southern Baptists. We will continue discussions with Disney officials."

NYPD Blue, a new ABC television series, has drawn the ire of many religious groups, and 46 of the network's 225 affiliated stations refused to air the show.

The SBC executives' action was prompted by Walter Carpenter, a Houston attorney and member of Second Baptist Church where Young is pastor. Carpenter had earlier requested the SBC boycott Walt Disney World at the Orlando meeting next year.

"I love Goofy, but they (Walt Disney) shouldn't put him in charge of their advertising," Carpenter told Baptist Press.

**Annuity Board trustees enact  
sweeping boosts in benefits**

By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

DALLAS (BP)--Trustees of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention approved an increase in retirement benefits, lowered the deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums in its Comprehensive Medical Plan for church ministers and employees, increased maternity benefits and raised maximum relief payments in a series of sweeping changes during their Nov. 1-2 meeting in Dallas.

Effective Jan. 1, 1994, a permanent increase of 5 percent in benefits will be added to life annuities and fixed period benefits established for a duration of five years or longer. The increase will apply to all such annuities that were funded from defined contribution accumulations, as well as Plan A retired and deferred benefits.

"When we entered 1993," said Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell, "nobody was predicting the kind of earnings that would permit a permanent increase in retirement benefits. We had raised benefits 10 percent on Jan. 1, 1992, for most annuitants. July 1 of that year we increased them 5 percent more for virtually all retirees. Now, despite reduced earnings in 1992, the experience in 1993 has been good enough to make this wonderful decision. I am thrilled the trustees have had this exciting opportunity."

In another action, trustees approved establishment of a minimum 6 percent funding rate for life annuities or fixed period benefits of five years or longer and made it retroactive to March 1, 1993. This action will result in recalculation of benefits for some 800 persons who have retired since March 1 when the indexed funding rate dropped below 6 percent for the first time since 1976.

"This extraordinary action will be warmly welcomed by the hundreds of our newly retired who watched interest rates plummet this year," Powell said. "Because the benefit fund is managed for long-term earnings, our experience allows us to make a more favorable earnings projection than current market conditions indicate."

Terry R. Wade, senior vice president for retirement services, said he expects all recalculations to be complete and new, higher monthly benefits paid by the end of December, along with a one-time "catch-up" benefit covering the retroactive increase from the effective date of each person's benefit. The new minimum funding rate will not apply to fixed period benefits established for less than five years duration since they are analogous to short-term investments, Wade said.

Wade also explained that the 5 percent permanent increase in annuity benefits will not be paid to variable annuities or death and disability benefits paid as a result of the Protection Section of the Church Annuity Plan. Benefits in 1994 for variable annuities will be determined in a regular, scheduled calculation this month. Protection Section benefits are paid from a separate fund.

Hearing continuing reports of better claims experience in the church Comprehensive Medical Plan, the individual deductible has been lowered 20 percent, from \$500 to \$400, the family deductible from \$1,000 to \$800, individual out-of-pocket maximum from \$5,000 to \$4,000 and the family out-of-pocket maximum from \$10,000 to \$8,000. The cap on maternity benefits was removed, and maternity claims will be treated as any other covered expense after Dec. 31, 1993.

Participants who use preferred providers (Prudential PruNetwork, Health Choice and most Baptist hospitals) will see deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums reduced. Individual and family deductibles for "in-network" covered claims will be reduced to \$200 and \$400 respectively. Out-of-pocket maximums for individuals will be \$2,000 and \$4,000 per family.

The Annuity Board's insurance programs and medical plans will be known as the Personal Security Program beginning Jan. 1, 1994. This program will include all life and health plans, accident and disability plans.

The Annuity Board announced on Aug. 4 that rates in the Comprehensive Medical Plan would not increase until at least July 1, 1994, continuing rates set July 1, 1992.

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Despite falling budget allocations and receipts from the Cooperative Program, which are used for relief, trustees reallocated Cooperative Program money that had gone back to state conventions and raised maximum relief benefits 20 percent effective with new grants made during the Nov. 1-2 meeting in Dallas. Existing relief grants will be reviewed for the higher maximum when they are renewed over the next two years. The board is picking up the state convention educational and promotional costs in its regular operating budget.

Board treasurer Harold D. Richardson reported assets increased 14.7 percent in the 12-month period ending Sept. 30, 1993, bringing the total to \$4.33 billion.

Contributions to retirement plans for the first nine months of 1993 were \$163 million.

Benefits paid in 1993 reached \$104 million, the first time total benefits passed \$100 million by the third quarter of the year. There were 24,371 persons in annuity pay status on Sept. 30.

Earnings on retirement funds totaled \$165 million in nine months, with members choosing from among four investment funds with varying risk levels.

The Variable Fund of common stocks earned 8.7 percent in the first nine months, the Balanced Fund earned 11.7 percent, the Fixed Fund earned 5.7 percent and the Short-Term Fund earned 2.31 percent. All funds out-performed established benchmarks for the period.

In addition to changing relief guidelines, trustees considered 44 new applications for relief. Of these, 14 were approved for two-year monthly grants, one was approved for a three-month monthly grant, one was approved for a four-month monthly grant, two were approved for two-year expense grants, seven were approved for one-time grants and 19 were declined for being outside guidelines. Most relief recipients receive no regular annuity benefit from the board.

Also approved by the trustees' relief committee was a recommendation to send a Christmas check of \$150 to each relief recipient.

The relief committee approved 165 persons for the board's Adopt An Annuitant ministry, bringing to 1,351 the number who receive an extra \$50 each month to supplement inadequate retirement benefits.

Trustees approved a 1994 operating budget of \$26,325,311, an increase of 4.82 percent over 1993. A net reduction of seven positions was made possible by extensive re-engineering of work processes in 1992 and 1993. Treasurer Richardson noted, "Much of the modest increase is related to continuing development of a new customer service system that is scheduled for full implementation in 1995."

The next meeting of the Annuity Board's trustees is Feb. 28-March 1, 1994.

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Church medical plan turns around;  
trustees vote increased benefits By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

DALLAS (BP)--Trustees of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention have approved benefit increases in the self-insured church Comprehensive Medical Plan during their Nov. 1-2 meeting in Dallas.

A reduction in personal and family deductibles and maximum out-of-pocket copayments, and increased maternity benefits, come on the heels of an earlier announcement to hold rates at the July 1992 level. The board has promised no rate increase until at least July 1994.

Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell said, "The turnaround in the condition of the church Comprehensive Medical Plan has been an answer to prayer and an evidence of magnificent efforts among our participants, the carrier and our insurance division. As always, when the Annuity Board has good financial experience, we try to pass it on to the people who are our reason for being."

Effective Jan. 1, 1994, the annual deductibles for individuals and families will be reduced 20 percent. Individual deductibles will fall from \$500 to \$400, while the family total deductible will be reduced from \$1,000 to \$800.

The out-of-pocket maximums also will go down 20 percent. Individual maximum copayment moves from \$5,000 to \$4,000 and family from \$10,000 to \$8,000, after which the Comprehensive Plan will pay 100 percent of covered expenses.

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Also effective Jan. 1, 1994, maternity claims will be considered as any other covered expense without the benefit caps that have applied since Jan. 1, 1991.

Joel H. Mathis, senior vice president for the insurance division, noted all managed care procedures will remain in place, including pre-certification for hospitalization, pre-existing condition benefits delay and individual case management. "These important features of our plan have been vital to its new strength and stability," Mathis said.

Participants who receive medical service from available preferred providers (Prudential's PruNetwork, Health Choice and most Baptist hospitals) also will see their deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums reduced. For "in-network" covered claims, the individual deductible will be reduced to \$200 and family total deductible to \$400. Out-of-pocket maximum for individuals will be \$2,000, and \$4,000 for the family for in-network covered claims.

Mathis paid tribute to the thousands of churches and individual staff members who kept their coverage with the Annuity Board through several years of serious claims imbalance and rapidly rising rates. "The assistance of The Prudential in plan design and managed care programs was critical," Mathis said, "but faithful participation of our members was the single most important factor in our success."

Mathis also predicted a new interest in the Annuity Board's plan by young and healthy church staff members who have been the most tempted to seek lower cost coverage elsewhere. "Many of them are now seeing their rates rise, and our plan is much more competitive than it was while we were bringing the losses under control," Mathis said.

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Aid to needy retired ministers  
raised by Annuity Board trustees By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

DALLAS (BP)--The most needy of retired Southern Baptist ministers or their widows may receive substantial increases in benefits when relief grants are established or renewed over the next two years.

Although Cooperative Program allocations for relief have been declining over the past three years, the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has found a way to channel additional money into the relief ministry, and will have as much as \$1 million to pay in 1994 and even more in 1995. This will permit all relief recipients to be reviewed for possible increases over the next 24 months.

During their Nov. 1-2 meeting in Dallas, trustees approved an increase in maximum monthly grants from \$150 to \$180 for an individual and from \$200 to \$240 for a couple.

Until 1983, all Cooperative Program money received by the Annuity Board went for relief. Beginning in 1983, the Southern Baptist Convention increased its allocation to the Annuity Board to permit increased educational and promotional work in state conventions. Until 1993, the board reallocated \$400,000 of Cooperative Program receipts for that purpose. No Cooperative Program funds are used for Annuity Board operating expense which is paid by earnings on assets.

Beginning in 1993, trustees of the board approved assumption of \$140,000 of the state convention educational expense in the board's operating budget and release of this amount for relief. An additional \$140,000 has been approved for assumption into the operating budget in 1994. Plans call for a final assumption of \$120,000 in 1995 at which time all Cooperative Program receipts again will be used for relief.

An additional \$100,000 for relief is expected from income on the Retired Ministers Support Fund, an endowment fund built from other than member retirement contributions and earnings. When all sources are combined, the money available for relief may exceed \$1 million in 1994 and as much as \$1.2 million in 1995, depending on Cooperative Program budget receipts.

Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell praised the action of trustees. "Almost all our trustees will serve on the relief committee at some time while on our board. Without exception, they become committed to this ministry. When the trend of decline seemed indicated, trustees joined us in seeking a way not only to meet immediate needs, but to deal creatively with the demands of the future.

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"The additional money and new, higher maximum," Powell said, "will permit us to provide more help to more people."

Terry R. Wade, senior vice president for retirement services, said, "These grand old people deserve more than the bare necessities of life. Since we have the ability to add some comfort to the essentials, we want to do so."

Implementation of the new grant structure will be phased in since receipt of the money likewise will be phased in. Existing grants may be increased when they are renewed over the next two years. New grants established Nov. 1, 1993, and after are considered for the new maximum.

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**'Floor Funding Rate' boosts  
recent retiree benefits**

By Thomas E. Miller, Jr.

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

DALLAS (BP)--Establishment of a minimum funding rate for certain annuities paid by the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention will mean retroactive increases for about 800 annuitants who accepted life annuities or fixed period benefits of five years or more since March 1993.

Trustees of the Annuity Board, acting with counsel of staff and outside actuaries during their Nov. 1-2 meeting in Dallas, set the minimum funding rate at 6 percent, which is higher than any indexed rate since February 1993.

People who annuitized accumulations or elected a fixed period benefit of five years or longer while the funding rate was less than 6 percent will have their benefits recalculated. The new, higher benefit is expected to be paid by the end of December, and a one-time lump sum will be paid for additions retroactive to the effective date of the prior benefit. Each eligible annuitant will receive a personal letter explaining the increase when calculations are completed.

The annuity funding rate is the assumed earnings figure used when an annuity is established and partially determines the amount of annuity benefit over its term of payments. Other factors in determining the periodic benefit are the total accumulations available, age of the annuitant, age of any contingent annuitant, type of annuity option selected and such elections as a guaranteed period.

Since January 1990, the Annuity Board has set the monthly funding rate one-half of 1 percent above the index of a federal agency, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. The index is based on an average of the rates used by 10 large annuity-writing insurance companies. Because the Annuity Board is nonprofit and pays no commissions in establishing annuities, it is able consistently to use a higher assumption than the index.

Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell said, "Our actuary analyzed the current and assumed earnings of our Defined Benefit Fund and predicted we would do better in long-term earnings than the current index assumes. Outside actuaries agreed under current conditions we could safely set a minimum funding rate at 6 percent. The policy of providing a minimum funding rate will be reviewed from time to time by the Annuity Board to determine the appropriateness of this practice in light of prevailing economic and competitive conditions."

Terry R. Wade, senior vice president for retirement services and actuary for the Annuity Board, noted people who elected a fixed period benefit of less than five years will not be included for recalculation by the new minimum funding rate. "Fixed period benefits of less than five years are analogous to a short-term investment," Wade said, "and these benefits will continue to be calculated with the PBGC index method."

The funding rate for November previously had been set at 4.75 percent. These benefits will now be recalculated at a 6 percent funding rate if they are life benefits or fixed period benefits of five years or more.

Wade said any month the PBGC index method pegs the funding rate above 6 percent, the indexed rate would apply for new benefits established.

"Many of our members have planned their retirements for years based on higher assumed funding rates than are currently available," Wade said. "This change will help our members carry out their plans with more comfort and security."

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As an example of effects of the floor funding rate, Wade said a member age 65 with a spouse age 63 who retires in November and elects a joint life, 100 percent survivor benefit will receive a monthly benefit approximately 13 percent higher under the 6 percent funding rate than the PBGC indexed rate of 4.75 percent.

"An added blessing," Wade said, "is that we will recalculate the benefits before Dec. 31, so eligible annuitants also will receive a permanent 5 percent increase approved for Jan. 1 on top of the higher benefit resulting from the retroactive increase in funding rates." Trustees approved a permanent 5 percent increase in benefits for life annuities and fixed period benefits of five years or longer.

"When we entered 1993," Powell said, "nobody was predicting the kind of earnings that would permit a permanent increase in retirement benefits. We had raised benefits 10 percent on Jan. 1, 1992, for most annuitants. July 1 of that year we increased them 5 percent more for virtually all retirees. Now, despite reduced earnings in 1992, the experience in 1993 has been good enough to make this wonderful decision. I am thrilled the trustees have had this exciting opportunity."

PBGC funding rates have followed market interest rates down throughout 1993. "Indexing the funding rate helps assure the funding rate is competitive and also responsive to market changes," Wade said. "The indexed rate is competitive, but the Annuity Board's long-term investment yield justifies a more optimistic forecast. Thus, we are able to considerably lessen the impact of falling interest rates on our new annuitants."

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Draper emphasizes urgency  
of local church discipleship

By Millie Gill

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Southern Baptists are "beginning to pay a dear price" for evangelism that lacks adequate follow-up, the president of the Baptist Sunday School Board said during the Arkansas Conference on Discipleship.

James T. Draper Jr. said Southern Baptists "have been known for our evangelism" but now "one of the most important things for us as Southern Baptists is to mature those we are winning to Christ."

The Oct. 25-26 conference at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock was sponsored by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's discipleship and family ministry department.

Southern Baptist churches, Draper said, must have a caring, ministering discipleship because of the crisis in leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention and in church influence and church membership.

Draper cited an institute's recent survey at a pastors' conference that revealed 50 percent in attendance felt they were inadequate for ministry, 37 percent admitted they had acted improperly sexually with a member of their church, 50 percent said they received only four to five hours of sleep a night, 70 percent said their self-image was lower than when they began their ministry and 50 percent said they had no close friends to whom they could relate.

Another survey among non-church members, Draper noted, found only 28 percent believe the church has anything to say to them. "These statistics are frightening and the truth is the church has withdrawn into its sanctuaries, buildings and programs. We as Southern Baptists have stopped being on the cutting edge of touching people at the point of their needs and thus we have lost our influence."

Illustrating the crisis in church membership, Draper said one in four children in America today lives in a single-parent home and one in two will live in a single-parent home by the time they graduate from high school. He added half of all marriages end in divorce, almost 10 percent of the population lives alone, sexual abuse is rampant, incest affects one in five Americans and there are 20 million alcoholics in the nation.

"The depth of the problem is seen in the fact that more than 15 million people weekly participate in over 500,000 self-help groups," Draper said, noting that number is expected to double in the next three years and reach 60 million people within a decade.

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"We have abandoned this epidemic to secular groups when there are answers to be found in the Word of God," Draper said. "The church is called by God to address these needs, and discipleship is the maturing of an individual into a real and vital relationship with Jesus Christ.

"We have never had better materials or sharper tools than we have now, but there is going to have to come a commitment on the part of our churches to ministering in the name of Jesus to the pains, hurts and needs of individuals, leading them in their relationship with God until we all together become what God would have us to be," Draper declared.

Also addressing the conference, Johnny Jones, a specialist in the BSSB's discipleship and family development division, highlighted the materials now available through the Sunday School Board. Southern Baptist churches must take advantage of such resources to become prepared to help people where they are hurting, he said.

"I praise God that Southern Baptists for the first time are entering a new ministry that can help people where their needs really are," Jones said. "Through a small LIFE support group (using BSSB resources) or 12-step group, people with hurts and needs can find trust and affirmation. It is a place where they are meeting for a specific purpose with a trained facilitator who leads the group in sharing their sins and praying together.

"Individuals will see that others are hurting and see themselves in others."

Small support groups are a tremendous outreach tool for local churches, Jones emphasized. "We are finding that 70 percent of those people who come to support groups don't belong to the church. It is a ministry to help people where they have needs and to let the church really be the church . . . . Through these groups people learn they can come to the church, take off their mask and really be themselves."

He encouraged more churches to become involved in such programs, challenging churches to quit ministering to those people who have it all together and become concerned for those people who are on the pews Sunday after Sunday hurting emotionally, dealing with co-dependency or addictions or who come out of abusive backgrounds. "These people have brought all of that baggage into an adult life, they are hurting and they need help for those hurts," Jones challenged.

"Is it a risk to do support groups?" he asked. "Yes, it is, but I believe it is a God-called ministry that we all need to get involved in."

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Alabama Baptist historian  
killed in auto accident

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--John Loftis, 42, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, died Oct. 30 in an automobile accident in Birmingham, Ala. His daughter, Jessica Powell Loftis, 14, also was killed in the accident.

"It's a tough, tough loss for our convention," said Troy Morrison, executive secretary-treasurer of the state convention. "I don't know of a person who had more integrity, openness and honesty than John Loftis. We are going to miss him in the convention, and our prayers will be with Deborah and the family through this tragic loss."

Birmingham police officials said the Loftis auto and a tractor-trailer rig collided in south Birmingham as he was taking his daughter to a nearby appointment.

The crash sparked a fire in the car that burned both father and daughter. The truck driver received minor injuries. Investigation of the accident is continuing.

A native of Virginia, Loftis was a graduate of Furman University and held degrees in church history, religious education and divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Loftis assumed his post at the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission in 1988 as its first full-time director. In previous years, the ABHC's duties had fallen to commission members who had served on a volunteer basis.

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During Loftis's tenure, the ABHC instituted a project indexing The Alabama Baptist, started a microfilming service to microfilm records of churches and associations, promoted a pamphlet series on Baptist heritage, presented its annual Historian of the Year awards and expanded its oral history program now available to researchers using the Alabama Baptist Collection in the Samford University Library.

Buddy Nelson, pastor of Riverchase Baptist Church where Loftis was a member, called Loftis "one of the most compassionate people I have ever known, ministering to families and needs in our congregation, setting an example as deacon and leader in the church. If it were not for a conversation I had with him in the summer of 1989 in which he articulated the vision of this church, I would not be pastor," Nelson said.

Loftis is survived by his wife Deborah and his father, Frank, of Rock Hill, S.C.

A memorial service for John and Jessica Loftis was held Tuesday, Nov. 2, at Reid Chapel on the campus of Samford University. A memorial fund has been established at Riverchase Baptist Church; gifts may be designated to the scholarship fund, Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va.; Riverchase organ fund; or Shades Valley Resource Learning Center.

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Baptists warned about  
phony prisoner letters

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

ATLANTA (BP)--Letters from prisoners asking for money orders are circulating again and in most cases should be ignored, warned Bill Donovan, director of institutional chaplaincy for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Donovan's advice is don't respond to unsolicited mail, especially if the letter writer does not immediately identify himself and his location. Prison chaplains can tell concerned people if the letter writer's needs are legitimate, he said.

Home and foreign missionaries were the target of a similar letter-writing campaign last year, Donovan said.

Delores York, Mission Service Corps volunteer in the Texas Rio Grande Valley, received a letter in October from an inmate at the Mississippi state penitentiary in Parchman, Miss.

York said she felt like the prisoner was begging for a friend. He asked for a Bible and information on how to become a Christian. He said the prison did not have a chaplain.

York sent him a Bible and a Christian magazine. He wrote back to thank her and asked her to explain the Scriptures she suggested he read. He also gave her a list of supplies ranging from a toothbrush to a radio that he said he did not have but could buy in prison. He included instructions on how to fill out a postal money order form so she could send him money.

York said she had no plans to send cash, but she was on her way to send toiletry items when she met another Mission Service Corps volunteer who received an identical letter.

Puzzled, York called the prison and learned the institution has several chaplains and plenty of Bibles for inmates who want one. A chaplain told her volunteers from local churches come to the prison frequently to talk to inmates about their spiritual needs, and the prison meets their physical needs, including toothpaste and soap.

The Mississippi chaplain suggested she mark "return to sender" on future correspondence.

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Women's devotional guide  
slated for 1994 by BSSB

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Baptist Sunday School Board is producing its first women's monthly devotional magazine with release due in April 1994.

"Journey: A Woman's Guide to Intimacy with God" is being designed to meet the distinctive needs of women in the '90s, according to editor Selma Wilson.

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"Journey deals with contemporary needs and issues faced by women and directs them to God's Word to find answers, hope and encouragement," Wilson said. "Journey is a relevant, timely magazine that is warm, personal and intimate in its design and approach."

A four-color, digest-sized periodical made to fit in a Bible, Journey encourages women who don't already study the Bible regularly to do so, she said.

"It's so easy to use," Wilson said. "A Scripture verse is provided for each day with a brief devotional vignette targeted specifically to a woman's needs."

The reading relates to topical themes appropriate for months and seasons of the year. Each devotional allows the reader to respond by writing her own needs, prayer or goals, Wilson said.

Wilson is encouraging women who have ideas or suggestions for Journey to write her c/o Journey, MSN 140, Sunday School Board, 127 Ninth Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37234. The magazine is being produced through the board's discipleship and family magazine department.

Journey can be ordered under the heading "Family and Devotional Periodicals" on the Dated Resources Order Form or by calling 1-800-458-2772 .

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**Budget shortfall spurs CP drop  
by Kansas-Nebraska Baptists**

**Baptist Press  
11/2/93**

LIBERAL, Kan. (BP)--Kansas-Nebraska Southern Baptists were challenged to "Serve in Christ's Spirit" during their 48th annual meeting Oct. 25-27 at First Southern Baptist Church in Liberal, Kan.

A total of 312 messengers and more than 150 visitors heard challenges from Bible study leader Henry Blackaby, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's director of prayer and spiritual awakening.

Carl Garrett, who had been KNCSB vice president for two years, was chosen as the new president by acclamation. Garrett is pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Overland Park, Kan.

Also elected by acclamation were the vice president, Neal Alford, pastor of First Baptist Church in Douglass, Kan.; and historian, James Shope, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Columbus, Kan. Bryan Jones, pastor of Wanamaker Road Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., was chosen as recording secretary.

Messengers approved the 1994 KNCSB budget of \$3,738,744, for a 1.9 percent increase over 1993. A total of \$1,947,492 is anticipated to come from Cooperative Program receipts from Kansas-Nebraska churches.

Due to a projected budget shortfall, messengers voted to reduce giving to the national Cooperative Program from 32.5 percent to 30 percent. The convention's finances will be reviewed quarterly in 1994 to see if Cooperative Program giving can be increased, with the goal of getting back to 32.5 percent, said R. Rex "Peck" Lindsay, KNCSB executive director.

Messengers heard presentations about KNCSB's two new missions partnerships, with Nevada and Jordan.

A home missions partnership is being formed with the Nevada Baptist Convention. Nevada Baptists gave nearly \$2,700 to flood relief in Kansas-Nebraska this year. Representing the Nevada convention at the KNCSB meeting were David Meacham, executive director, and Tom Bacon, missions director.

KNCSB's new foreign missions partnership is with Southern Baptist representatives and Baptist churches in Jordan.

In addition, messengers were informed that 18 new missions, Bible fellowships and churches were formed in Kansas-Nebraska this year. The first mission efforts were begun among Russians and Japanese.

Resolutions adopted expressed prayer and concern for areas of the world experiencing civil unrest; expressed opposition to proposed gambling casinos in Kansas; and affirmed Southern Baptists' "True Love Waits" teen abstinence campaign.

The 1994 KNCSB annual meeting will be Oct. 24-26 at Southview Baptist Church in Lincoln, Neb. This will mark the beginning of the KNCSB 50th anniversary celebration, which will culminate during the 1995 annual meeting.

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**Russ Dilday named associate editor  
of Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Russ Dilday has been unanimously elected by the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine board of directors as the journal's associate editor.

Dilday, who currently is news and information coordinator for the Missouri Baptist Convention public relations department, will begin his new responsibilities Jan. 1, 1994.

Dilday, 29, a native of Arkansas, holds a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and a master of arts in religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. While in seminary, he was assistant to the director of public relations. Following graduation in 1991, he accepted the Missouri Baptist Convention position.

As associate editor, Dilday will assist in the publication's ongoing production, including responsibilities in news and feature writing, editing, photography, design and long-range planning.

"God's hand was obvious throughout the search process," noted board president Greg Kirksey, pastor of First Baptist Church in Benton, Ark. "There was absolutely never a doubt that Russ was the man for the job. He is just another choice servant that God has brought to Arkansas."

"I am excited about the personal and professional strengths Russ will bring to our staff," agreed Newsmagazine editor Trennis Henderson. "His strong Southern Baptist heritage and training, combined with his commitment to the ministry of Christian journalism, will help strengthen the Newsmagazine and benefit all Arkansas Baptists."

Dilday said he is "looking forward to returning to my home state and renewing some old relationships and beginning many new ones."

Dilday and wife, Suzanne, a high school English and journalism teacher, currently are active members of Southridge Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Mo.

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**Concise articles, bright colors  
in family magazine's new look**

By Jackie Bridges

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

SHELBY, N.C. (BP)--The pages of "Home Life," a family magazine published by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, hold practical stories about marriage, parenting and relationships.

But more often than not, the magazines are left on the front pew at church or in a Sunday school room, unopened -- the useful information unseen.

That is, until now.

The October issue -- with a strong photograph and bold orange type -- begs to be picked up and thumbed through. Better graphics, brighter colors and stronger photos catch the eye. Before the reader realizes it, he's stopped to read a story, and another, and another.

The stronger art and concise stories are the result of a major redesign effort that started three years ago.

"Our circulation has been on a decline for a number of years," said design editor Charlie Warren, speaking by phone from his Nashville office. "It was a signal that we needed to make some improvements."

The staff conducted research to find out what readers want in a Christian family magazine. Some things were surprising -- like recipes and craft ideas -- things that have never been included in "Home Life." The magazine's budget was increased to improve quality.

"We looked at other magazines -- secular and Christian," Warren said. "As part of the research we showed readers certain magazine layouts and designs. They pointed out what they liked."

Another part of the research was to find out the magazine's best markets. "North and South Carolina are two of our strongest states," Warren said. "The magazine is heavily distributed in these areas."

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Included in the first "improved" issue is a reader survey.

"We've received about 800 surveys," Warren said. "Ninety to 95 percent have been very positive."

Home Life readers, at least in Shelby, N.C., who receive the magazine through their churches, echo their approval.

"The new one is more up-to-date," said Patsy Cabiness, a Sunday school teacher at Double Springs Baptist Church. "There's a story about the flood in Illinois and there's a story about sex in marriage."

Cabiness, who teaches a class of young married couples and is a regular reader of Home Life, points out articles of interest to her class. She said the new design makes the magazine more appealing and easier for busy families to use.

"The devotional calendar is good for today, because people are so busy," Cabiness said. "It has things for children and families to do."

One of her class members is Debbie Bridges, mother of a 10- and 8-year-old.

"I like the article about the flood victims," Bridges said. "It lets people know what really happened. The picture of the family living in the camper reminded me of when we lived in a small camper for about three months while our house was being built. I wouldn't want to do that again."

Bridges said she and her husband are going to try to use the devotional guide with their children.

June Ballard, who team teaches a class for married couples with her husband, Gene, at Eastside Baptist, frequently uses stories from Home Life to illustrate a Sunday school lesson.

"I think it's greatly improved and I didn't think the other one needed improving," Ballard said.

Karen Gosnell, a member of Ballard's class, also didn't think Home Life needed a change.

"I didn't realize how much better it could be," she said. "The new one is more straightforward. The new one has 25 inexpensive ways to say, 'I love you.' There was always something for children, but this issue has something for different ages."

Gosnell, the mother of a kindergartener and first-grader, also is planning to use the new devotion calendar with her children.

"It's something that the family can sit and discuss ... problems that kids might have at school or problems at work," Gosnell said. "With this they have something they can comment on."

She said the changes are good because more people will want to read the magazine. "If you don't accept change, you are going to fall by the wayside," Gosnell said.

More changes are on the way, Warren said. He and the Home Life staff will continue to make improvements based on comments from readers.

"Nothing is set in stone," Warren said. "We are real sensitive to what readers tell us."

Other family magazines published by the Sunday School Board also are changing. The "Christian Single" magazine will soon have an improved look and the quarterly "Living With" series will become two new magazines: "Parent Life" for parents of preschoolers and children and "Living With Teenagers." The parenting magazines are scheduled to come out in July 1994, Warren said.

More information about Home Life can be obtained from the Sunday School Board at 1-800-458-2772.

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Reprint d by permission from Jackie Bridges, lifestyles editor at the Shelby Star in Shelby, N.C.

Billy Graham Association  
taps Broadman & Holman book

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Worldwide Publishing, a division of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, has sel cted the book "Satan's Whispers: Breaking the Lies That Bind" by Robert Don Hughes to be offered as a premium through the Billy Graham Newsletter which is sent to about 1.5 million people.

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In making the selection, Worldwide Publishing has contracted with Broadman & Holman Publishers for rights to produce and distribute the book.

"Initial reception to the premium has been very positive," according to Steve Searles, key accounts representative for B&H of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

In his 1992 release, Hughes, professor of communication and mass media at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., described the voice of Satan as a "counter-conscience -- cynical, mocking, irreverent -- which is all-too-often persuasive."

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'Experiencing God' series  
to air on ACTS, FamilyNet

By Shawn Switzer

Baptist Press  
11/2/93

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Author and teacher Henry Blackaby is the featured guest for six weeks on ACTS and FamilyNet's Family Enrichment Series program beginning Nov. 5. All programs will be aired Fridays at 10 p.m. Eastern Time.

Blackaby, director of the Office of Prayer and Spiritual Awakening at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, is teaching his study series "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God." The 13-week study has been condensed to a six-week course for airing on ACTS and FamilyNet.

Blackaby will discuss "God's Will & Your Life" and "Looking to God," Nov. 5; "God Pursues a Loving Relationship" and "Knowing the Will of God," Nov. 12; "God Speaks," Nov. 19; "Crisis of Belief," "Adjusting Your Life to God" and "Experiencing God through Obedience," Nov. 26; and "God's Will and the Church" and Kingdom People," Dec. 3.

The "Experiencing God" series concludes Dec. 10 with a live televised question-and-answer segment. Blackaby will face a studio audience and home viewers can call a toll-free number to ask questions about the study series.

Blackaby co-authored the series with Claude V. King, formerly of the Baptist Sunday School Board. Together they have created a popular study series that has challenged thousands of Christians in discovering not only the importance of doing God's will but the importance of his timing.

The television series combines a daily Bible study with an interactive workbook. A condensed 18-page home study guide of the "Experiencing God" series can be purchased from the RTVC for \$5. To order call 1-800-641-1221 or write to the Radio and Television Commission, SBC, 6350 West Freeway, Fort Worth, Texas 76150.

The Family Enrichment Series is produced by the RTVC. Each month a new series offers information on a variety of topics. Blackaby joins a lineup of well-known personalities such as James Dobson, Chuck Colson and Kay Author.

ACTS is a faith and family cable television service of the RTVC, reaching 19 million homes through VISON\ACTS, the Faith and Values Channel.

FamilyNet is a broadcast television program service owned and operated by the RTVC and is carried by 120 stations reaching more than 40 million homes.

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