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November 4, 1994

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EDITORS' NOTE: Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, issued the following statement just before Baptist Press' deadline Nov. 4. The statement addresses a report concerning accounting methodology used in tallying total giving to the 1993-94 SBC Cooperative Program, which appeared in Associated Baptist Press Nov. 3. Baptist Press is releasing the statement by Chapman in full and will release a news story about the statement Nov. 7. Baptist Press acknowledges this is not normal news policy but believes the statement should be promptly relayed to state Baptist papers and other (BP) readers.

November 4, 1994

Baptist Press  
11/4/94

**CHAPMAN CLARIFIES 1993-94 COOPERATIVE PROGRAM RECEIPTS REPORT**

Responding to a November 3 Associated Baptist Press article by Bob Allen, Morris H. Chapman clarified the SBC Executive Committee accounting policy and the report of 1993-94 SBC Program Allocation Budget receipts.

Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Executive Committee, reaffirmed that the 1993-94 record high SBC Cooperative Program income was cause for thanksgiving. The total receipts of \$142,866,783 identified in some news reports as Cooperative Program were dollars actually received for and distributed to SBC entities.

Chapman explained the confusion by calling attention to accounting policies adopted by the Executive Committee on June 14, 1993, after lengthy dialogue with state convention leadership. The policies state that "Funds received from state conventions and state fellowships, identified by them as Cooperative Program funds, shall be recorded and reported by the SBC Executive Committee as Cooperative Program funds and identified with the state convention from which they are received, so long as these funds are to be distributed only to SBC entities." This policy permits the Executive Committee to recognize that some state conventions allow a certain amount of restrictions and/or designations in funds they call CP.

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According to Chapman, the policy also states that "Funds received from churches or individuals for distribution only to Southern Baptist Convention entities, without designations or restrictions, shall be recorded and reported as Cooperative - SBC Causes and shall be distributed according to the percentage formula of the SBC Program Allocation Budget". This policy was an effort to respond to the request of state convention leadership that funds coming directly to the SBC from individuals and churches not be called Cooperative Program although they are distributed in the same manner as CP funds.

The policy also identifies funds given by churches and individuals for restricted use as "designated" and not Cooperative Program funds. Such funds are not included in the SBC Program Allocation Budget distribution.

1993-94 SBC Program Allocation Budget receipts, \$142,866,783, were a total of Cooperative Program receipts and Cooperative - SBC Causes receipts as identified in the new accounting policy. These funds were distributed among the 17 SBC entities receiving CP funds.

Chapman reiterated his commendation of Southern Baptists "for increasing the number of dollars they gave in 1993-94 for spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ at home and abroad."

Mississippi convention OKs  
compromise with college

By Tim Nicholas

Baptist Press  
11/4/94

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Mississippi Baptists, after intense debate in their Nov. 1-2 annual meeting, declined to change the way they fund Mississippi College and gave the sale of the Clarke College property in Newton another 60 days to reach closing.

Mississippi College in Clinton has been the subject of much discussion since September when trustees changed their charter to make themselves into a self-perpetuating board with only one-fourth of the trustees elected by the Mississippi Baptist Convention. That charter change was amended after negotiations with convention leadership which would allow for joint approval of trustees by the MC trustees and the convention's nominating committee.

Some messengers, unhappy with any change that prevents direct and unhindered election of trustees from the floor of the convention, suggested either a change in the way the college is funded or to escrow these funds -- about \$2 million per year out of MC's total budget of nearly \$30 million -- until the former system is re-established.

However, a clear majority of messengers voted to continue the funding system unchanged.

Messengers did vote to request Bill Causey, the executive director of the convention board, the board itself and legal counsel to examine the charters of other convention institutions to "insure that actions similar to those taken by trustees of Mississippi College be averted in the future" and report to the convention next year.

The campus of Clarke College, a junior college in Newton which closed in 1992, has been for sale for the past two years by the convention. A special committee, charged with finding a buyer, recommended that sale go through to the Deep South Family Film Institute for \$1 million. The institute plans to make family-oriented films and teach filmmaking. Messengers approved allowing the institute another 60 days to escrow the \$1 million sale price and to complete closing of the sale.

In other business, the messengers, totaling 1,870 at First Baptist Church in Jackson, approved a 1995 Cooperative Program budget of \$22.6 million. The amount going to SBC causes outside the state is \$8,364,434, or 37 percent, which is the same percentage given last year. However, because of a \$154,579 budget increase, the SBC portion was increased by \$57,194.

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Resolutions applauded the negotiations that brought Mississippi College back into convention governance and expressed discontent with the MC trustee actions. And messengers again expressed disapproval of gambling -- particularly efforts to legalize land-based casinos -- in the state which now is rated as the number two gambling state in the nation.

Messengers elected officers for the coming year. Re-elected unopposed to one year terms were Rex Yancey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pascagoula, president; Kara Blackard, pastor of Wheeler Grove Baptist Church, Corinth, first vice president; and Richard Johnson, pastor of Parkview Baptist Church, Greenville, second vice president.

The 1995 convention will meet at First Baptist Church, Jackson, Oct. 31-Nov.

1. Jimmy Porter, pastor of First Baptist Church, McComb, will preach the convention sermon.

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Arizonans adopt reorganization,  
continue deficit-reduction steps By Elizabeth Young

Baptist Press  
11/4/94

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Arizona Southern Baptists adopted a reorganization plan for the state convention, voted to close the convention's Baptist Loan Fund in a continuing deficit-reduction effort and elected a layman as president at their annual meeting, Nov. 1-2 at North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix.

Items related to the reorganization of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention filled the time for business during the opening -- and best-attended -- session. A total of 621 messengers, about 100 more than last year, registered for the meeting.

On standing and voice votes, messengers adopted a reorganization plan and then adopted a new constitution and articles of incorporation. All will take effect Jan. 1, 1995.

The reorganization creates two new corporations -- the Arizona Church Growth Board and the Arizona State Mission Board. The state convention's present church growth and development division, which contains programs relating to the Baptist Sunday School Board and Woman's Missionary Union, will form the Church Growth Board. The present evangelism/missions division, which contains programs relating to the Home Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission, will form the State Mission Board.

The two new corporations will have separate boards, as do the state convention's three existing corporations: Arizona Baptist Children's Services, Baptist Foundation of Arizona and Grand Canyon University.

The reorganization also provides for a restructured executive board, composed of one board member and the executive leader of each of the five corporations, 12 at-large members elected directly by the convention, the state convention president, first vice president and executive director. The present executive board consists of 29 at-large members elected by the convention, plus the state convention president, first vice president and executive director, who serves ex-officio.

The basic structure of the reorganization was initially presented to the state's executive board earlier this year by Dan C. Stringer, executive director-treasurer. Following the recommendation of the executive board, state convention messengers endorsed the overall concept and voted to proceed with plans for reorganization in a special called session July 14.

In the July meeting, Stringer listed three reasons for reorganization:

-- heightened visibility for the church-related programs in an environment where the other state convention agencies are considerably larger;

-- a better forum in which all Arizona Southern Baptists ministries and tasks can be involved and in which strategic alliances can be formed between corporations;

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-- added protection for the convention, with an executive board "better prepared to monitor budgets and audits, financial preparation and the overall direction" of each corporation.

Messengers also approved a recommendation from the executive board regarding the closing of the Baptist Loan Fund, which has been an executive board operation and is not a part of the Baptist Foundation of Arizona. The loan fund was originally formed with funds from individuals for the purpose of loaning money to churches for construction needs. In late 1990 the loan fund had an operating deficit of \$3.6 million.

Since 1990, efforts to reduce the deficit have included selling the state convention office building in Phoenix and conference center in Prescott, budgeting \$300,000 per year to meet the interest on the loan fund, cutting state convention personnel, reducing budget allocation percentages to state convention agencies and the Southern Baptist Convention, adjusting cooperative budgeting with the Home Mission Board and reducing the interest rate paid to individuals with deposits in the loan fund.

With the sale of the state convention's conference center, which was finalized last month, the loan fund is within about \$350,000 of being balanced in assets and liabilities, Stringer said. Under the adopted recommendation, when the deficit is satisfied and the cash flow position is stable, the executive board may take such action as needed to close the loan fund.

In terms of new loans to churches, the loan fund has been inactive for several years. When loans were made, they were relatively small, seldom as much as \$50,000. Stringer noted the Home Mission Board now is meeting much of the need once served by the loan fund.

In other business at the annual meeting, messengers adopted a 1995 budget with a Cooperative Program goal of \$2,707,586, a 14.7 percent increase over the 1994 goal. The basic budget is \$2,461,442, with an advance budget of \$246,144. Under the basic budget, 18 percent of all Cooperative Program receipts will be forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention. The percentage increases to 30 percent under the advance budget. Both percentages are unchanged from the 1994 budget.

The 1995 composite budget, which includes the budgets of the five ASBC corporations and the executive board, is \$89.9 million.

David Butler, a layman from Sabino Road Baptist Church, Tucson, was elected convention president. Butler is a member of the ASBC executive board and was chairman of the committee that presented the new ASBC constitution. He is a retired registrar for the University of Arizona.

Three pastors also were nominated for the presidency, a position which will probably have special importance in the coming year. The president is responsible for appointing an executive director-treasurer search committee. Stringer, executive director the past four years, is expected to announce his retirement soon. He wrote in his convention report it was probably his last annual meeting.

Carol Gutshall, state Woman's Missionary Union president and a member of First Southern, Buckeye, was elected first vice president, and Rik Danielsen, pastor of First Baptist, Show Low, was elected second vice president.

Messengers adopted eight resolutions as a slate. The resolutions commended SBC agencies for hearing the needs of Arizona Southern Baptists and providing resources; proclaimed 1995 as the year of the Sunday school; addressed a variety of moral concerns; recognized the 50th anniversary of D-Day; expressed appreciation to Stringer and his wife, Harriett, to outgoing state convention president W. Berry Norwood and to the host church; and expressed gratitude for the dedication and leadership of C. Vaughn Rock, pastor emeritus of First Southern Baptist Church, Phoenix, who died earlier this year.

Without discussion, messengers adopted a motion from the floor opposing the Baptist Sunday School Board's closing of the Phoenix Baptist Book Store, set for April 1, 1995.

Following brief discussion, a messenger's resolution condemning the signing of the document "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" was defeated by a show of hands.

Next year's meeting will be Nov. 14-15 at North Phoenix Baptist Church. David W. Johnson, newly called pastor of First Southern, Phoenix, will preach the annual sermon. Johnson was previously pastor of Twenty-Second Street Baptist Church, Tucson.

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Dakota Baptists increase  
Cooperative Program giving

Baptist Press  
11/4/94

RAPID CITY, S.D. (BP)--The Dakota Southern Baptist Fellowship hiked the percentage of its Cooperative Program budget for national and international Southern Baptist causes by a half-percent during the Oct. 20-21 annual meeting at North Hill Baptist Church, Minot, N.D.

With 158 messengers registered, the fellowship approved an overall 1995 budget of \$865,338.

In the Cooperative Program budget of anticipated giving from the two-state fellowship's 93 churches and missions, a 1995 budget of \$199,999 was set, with 15.5 percent designated for Cooperative Program causes of the Southern Baptist Convention, up .5 percent from last year.

Philip Fike, pastor of Westside Baptist Church, Rapid City, S.D., was unanimously elected fellowship president, with Ray Self, pastor of Capitol Heights Baptist Church, Bismark, N.D., elected vice president and Ken Adkinson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Blunt, S.D., recording secretary.

Resolutions approved by the fellowship included appreciation for the partnership Dakota Baptists have with Florida Baptists and the 30-year work of Tom and Lou Sherrill in the Dakotas, he as a director of missions and she as a Woman's Missionary Union leader. The Sherrills' retirement will be June 30, 1995.

The 1995 annual meeting is tentatively set for Oct. 24-27 at Calvary Baptist Church, Mitchell, S.D.

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Orthodox resistance continues  
in Bulgaria, Eastern Europe

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press  
11/4/94

SOFIA, Bulgaria (BP)--New Southern Baptist workers are starting to put down roots in Bulgaria, but it's unclear how deep they'll sink into the soil of this formerly communist country still hostile to evangelicals.

Roger and Janice Capps represent the latest addition to the Foreign Mission Board's force of missionaries and shorter-term workers in Bulgaria.

The Cappses, of Beaufort, S.C., and Rancho Cordova, Calif., respectively, arrived in August after transferring from Singapore. They have received a visa allowing them to stay through July 1995 while they study the Bulgarian language and culture through a government-sponsored program. Paul and Judy Ridgeway, newly appointed missionaries who received a one-year visa when they arrived in June, also participate in that program. They are from Brookfield, Mo., and Benton, Ill., respectively.

The two couples are working alongside five shorter-term International Service Corps workers, who will leave when they finish their assignments next summer. Mission board officials say they hope more ISC workers will be allowed into Bulgaria in the future.

The ISCers came at the request of missionaries Bill and June Wardlaw, who moved from Japan in 1991 to help Baptists in Bulgaria. Wardlaw, a church starter, helped Baptists post gains throughout the country before media attacks on evangelicals became commonplace and local authorities began clamping down.

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Last spring government officials told the Wardlaws to leave the country by Aug. 22 or pay a \$1,000 fine. The missionary couple, from Texarkana, Texas, and West Palm beach, Fla., respectively, are now in the United States seeking mission assignment to another area.

Foreign Mission Board officials characterize the four new missionaries' language study as "preparation for ministry" in Bulgaria. But they stop short of predicting the future for work there.

"We really don't know. Right now we're just taking it from one visa to the next," said Dan Panter, associate to the board's area director for Europe. "We hope they can get a visa that will allow them to stay for a long time in Bulgaria."

Before it fell to communism, much of Eastern Europe had been steeped for centuries in the Eastern Orthodox tradition of worship. As communism has loosened its grip, Orthodox leaders and nationalists in the region have responded with vehement opposition to the proliferation of other religious groups -- and their primarily Western bent.

Teamed with power brokers reminiscent of communist days, Orthodox leaders in Bulgaria have labeled all non-Orthodox believers as heretics and quashed many early gains evangelicals made after freedom was won.

In March, Bulgaria's Parliament decided -- with only two dissenting votes -- to allow foreigners to live in the country only if their work contributes to the economy. Localities are interpreting national laws in various ways. Some stringent local laws even ban evangelizing young people or sharing the gospel on the street.

Theo Angelov, president of the Bulgaria Baptist Union, detailed how Bulgarian Orthodox are persecuting Baptists when he attended a three-day dialogue in late October with leaders of Eastern Orthodoxy in Istanbul, Turkey.

Angelov was included in a 13-member delegation sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance, which asked for the talks. The talks were seen as "one small step" to help the two faiths coexist peacefully in Eastern Europe, according to alliance officials. Future conversations might be scheduled, but only if representatives from the Orthodox' 15 self-governing bodies throughout the region approve.

Russ Bush, vice president and dean of faculty at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., was one of several Southern Baptist scholars in the delegation.

Bush told participants in the Baptist-Orthodox meeting that while Christians "must hold to truth dearly," they must also "permit God to work in the hearts of others who may understand some things differently or who may worship in ways other than our ways."

"The idea of religious freedom was a point on which we found differences of opinion," he told Baptist Press after the meeting. The Orthodox leaders "asked a lot of questions. They could not understand why you would ever give freedom to error."

A key concern of the Orthodox is what they call proselytism, Bush said. Where Orthodoxy has been a state religion, many priests consider all people Orthodox -- and thus Christian and in no need of spiritual change. "I made the point that even in our churches we always give invitations at our services to (become Christians)," he said.

"The basic New Testament truth leads Baptists to advocate the political principle of religious freedom," Bush said during the meeting. "The state is not God, and the state should not position itself in God's place. Baptists seek to worship and witness without restraint from the government and without restraint from another religion or even from another Christian group."

AGLU letter to Miss. schools  
generating Baptist opposition

By William H. Perkins Jr.

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--The school prayer debate is flaring again after Mississippi public school superintendents received a letter from the Mississippi chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union detailing "specifically prohibited" prayer practices.

Mississippi Baptists are already planning their response.

The Oct. 6 letter from David Ingebretsen, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi (ACLUM), offered to help superintendents enforce the Sept. 2, 1994, decision by U.S. District Judge Henry T. Wingate of Jackson that struck down the school prayer law passed by the 1994 Mississippi Legislature.

Ingebretsen said in his letter, "Judge Wingate ruled that Mississippi schools must maintain 'an atmosphere of religious neutrality.' Specifically prohibited are practices such as:

- devotionals or prayers over the public address system;
- teacher led or initiated classroom prayers;
- prayers by visiting clergy;
- recital of The Lord's Prayer in classes;
- prayers at sporting events."

Ingebretsen's letter also advised superintendents that ACLUM will monitor compliance with Wingate's ruling and offer assistance to parents whose children are "impermissibly subjected to organized school prayer ..."

Ingebretsen said Oct. 28 the letter was not meant to be threatening but was in response to complaints received by ACLUM.

Paul Jones, executive director of the Christian Action Commission (CAC) of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, reported Oct. 28 that CAC will be working with local Baptist congregations in crafting a response to the letter.

"We intend to counter the impression that superintendents and school boards must surrender their right to make policy whenever a complaint is raised about religion. We are hearing of cases where students' rights are being suppressed out of fear of threatened legal action by ACLUM," Jones explained.

Jones said CAC recently received a complaint involving a Mississippi public school student who was prohibited from bringing a Bible into his school.

"Overreaction to these implied threats from ACLUM, or punishment of students for acts such as carrying a Bible to school, could invite legal action by people who do not believe school officials have authority to suppress religious speech because of content," Jones warned.

For information on the school prayer issue, contact CAC at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530, telephone: (601) 968-3800.

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FIRST-PERSON

So, Shannen Doherty, you say  
you're a Southern Baptist girl      By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
11/4/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--OK, Shannen, so you're "just a nice, Southern Baptist, Republican girl," as millions of TV Guide covers in supermarkets across the country have proclaimed for the week of Nov. 5-11.

You deny the stereotype of Shannen Doherty as a "wild girl" and a "party animal" in the TV Guide interview by declaring, "I'm from the South. (laughter) You know, I'm a Southern Baptist. I can't be that wild. ... I have a conservative point of view. I mean, I'm a Republican. ... I'm just a nice, Southern Baptist, Republican girl!"

Ouch. I wish you would have separated "Southern Baptist" and "Republican" by a few sentences. Sure numerous Southern Baptists are Republicans, but many are also Democrats and independents.

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I did appreciate your statements of remorse for not coping too well with the stormy success and tabloid publicity that came your way as "Brenda" on Fox's "Beverly Hills, 90210" or your five-month marriage to actor Ashley Hamilton or those pictures in Playboy magazine. I certainly agree "there was definitely a more diplomatic way for me to handle what I was going through. But I was young ... . And all I can basically say is, 'I'm sorry.' I might have messed up a bit."

Interviewer Liz Smith felt you were such a genuine person that she told TV Guide readers, "Personally, I liked her. And I think you would, too -- away from the drumbeat of the media."

OK, we like you. I like honest attempts to assess one's life.

That's kinda what we Southern Baptists are supposed to do. Like each other. And examine our lives.

But that's just part of it. I don't know if you're aware of this, but there are lots better things -- more accurate things -- about being a Southern Baptist than, uh, one's political persuasion or new-and-improved efforts at being a better person.

I should warn you about prayer, for example.

There's the distinct possibility that one or more Southern Baptist women in their 60s or 70s -- and occasionally a radical few men and women in their 20s, 30s and 40s -- will start praying for you.

I mean, really praying. The lingo for these folks is "intercessors" or "prayer warriors." But don't worry -- they mean you no harm. They'll just be praying that you'll experience an array of supernatural occurrences to lead you to peace with God.

Goodness knows what results they'll get. You might, by seeming coincidence, encounter a few well-meaning people who dare to ask that troubling question, "Are you born again?"

You might find one of those "Are-you-going-to-heaven-or-hell?" tracts the next time you're in a limo or in the women's restroom of one of those Beverly Hills restaurants. But this time, instead of crumpling it up and tossing it aside, you may feel the tract tug at your heart.

A few Bibles might start arriving at your agent's office. Or if you have a Bible, you might feel a strange stirring to open its pages. I suggest starting with the Gospel of John. Lots of good reading there, beginning right with chapter 1.

Then there's that born-again question.

If it makes you nervous, just relax. Jimmy Carter's been born again, as have Willard Scott, Marilyn McCoo, Johnny Cash, Barbara Mandrell, Gavin MacLeod, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, lots of folks, even lots there in Hollywood. And, yes, even some of your Republican buddies. Dan Quayle, Jack Kemp and Ohio Gov. George Voinovich, just to name three.

Want a dose of deep inner peace and joy after those tussles with the tabloid reporters? Want to get rid of any bothersome guilt from those Playboy photos?

Want peace with God? Want to go to heaven? Want a touch of heaven here on earth?

If you have stepped out in faith, you may know what I mean.

If not, there's no better time than now to link up with Jesus. Yeah, Jesus. The Lord and Savior we Southern Baptists are to worship and live our lives for.

Just like I did and countless others have -- turn to Jesus Christ, repent and ask him to forgive your sin and your sinfulness; ask him to come into your life and change it as your Lord and Savior. Start celebrating Jesus' life in you -- his Holy Spirit giving you peace and joy; transforming you; urging you to continually confess your sins and be cleansed of guilt; energizing you to the things of God; stirring you to holy courage to step out in faith daily; giving you a wondrous dose of heaven while you're still here on earth.

When you do that, you'll be more than "a nice, Southern Baptist," and, OK, "Republican girl." So much more.



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