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**-- BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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SBC Executive Com.  
901 Commerce  
Nashville, Tennessee  
(615) 244  
Herb Hollinger, Vice Pre  
Fax (615) 742  
CompuServe ID# 704

**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

February 17, 1994

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SBC statistics show mix  
of gains, losses for 1993

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
2/17/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists registered an equal number of gains and losses among 10 key denominational reporting areas in 1993, according to figures released by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's strategic information and planning unit.

Increases were registered in numbers of churches, church membership, discipleship training enrollment/participation, mission expenditures and total tithes, offerings and special gifts.

Decreases came in baptisms, ongoing Sunday school enrollment, ongoing music ministry enrollment, ongoing Woman's Missionary Union enrollment and Brotherhood enrollment/participation.

Southern Baptist churches increased by 283, or 0.74 percent, for a total of 38,741, and church membership reached 15,404,621, for an increase of 0.25 percent or 39,135 over 1992. The numerical gain in numbers of churches compared favorably to that of 1992, which was 237. However, church membership showed a greater increase in 1992, with a gain of more than 127,000 persons.

Discipleship training enrollment/participation showed the greatest percentage increase among all reporting areas for 1993, with 4.59 percent, or 102,069, for a total of 2,328,082. The increase was higher than that of 1992, which was 1.1 percent or 23,486.

While financial categories gained in 1993, increases were less than those of 1992. Mission expenditures, which increased 2.7 percent the previous year, were up 1.31 percent or \$9,866,383, for a total of \$761,639,840. Total tithes, offerings and special gifts increased by 3.17 percent or \$155,421,045, for a \$5,054,436,650 total. In 1992, that increase was 4.1 percent.

Among the five reporting areas showing decreases, three -- ongoing Sunday school enrollment, ongoing music ministry and Brotherhood enrollment/participation -- slipped from the gains column of 1992.

A 1 percent gain in ongoing Sunday school enrollment in 1992 was the fourth consecutive gain for the Bible study program. This year's total of 8,246,250, however, was a loss of 0.20 percent or 16,271 persons.

Ongoing music ministry enrollment fell for the first time after 27 consecutive years of growth. Total enrollment declined 0.49 percent, or 9,246, compared to last year's gain of 0.6 percent.

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Brotherhood enrollment/participation dropped 0.10 percent or 592, after posting its second consecutive gain last year of 2.1 percent.

Ongoing WMU enrollment decreased 3.29 percent, or 39,063, compared with the 1992 loss of 0.8 percent. The two losses follow a small increase in 1991.

The second decrease in baptisms in six years was a 5.10 percent loss of 18,774. The loss was less than 1992's decrease of 7.3 percent.

The statistics were compiled from 37,770 Uniform Church Letters processed by the board's strategic information and planning unit.

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State totals in the 10 reporting areas will be faxed to Baptist state newspapers Feb. 17.

**Southern Baptist Statistical Summary**  
1992 - 1993

Item	1993	1992	1993-1992 Change	
			Numerical	Percent
Churches	38,741	38,458	283	0.74%
Baptisms	349,073	367,847	(18,774)	-5.10%
Church Membership	15,404,621	15,365,486	39,135	0.25%
Ongoing Sunday School Enrollment	8,246,250	8,262,521	(16,271)	-0.20%
Discipleship Training Enrollment/Participation	2,328,082	2,226,013	102,069	4.59%
Ongoing Music Ministry Enrollment	1,876,875	1,886,121	(9,246)	-0.49%
Ongoing WMU Enrollment	1,149,085	1,188,148	(39,063)	-3.29%
Brotherhood Enrollment/Participation	613,774	614,366	(592)	-0.10%
Total Tithes, Offerings, and Special Gifts	\$5,054,436,650	\$4,899,015,605	\$155,421,045	3.17%
Mission Expenditures	\$761,639,840	\$ 751,773,457	\$ 9,866,383	1.31%

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Increase in HMB volunteers prompts higher goals for '95

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press  
2/17/94

ATLANTA (BP)--An increase in mission youth groups helped boost the number of volunteers coordinated through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board by almost 5 percent in 1993.

The board's volunteer division assigned 63,994 volunteers in 1993, up from 60,284 in 1992. Seven of 10 categories for volunteers showed an increase last year, including Mission Service Corps workers, who serve four months or longer. Sunday, Feb. 27, is Volunteer in Missions Sunday.

Because the number of volunteers for 1993 is already higher than next year's goal, volunteer coordinators have set higher goals for 1995 and 2000, said Mike Robertson, director of the student missions department.

The 1995 goal has been increased from 61,000 to 65,000 and the 2000 goal has been increased from 75,000 to 80,000, he said.

Mission youth groups showed the strongest increase in 1993, up more than 3,500 compared to 1992. Robertson attributed that growth to a direct appeal for volunteer help from all youth ministers.

The greatest decrease occurred in college students for special projects other than summer work, down from 1,639 in 1992 to 1,047 last year.

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Robertson said that decrease is only a matter of bookkeeping because those workers no longer register with the Home Mission Board for insurance. "We know they're still out there serving. We just don't have a record of them."

The number of Christian Service Corps groups decreased in 1993, but larger team sizes resulted in the actual number of CSC group members growing by about 1,000. While the growth in CSC volunteers is encouraging, the decrease in groups means fewer projects received attention, Robertson said. Christian Service Corps was recently renamed Mission Partners.

A likely reason for the CSC decrease was the 10,000-plus volunteers who worked on disaster relief efforts in the flood-damaged Midwest, he said. Those workers are coordinated by the Brotherhood Commission and are not counted by the Home Mission Board.

With the increase in mission youth groups but a decrease in Christian Service Corps groups, the board maintained its traditional average of filling about 65 percent of home missionaries' requests for volunteers.

Robertson said that average could go lower as more requests are likely in the future. "More missionaries are learning the value of volunteers and are asking for help."

Volunteer coordinators already anticipate a drop this year in the number of Acteen Activator teams because of that group's national conference, held every five years.

Acteens are girls in grades seven through 12. Activators must be at least 15 years old or have completed their ninth grade of high school to go on a mission project.

A decrease would mean fewer Southern Baptist missionaries receive assistance for such projects as Vacation Bible School, Big A Club and inner-city missions work, said Valerie Hardy, HMB associate director of short-term volunteers.

Between 12,000 and 15,000 Acteens are expected for the national convention June 21-24 in Birmingham, Ala. During the 1989 convention, the Home and Foreign mission boards assigned half the previous year's number of Activator teams to mission projects.

In 1992, about 190 Activator teams worked on home and foreign mission projects. A shortage of teams will especially hurt smaller churches in new work areas, because they often need smaller teams the size of Activator groups, Hardy said.

Information about volunteer mission opportunities is available from state volunteer coordinators or the Home Mission Board at 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

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#### HMB volunteer statistics

	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994 goal</u>
Mission Youth Groups	1,558	1,794	1,400
MYB team members	31,626	35,148	33,000
Sojourners	137	162	115
Student Summer Missionaries	1,455	1,328	1,400
Semester Missionaries	151	180	135
SPOTS (Special Projects Other Than Summer)	1,639	1,047	1,500
Innovators	106	145	110
Mission Specialists	19	24	20
Christian Service Corps	1,640	1,232	1,600
CSC Groups	1,404	1,186	1,200
CSC Group members	21,900	22,975	20,000
Mission Service Corps	1,611	1,753	1,625
Total	60,284	63,994	59,505

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HMB reports 14 more  
missionaries at year-end.

By Sarah Zimmerman

ATLANTA (BP)--The number of home missionaries in 1993 increased by 14 from the previous year, with the most significant changes in Mission Service Corps volunteers and mission pastors.

At the end of last year, 4,882 people served as home missionaries, compared to 4,868 in 1992, according to Southern Baptist Home Mission Board reports.

"I'm encouraged to see the numbers continue to increase, and especially the great wave of volunteers," said HMB President Larry Lewis. "We are very close to our (Bold Mission Thrust) goal of 5,000 home missionaries by 2000."

The number of Mission Service Corps volunteers in the missionary count increased by 149 in 1993, while mission pastors decreased by the same number.

Mission Service Corps volunteers serve four months or longer, but only those serving two years or more are included in the missionary total. The 1993 missionary count includes 977 MSC volunteers.

The number of mission pastors, who typically start churches, was 593. Mission pastors receive a salary supplement that is designed to phase out as the church grows, said Bill Graham, HMB director of missionary personnel.

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Missions partnership links  
S.C.'s black, white Baptists

By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press  
2/17/94

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--South Carolina Baptists have completed the first year of a productive and far-reaching partnership linking the state's black and white Baptists in volunteer missions.

The three-year partnership is believed to mark the first time volunteers from a Southern Baptist state convention and a black Baptist convention have worked together in volunteer missions overseas through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. "It's an historic partnership," said Zack Weston of the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina, the largest black religious organization in the state.

Volunteers from that convention and from the predominantly white South Carolina Baptist Convention completed 40 joint projects in Kenya during the first year of the partnership formed in cooperation with mission board and the Baptist Convention of Kenya.

About 80 volunteers and officials from both conventions celebrated their achievements -- in missions and race relations -- Feb. 11-12 at the White Oak Conference Center, about 35 miles from Columbia, S.C. Guest speakers included several volunteers from each convention; Ed Johnson, president of the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention; and Carlisle Driggers, executive director-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Driggers, in a telephone interview with Baptist Press, said the partnership has helped build relationships between the state's black and white Baptists and to create opportunities for other joint ministries.

"A positive result of this has been that black and white Baptists are gaining respect for and knowledge of each other in our distinctive conventions and (realizing) we can do some significant things together without merging into one convention," Driggers said. "We can respect each other's autonomy and dignity, yet together in the name of Christ carry out the Great Commission both overseas and locally."

During the partnership's first year, volunteers from both conventions worked together training Kenyan Baptists, planting churches and doing construction, ministries for women and youth, evangelism, and medical and dental care.

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Through their efforts, 3,935 Kenyans accepted Christ as Savior and 17 new Baptist mission congregations were started. Volunteers led leadership training for about 5,400 Kenyan Baptists, completed 28 construction projects and provided medical and dental care to 2,225 Kenyans.

Twenty-five of the 127 volunteers participating represented black churches in the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention. And the effort transformed the lives of the African Americans, said Weston, partnership coordinator for the black convention.

"Not only have they been able to help the Kenyans, but this experience has made them better Christians. ... They have a new excitement about foreign missions ... and are helping to get our people -- blacks in this country -- more excited about missions," said Weston, who traveled to Kenya twice during the partnership's first year.

"This was the first experience most Kenyans have had with blacks coming as (volunteer) missionaries," said Weston, although mission board officials point out black Baptists have participated in a number of volunteer projects overseas. Weston said the African American volunteers were well received by Kenyans.

"Kenyans said to the white volunteers, 'You are welcome here any time as our guests. White missionaries have been coming here for years and have done a lot of good ...,'" added Debbie McDowell, partnership coordinator for the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

"But they (Kenyans) turned to the black volunteers and said, 'Welcome home. You're our family.'"

The partnership also built significant racial bridges between black and white Baptists, McDowell said. Black Baptist churches funded the trip to Kenya for some white volunteers, while some white Baptists paid trip expenses for blacks. After returning from Kenya, black and white volunteers visited in each other's churches and socialized in each other's homes, she said. Black and white Baptist pastors exchanged pulpits, spoke at each other's convention meetings and broadcast Christian radio programs together.

"I think this is the start of something that's going to have a much wider impact," McDowell said. "We can definitely see a difference."

McDowell added that volunteers attending the recent "Kenya Celebration" discussed ways both conventions could continue to minister together in South Carolina. An advisory council has been formed to evaluate and develop strategies for a statewide partnership between the two conventions.

David Cornelius, the Foreign Mission Board's director of black church relations, commended black and white South Carolina Baptists for their efforts to minister together overseas.

"I want to offer a word of encouragement that we continue in that vein and find other ways in which we can cooperate with one another," said Cornelius, an African American and former Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria.

"Speaking for myself, I would be thrilled if we could do this over and over again," added Jimmie Hooten, associate director for Africa in the mission board's volunteers department. "I think it's a great idea."

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Christian radio: cheap,  
immediate, influential

By Mark O'Keefe

Baptist Press  
2/17/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--Randall Terry, Operation Rescue founder on his "Randall Terry Live" radio broadcast at the recent National Religious Broadcasters meeting, answering a man at a microphone, said the worst thing President Clinton has done is approving "killing the babies ... ."

What is the best thing the president has done? the man asked.

Silence. More silence.

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Stumped, Terry tossed the question back to a crowd of about 20 people watching his show from the NRB convention floor in Washington in late January. "He created more interest in national Christian radio than any other president in the history of the nation," said one man, stepping up to a hand-held microphone.

Terry and dozens of other Bible-quoting radio personalities can give a big Am n to that.

Christian radio is hot. It's also inexpensive, immediate and influential, able to light up Capitol Hill and statehouse switchboards within minutes.

With the fall of scandal-ridden televangelists in the 1980s, many people wrote off religious broadcasting. They may be surprised by the steady rise of Christian radio.

It is the third most common radio format in the country, trailing only country and adult contemporary, according to the M Street Journal, which monitors the radio industry.

Since Clinton took office, the number of religious TV stations has dropped 2 percent, to 274. But religious radio has shown an 11 percent increase, to 1,566 stations, according to the Directory of Religious Media.

Since 1980, it has grown 33 percent. Since 1970, it's up 422 percent.

It may be the religious right's most underrated weapon.

Not all the stations and their programs are political. Many try to inspire with music and traditional teachings from the Bible, including "The Baptist Hour" and a range of other programs produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, as well as "In Touch" Bible preaching on more than 500 radio stations by Charles Stanley, pastor of Atlanta's First Baptist Church.

But dozens of evangelical call-in and talk shows tackle public policy issues with the belief that they must inform and save the nation from crumbling in a heap of immorality. A few are carried on secular stations. But most preach to the choir on religious radio.

Among them: "Beverly LaHaye Live." LaHaye, founder of Concerned Women for America and a member of Montrose Baptist Church in suburban Washington, is heard on 90 stations nationally. Her daily, half-hour program was launched in 1990.

Terry is a relatively tiny upstart. His two-year-old show, normally broadcast from Windsor, N.Y., is on 32 stations.

He says he sees radio as a way to mobilize America's 40 million evangelical Christians. "I don't have time to travel across the country burning my body out," said the anti-abortion activist. "It's very simple. I can reach thousands of listeners every day on radio."

The king of Christian talk radio is psychologist James Dobson of "Focus on the Family." His daily show is carried around the world by more than 4,000 stations.

When his show began in 1977, Dobson was like a Christian Dr. Spock, concentrating almost exclusively on child-rearing issues. He still deals with those issues. But Dobson has increasingly added political causes to his agenda. For example, in recent weeks, Dobson has devoted five shows in an attempt to toughen child pornography laws. He has alleged Attorney General Janet Reno's proposed modification of the laws would allow sexually suggestive poses of clothed children.

"God will not hold blameless a nation that abuses its children that way," Dobson said in an hour-long speech to his fellow broadcasters.

With tears in his eyes, Dobson defended his increasing, sometimes criticized activism against government policies. "I want to tell you folks, I am prepared to pay with my life," Dobson said.

Dobson receives up to 50,000 letters a week. His political thoughts affect millions.

"Though he has on of the top-ranked radio shows in the country, most people on the mainstream or progressive side of the equation have never heard of it," said Matthew Freeman of People for the American Way, a liberal advocacy group that monitors the religious right. "They have a means of political communication that their political opponents don't even pay attention to."

Marlin Maddoux, a Christian talk show host, speaks to nearly 3 million listeners weekly on more than 280 stations. His guest during one broadcast from the NRB was William J. Bennett, President Reagan's secretary of education and drug czar.

Bennett, considered a possible presidential candidate, used the forum to attack Clinton's policies.

"We have a crisis in America," Bennett said. "But it has to do with the things we've been talking about, families and values. It's not about health care. We have the best health care system in the world."

The right's radio weapon could be weakened by a congressional push to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine, which, prior to its repeal in 1987, required broadcasters to present opposing points of view on "controversial issues of public importance."

The religious broadcasters are battling that move, calling it the Unfairness Doctrine. It would, according to NRB President Brandt Gustavson, take broadcasting "backwards to political intimidation, censorship of debate and boring, ineffective commentary about issues no one really cares about."

Stuart Epperson, owner of a Chesapeake-Portsmouth, Va., Christian radio station, said small stations fearful of expensive battles with the government would be especially reluctant to air provocative programming.

"It's harassment," Epperson said of the threat to bring back the Fairness Doctrine.

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O'Keefe is religion and ethics reporter for The Virginian-Pilot in Norfolk, Va. Used by permission. Art Toalston added Southern Baptist-related information to this article.

Church's protest helps nudge  
Frito-Lay to make new TV ad

By Glenn Gamboa

Baptist Press  
2/17/94

CUYAHOGA FALLS, Ohio (BP)--A fictional grandma swings in like Tarzan to swipe a bag of tortilla chips from a downtrodden Chevy Chase in a new Doritos ad -- and a Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, church celebrates.

"It's exactly what we were asking for," said Jeff Scott, pastor of Broadman Baptist Church in suburban Akron and organizer of a protest against Frito-Lay, the Dallas-based maker of Doritos.

"I'm amazed that a little church in Cuyahoga Falls can actually help align forces that make a multinational corporation change their advertising strategy," Scott said.

In October, Scott and a group of offended seniors steamrolled Frito-Lay products in response to the Doritos commercial in which comedian Chase valiantly rushes toward a grandmother figure about to get flattened by a steamroller. Chase saves the bag of chips she is toting and leaves the woman behind.

Scott asked Frito-Lay officials for an apology and a new commercial that portrayed seniors in a more positive light. He was pleased with getting both -- even though he doubted the company would acknowledge his church's role in the new commercial.

Frito-Lay spokeswoman Lynn Markley said the protest played no part in the creation of the new campaign, which has met with great reviews since its debut during the Super Bowl.

"Our first ad was meant to entertain and so was the second," said Markley. "We listened to the group. We understood their concerns. But we came back with this spot because it was entertaining."

In the new campaign, Chase is fired from the commercial for having low ratings and is left with nothing but a bag of chips from the deal. As he leaves the lot, the grandma swoops in and steals the chips from Chase.

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"It's been a really bad year," Chas deadpans, referring also to his failed late-night talk show.

The 70-year-old actress, who co-stars in both ads, thought the campaign was amusing and enjoyed the work, Markley said.

Greg Farrell, editor-at-large at Adweek, said the new campaign should work better for the company.

"It's payback time and it comes off very well," he said. "This ad will definitely go over better."

Farrell said he's unsure whether the new campaign is a direct reaction to the controversy generated by the Cuyahoga Falls group's protest. But if it was, it would not be unusual.

"Corporate America does not like controversy," he said. "They look for a way of getting beyond it -- a way to settle it and not lose face. This was a way to do it."

Scott said the new campaign should serve as an example to everyone.

"It goes to show that even the little guy can have a voice if he is willing to step up to the plate to speak," he said.

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Reprinted by permission of the Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal. Gamboa is a business writer for the newspaper.

English-speaking church  
becomes Chinese in 1 day

By Andy Arnold

Baptist Press  
2/17/94

WEST HYATTSVILLE, Md. (BP)--If one person learns a second language only with hard work over a long period, how long does it take a group?

One day.

At least one Maryland church changed from an English-speaking congregation to Chinese in one day.

Officially, the change came as members of West Hyattsville Baptist Church invited Andrew Shen, former pastor of the Berwyn Chinese Baptist Mission, to become its pastor. Eighty-three members of the mission followed Shen in joining, instantly transforming West Hyattsville into a Chinese congregation.

The transition marked the first time an English-speaking assembly in the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware gave its facilities to another body, according to officials.

Ron Rogers, director of missions for Prince George's Baptist Association, said churches of one culture will sometimes give their facility to another culture, such as a white church going black, but that type of change is a gradual process that usually occurs over a period of years.

"This is the first time they've made it this quickly," he added. "I don't know that it's ever been done where the people didn't know one another."

Rachel Thompson, wife of pastor emeritus Alva Thompson, explained how the church made the decision. "We found ourselves in a decline which taxed the strength of even our youngest members. An aging congregation, scattered membership and a rapid turnover in pastoral leadership had taken its toll."

Church membership had fallen to 20 families, she said. Rather than closing church doors and selling the building to another group, a committee proposed receiving a language congregation into their membership "as a means of extending the life of our church beyond the ability of our membership," Thompson said.

The church set up three requirements in the search, Thompson said. "Since, by virtue of membership, they would assume our name, our constitution and bylaws, our corporation and our assets, 1) they must be theologically sound; 2) they must not be constituted as a church nor incorporated; and 3) they must have adequate financial resources to sustain the work and the property."

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Berwyn Chinese mission met West Hyattsville church's expectations and more, Thompson said.

"Their vigor and dedication was an inspiration, and in our meetings together we soon developed a bond of love and respect which was unexplainable."

Church members witnessed new life breathed into the church as four new converts were baptized and two Chinese couples made professions of faith in the transition service.

Alva Thompson said the transition was "the Lord's doing." "It normally takes one month to a year to join the Southern Baptist Convention and Maryland/Delaware assembly," he said. "This one took a matter of minutes."

Longtime member Bessie Bassham agreed. "God was leading us," she said. "We were on a low (in attendance). Now we can serve him in a way that is glorifying to him."

The new members of the church also affirmed the transition. "For us this is like a miracle," deacon Yuan-Yuan Shen said. "It is almost impossible to buy land or build a church in this area. It's a blessing to get in this area."

Bassham said she has taught Sunday school at West Hyattsville church most of her 34 years there. She started with the nursery and now teaches senior adults. She said she plans to continue -- at least for the time being.

"If enough English-speaking people remain, I'll be here," Bassham added. "If not, I'll go where God leads me."

And Joseph Chow will continue to serve as an interpreter as he did at the first service. He said the church will provide an interpreter for as long as English-speaking people stay in the congregation.

Rogers said there are no immediate plans to start another Southern Baptist English-speaking work in West Hyattsville, but he suspects the Chinese will find the field ripe for harvest.

"Chinese immigrations will stay at the max with everything happening in Hong Kong," he said. "They've had an outreach (at the University of Maryland) for a long time. Having a building will be a growth factor."

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