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SBC Cooperative Program gifts
down for month; below budget

Baptist Press
12/1/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for the second month of the 1993-94 fiscal year were 6.32 percent below receipts for the same month last year, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

The CP gifts for November 1993 totaled \$10,992,852 compared to \$11,734,974 for the same month last year. The monthly requirement for the SBC Program Allocation Budget is \$11,519,561.

For the two months of the fiscal year the CP gifts totaled \$21,872,550 compared to last year of \$22,565,020 or a 3.07 percent decrease. The two months budget requirement is \$23,039,122 which leaves a deficit of \$1,166,571 or 94.94 percent of the budget need for the year-to-date.

Designated gifts also were down for the month: \$1,874,230 compared to \$2,384,109 last year, or a 26 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.

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Missionary in Philippines
stabbed during prison riot

By Donald D. Martin

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AMAS, Philippines (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary Thurmon Braughton was stabbed Nov. 23 during a prison uprising in Amas, Philippines.

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As Braughton, from Hot Springs, Ark., and a Christian team from Malaysia held a Bible study in a small prison, several prisoners attempting to escape attacked the visiting Christians.

One of the prisoners, armed with a handgun, grabbed a woman from the Christian team and attempted to take her hostage.

Braughton moved toward the gunman and offered to exchange places with the woman. When the gunman refused, Braughton grabbed his arm and freed the woman. But as he struggled with the inmate, someone stabbed the missionary.

The flesh wound, just under his ribs, did not damage any vital organs, mission officials said. Braughton, 60, was treated overnight at a local medical facility and released the next day.

Press reports said three of the escaped inmates were killed by government troops. Officials also captured one escaped prisoner, but several others remain free.

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Missionary surgeon regains
India medical license

By Donald D. Martin

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BANGALORE, India (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary doctor Rebekah Naylor officially regained her Indian medical license Nov. 25 following a surprise overruling of the Indian national medical council, which denied her a license last October.

"I was of course rather stunned," Naylor said of the reversal decision, made by India's top health official, Secretary of Health R.L. Mishra.

Naylor, a surgeon from Fort Worth, Texas, and the only Southern Baptist missionary living in India, first learned of the decision in a Nov. 12 meeting with Mishra in Delhi. But she couldn't practice medicine or comment publicly until she received official notification, which arrived -- appropriately -- on Thanksgiving Day.

Mishra also overruled the medical council's decision not to grant Naylor a license in 1991. The council's 1991 decision, as well as the October ruling, made it illegal for Naylor to practice medicine at Bangalore Baptist Hospital, where she has worked since 1973.

The 143-bed hospital treats more than 74,000 patients a year. About half of them are too poor to pay their medical bills.

The 1991 overruling came only after a U.S. senator, India's ambassador in Washington, and Southern Baptist pastors in Kentucky interceded on her behalf.

When Naylor learned of her most recent license denial, she and other hospital representatives arranged the Nov. 12 meeting with Mishra. They hoped to lay the groundwork for what they assumed would be a lengthy appeal process. But before the anxious Bangalore group had even settled into their seats, Mishra announced he had personally repealed the council's decision.

Mishra referred to the Washington involvement in the 1991 case, "but he never said he knew of (any such appeals) this time," Naylor said. "So I'm convinced that he himself decided to do this, and I think that's rather remarkable. I think it's evidence of all the prayer that has gone into this."

The good news falls short of total victory, however, because the new license is good for only one year.

"It's a big problem. Last time they gave two years and this time they've only given one year. And the medical council has told us that they were very negative about future (renewals)," the missionary doctor said.

A renewal next year appears even more doubtful since Mishra will retire from his position as health secretary in early 1994. Naylor already has begun inquiring if there is a way to extend the new license to two years.

"I'm still very relieved and I'm very grateful, but at the same time it's not freedom from this burden," she admitted. "I'm kind of on borrowed time."

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**Visa barriers restrict
missionaries throughout Asia** **By Donald D. Martin**

BANGALORE, India (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary Rebekah Naylor's time-consuming effort to obtain governmental approval for her medical work is a common struggle in the world of missions.

In India alone, tight restrictions on licenses, work permits and visas have slashed the Southern Baptist missionary force from 18 in the 1980s to one -- Naylor, a surgeon at Bangalore Baptist Hospital.

Some missionaries work in India as itinerants, moving in and out of the country on a short-term basis, but Naylor is the only resident Southern Baptist missionary in the Asian nation of 897 million people.

In other parts of Asia, visa restrictions have forced missionaries to radically alter ministries that took years to establish.

With the sweep of a bureaucrat's pen, whole missions have plunged into crises as gripping as any evacuation prompted by war, explained Clyde Meador, who oversees Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board work in Southern Asia and the Pacific.

Reasons for the rise in visa restrictions are difficult to pin down, but mission administrators believe the trend can be traced to a growing sense of nationalism.

"That's probably the No. 1 thing," Meador said. "Sometimes there's an element of ... anti-Christian sentiment, but it seems to be more nationalism."

In Indonesia, missionaries now can live in the country for only three years. Less than a year ago, the time limit stood at 10 years. In the early 1970s visa restrictions hardly existed; most missionaries there could commit whole careers to the populous nation.

Today, five Southern Baptist missionary physicians in Indonesia expect to lose their visas within the next year. Three other missionary families may have to leave by next summer.

In New Caledonia, the Pacific islands east of Australia, a missionary couple has been trying for months without success to acquire a resident visa, Meador reported. And in Bangladesh, a nation of 114 million people, the potential Southern Baptist missionary force will soon drop from nine to six -- the government's new maximum for the mission's "visa slots."

Such visa emergencies have become almost commonplace, yet they remain a critical struggle of missionaries seeking to follow God's call overseas.

"That's why prayer concerning a visa is not just about a stamp in a passport, but about a ministry and the long-term commitment to a people and their salvation," Meador said.

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**FACE stalls; fight possible
on worship amendment**

By Tom Strode

**Baptist Press
12/1/93**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act will not become law until at least next year.

The Senate and House of Representatives passed different versions of the bill the week before Congress adjourned for the year, but sponsors of the FACE Act ran out of time in their attempt to achieve reconciliation.

Members of a Senate-House conference committee never were named before Congress adjourned Nov. 25. When the Senate and House approve different versions of a bill, a conference committee normally is convened to work out differences.

The conferees will be named in late January, a House staff member said, with the intent of sending the conference version through both houses soon thereafter.

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FACE makes a federal offense of the blockading of abortion clinics, as well as vandalism of abortion clinics and violence against clinic personnel. Pro-lifers, including many of those who oppose violence and who do not endorse the blockading of clinics, have attacked FACE as a violation of free-speech rights, while pro-choice advocates have supported it as necessary to protect abortion clinic workers and to ensure women have the right to obtain an abortion.

The House passed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act Nov. 18 by a voice vote. Two days earlier, the Senate approved the measure by a 69-30 margin. President Bill Clinton has indicated his support for the bill.

A sharp disagreement could arise in the conference committee over a religious liberty amendment offered by Sen. Orrin Hatch, R.-Utah, and adopted by the Senate. The language in the Senate version provides the same protections from violence and obstruction for those seeking to attend worship services as are guaranteed in the bill for those seeking to enter or working at abortion clinics.

Some pro-life observers have predicted House supporters, buoyed by homosexual and abortion rights activists, will seek to eliminate the Hatch amendment from the conference report. Such may not be the case, others say.

Rep. Charles Schumer, D.-N.Y., and the House's chief sponsor of FACE, has taken no position "one way or the other" on the Hatch language, said Steve Goldstein, staff counsel of a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee.

Schumer is "very, very respectful of the free exercise of religion and would certainly consider seriously, very seriously, any provision that would protect the free exercise of religion," Goldstein said. "It's something we're going to have to look at over this recess."

Gregory King of the Human Rights Campaign Fund said he knows of no homosexual group which is working against the religious liberty language. The Human Rights Campaign Fund is the country's largest homosexual political organization.

"The right of people to have access to their places of worship ... is one that we respect," King said. "It works the other way too. There have been instances of services for gay people that have been disrupted by anti-gay activists."

Increasingly in recent years, services at some churches which have opposed homosexual rights have been disturbed by homosexual activists.

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission opposed FACE but supports the Hatch amendment. The Baptist Joint Committee has not taken a position on the amendment yet.

"It would be ironic, to say the least, if Sen. Kennedy and Congressman Schumer, as the chief sponsors of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, end up standing in the way of the Hatch amendment," said James A. Smith, the Christian Life Commission's director of government relations.

Sens. Edward Kennedy, D.-Mass., and Hatch were the chief Senate sponsors of RFRA, while Schumer and Rep. Chris Cox, R.-Calif., were the prime House sponsors. RFRA, which recently was signed into law by Clinton, restores a high standard of protection for the free exercise of religion. It seems assured Kennedy and Schumer will be on the conference committee.

"What's good for the goose is good for the gander," Smith said. "There has been a clear pattern of violence against evangelical churches by radical homosexual organizations."

"If the federal government must step in and protect abortion clinics against protests, it seems fair that churches deserve no less protection. After all, the free exercise of religion is explicitly protected by the Constitution, while abortion is not."

Brent Walker, Baptist Joint Committee general counsel, said he had not studied the Hatch language.

"We're definitely going to look at it," Walker said. "I don't know what we're going to do at this point."

Another amendment included only in the Senate version reduces the maximum sentence for first-time offenders not using force or threat of force from one year to six months and for repeat offenders from three years to 18 months. It also reduces the maximum fine for first-time offenders not using force or threat of force from \$100,000 to \$10,000 and for repeat offenders from \$250,000 to \$25,000.

A concern of some opponents of FACE is it will result in the suppression of legal activities such as sidewalk counseling and picketing. Sponsors of the legislation deny it will apply to such activities.

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Faith, Christian principles sustained
Luby's CEO after 1991 Killeen massacre

Baptist Press
12/1/93

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (BP)--Baptist layman Pete Erben, chief executive officer of the Luby's Cafeteria chain, shrugs off praise for his compassionate, hands-on response to the Killeen, Texas, massacre two years ago.

Doing the right thing -- the Christian thing -- shouldn't be anything out of the ordinary, he insists.

The events of Oct. 16, 1991, and the days that followed were anything but ordinary.

When George Kennard rammed his truck into the front of the Luby's in Killeen and began firing into the lunchtime crowd, he shattered more than a plate glass window.

He shattered the world of 45 families whose loved ones were killed or wounded, of a close-knit Central Texas town that was thrust into the national spotlight, and of a 168-cafeteria chain that saw one of its locations become the centerpiece of a tragedy.

But when Erben learned about the carnage Kennard inflicted before turning his gun on himself, the corporate executive determined he would do everything in his power to help the hurting put the pieces of their world back together.

Soon after the shooting, Erben received phone calls from his pastor, Buckner Fanning, at San Antonio's Trinity Baptist Church, and from Southern Baptist chaplain Gil Stricklin, president of the Dallas-based Marketplace Ministries, Inc. Both offered their support and their services as needed.

Erben asked for their prayers and thanked them for their concern, but told them dealing with the situation was his personal responsibility.

"I assumed it was something I needed to do myself as leader of a company that had been victimized," he said.

Soon after arriving in Killeen, Erben contacted a psychiatrist at Scott and White Hospital in nearby Temple, Texas, asking him to join in a meeting he had scheduled with cafeteria employees.

"We all prayed together and searched our souls together," Erben said.

Why the seemingly senseless, random tragedy occurred was a question that defied easy answers then and now, he said.

"Why? We're not going to learn that for awhile," he said. "But I do know Christian faith was something we relied on a great deal through those days."

From its founding, Luby's had been committed to Christian principles, particularly in regard to fair treatment of its customers and its employees, Erben said.

That commitment took on new meaning in the days following the Killeen shooting. Luby's donated \$100,000 to a fund to assist families of the 22 people who had been killed and the 23 who were wounded. Bills for their food and lodging were paid by the company.

At the request of community leaders in Killeen, Luby's reopened the cafeteria after extensive remodeling. During the five months the building was being renovated, cafeteria employees continued to receive full pay.

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Erben learned Christian principles early in life. Although his parents were not members of a church -- at least in part because they were embarrassed by their poverty -- he said they were believers who instilled in him a devotion to Christian ideals of fairness, compassion and respect for others by which he still lives.

Erben made his public profession of faith in Christ at Trinity Baptist Church in the early 1950s during a weekend visit to his hometown. At the time, he was a student at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, where he was captain of the Bears football team.

He graduated from Baylor in 1954, and at one point he was offered an assistant coach's position. Currently, he serves on Baylor's sesquicentennial committee and is on the advisory council of the university's Hankamer School of Business.

"I told them when I was invited to serve on the advisory council that it was an honor to be asked, but I'm not much of a business consultant. I was a P.E. major," he said.

Erben has served on the personnel committee at Trinity Baptist Church, but he is reluctant to speak of his contributions to the life of the church. He is not at all reluctant to speak of the church's contributions to his life.

He points with pride to the fact his three children who grew up at Trinity Baptist Church are all "mature, good Christians." His daughter and son-in-law are members of Trinity, one son is a deacon at Second Baptist Church in Houston, and another son is an active member of a Methodist church in Little Rock, Ark.

Trinity Church was "a tremendous strength" to Erben not only during the Killeen crisis, but also during a more recent, personal heartbreak -- the death of his wife after a lengthy bout with cancer.

"The church ministered to us -- personal visits, prayer groups, anything we could have asked for," he said.

Through his wife's long ordeal, Erben was touched by seeing something special in her. Though he will not say it himself, it is the same quality others have seen in him at times such as the Killeen tragedy -- a grace under pressure growing out of a strong, quiet faith.

"In such a world as we are in today," Erben says, "I don't know how anybody survives without a Christian faith."

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WMU seeks vacation
housing for missionaries

By Susan Doyle

Baptist Press
12/1/93

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--It is not uncommon for historic inns and guesthouses to brag "George Washington (or some other famous leader) slept here."

Peter and Sandra Mollica's historic house's claim to fame does not include George Washington but more than 300 Southern Baptist missionaries and their children who have spent the night sometime during the last nine years.

The Mollica's house, located in southern Vermont overlooking the Connecticut River, doesn't have a revolving door, bell captain or registration desk. It does have room to accommodate a few guests and boasts a host and hostess who are willing to roll out the red carpet for Southern Baptist missionaries.

Several years ago, Sandra read an article in Royal Service which asked people with vacation homes to consider sharing them with furloughing foreign missionaries. Royal Service is one of the adult missions magazine published by Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union. The article asked interested homeowners to respond by letter.

Sandra wrote and offered a wing of their house which was built as a guest wing, complete with kitchen, living room, bath, bedrooms, bathrooms, etc. At first her offer was mistaken as an offer to allow furloughing missionaries to stay their entire furlough.

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"I was told, 'I'm sorry to turn you away but we don't have many missionaries from New England, and therefore we don't have many missionaries who would be interested,'" Sandra said. "I wrote back and told them we were interested in offering vacation housing, not furlough housing."

Vacation housing was a different story.

Today, the Mollicas quickly rattle off name after name of Southern Baptist missionaries who have used their guest quarters, where those missionaries serve and something memorable about them and their work.

In fact, the Mollicas have enjoyed hosting the missionaries so much they have converted a barn on their property into a guesthouse to provide more space.

"The friendships we have formed, the knowledge we've gained and the things we have learned have been priceless," Sandra said. "In general, we've learned a great deal about life in other countries and the situations in which our missionaries live and operate."

"The missionaries are very bright, astute and interesting people," Peter added. "I find them fun to talk with, and enjoy their good sense of humor. They're really a lot of fun to have around."

The local Southern Baptist church, Precision Valley in North Springfield, also has benefitted from the constant stream of missionaries.

"We've probably had close to a hundred missionaries and their children just this summer," Sandra said. The missionaries are frequently invited by the church to speak in missions organization meetings, prayer meetings, worship services or Bible school.

The end result is missions has become close, real and an everyday, important part of the church's life, she said.

The small church of about 100 members has probably seen more missionaries than most large, prominent Southern Baptist churches, Peter said.

"Our Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is always met," Sandra said. "It is an extremely high goal given the number of church members and the economic situation in our community. It is a goal that is not matched by other churches in the area."

Missionaries have different needs when they arrive at the guesthouse, the Mollicas said. Some arrive straight from the field and need rest. Bob and Barbara Crider, Southern Baptist missionaries working in Madrid, Spain, found that to be the case this past summer. "We had just packed our apartment and placed everything in storage right before we boarded the plane to come home," Barbara Crider said. "We were totally exhausted when we got there. What we needed was rest and that's what they let us do."

Typical of a growing number of missionaries, the Criders asked their adult children to meet them and join them for a few days of vacation as they began their furlough.

"It had been a long, long time since we had taken a vacation together as a family," she said.

"It was absolutely wonderful because we all got to be together in relaxed circumstances," Bob said. "I can't tell you how wonderful it was."

If the Mollica's guesthouse had not been available to the Criders, a one-week family vacation such as they had would have been out of the question, they agreed.

"When we go anywhere, we usually go on a shoestring budget," Bob said. "Because we can't afford hotels, we usually camp."

Missionaries face some hefty initial expenses when they arrive home on furlough, Barbara said, listing car and car insurance as two that hit at once. "You don't have a whole lot of money to play with."

Gene and Jan Huckaby, missionaries working in a school in Temuco, Chile, also spent time with the Mollicas this summer.

"It was a great experience," Jan said. "The Mollicas are lovely people and their guesthouse is just wonderful. Staying there gave us an opportunity to be with family members who were able to travel with us."

Like the Criders, the Huckabys also said the provision of a place to stay made the vacation possible.

"A lot of missionaries wouldn't be able to take much of a vacation without some help like this," Jan said.

This is the reason Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union is looking for Southern Baptists who have vacation or second homes which they would share on a short-term basis with furloughing foreign missionaries and vacationing home missionaries.

Since 1990, WMU has coordinated and distributed a master list of furlough houses available to Southern Baptist missionaries. WMU leaders want to add vacation homes to the list.

"We are interested in vacation homes across the country," said June Whitlow, WMU associate executive director responsible for the function of missionary housing. "Missionaries furlough, vacation and live in every area of the United States, therefore, we are interested in all areas - near the ocean, the mountains, near tourist attractions, on lakes, in the country and even in the city."

Vacation house sponsors are responsible for providing the location only. Food is the responsibility of the missionaries.

Anyone interested in more information about sharing vacation housing with missionaries should write Barbara Yeager, WMU, P.O. Box 830010, Birmingham, AL 35283-0010.

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RTVC president says gospel opportunities
in Russia must be acted upon immediately

Baptist Press
12/1/93

By C.C. Risenhoover

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The president of the SBC's Radio and Television Commission said he was not optimistic about the ability of the Russian people to solve their problems.

Writing in Russia Update, a newsletter sent to those interested in Russia, Johnson said, "I'm much more impressed with their patience and persistence than with their performance," said Jack Johnson, who recently made his sixth trip to Russia to arrange for distribution of RTVC radio and television programming.

"Russians have the gift of turning progress into calamity," he said. "The so-called Soviet experiment may be history's longest running and most colossal blunder. Hopefully, the time will come when getting from one day to the next for Russians will no longer require the sort of small miracle that it does today."

Johnson said there is a real hunger for the gospel in Russia, and that Southern Baptists must move quickly while opportunity permits.

"With the ever-changing political climate in Russia, it's impossible to predict how long the doors will be open to evangelical Christianity," said Johnson. "So we must take every opportunity to spread the gospel there while we can. Someday Russia might become somewhat ordinary, a country of problems rather than catastrophes, a country that develops rather than explodes. But I don't see that day coming anytime soon."

A shipment of 10,000 pounds of candy, 4,000 pairs of mittens and thousands of gospel tracts for children has been sent to St. Petersburg by First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss. and the RTVC's television program "Word of Life," which is telecast weekly there in the former Soviet state. More than 20,000 Christmas bags for children will be given out in St. Petersburg the week of Jan. 7, which is Christmas in Russia. Each bag has the day and time of the "Word of Life" broadcast printed on it.

Johnson said very few stores in Russia offer free bags, so the bags advertising the program will be used for some time.

"We are doing a lot with a little," said Johnson. "Our international media budget is only \$150,000 and our current revenues for this ministry are less than \$60,000. And we are providing a gospel witness in an area of more than 80 million people."

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"The 70 years of Soviet rule have contorted the minds of those who lived through it," said Johnson. "Many, including me, believe that the problems will not be solved until the 'Homo Sovieticus' has passed from the scene. By 'Homo Sovieticus' I mean that person whose whole life was lived under the deception and falsification of the Soviet system."

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A copy of Russia Update is available upon request from the RTVC at 6350 West Freeway, Fort Worth, Texas 76150.

EDITORS' NOTE: A 10-part series of short articles on senior adults written by Robert J. Hastings, retired editor of the Illinois Baptist newsjournal, is available upon request from the (BP) central office. Hastings, 69, is a busy author and speaker. A detailed biography of Hastings also is available from (BP).

Hastings has written these articles on senior adults in cooperation with Baptist Press.

Nearly 6,000 Americans turn 65 each day. A recent survey by the Baptist Standard, Texas Baptists' newsjournal, revealed 39 percent of its responding readers are 65 or older.

EDITORS' NOTE: To (BP) story titled "COMMENTARY: Your first holidays -- after the funeral," dated 11/26/93, please add a credit line at the bottom indicating the story was used by permission of the Baptist Standard, Texas Baptists' newsjournal.

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