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94-187

TEXAS--Letter to Texas conservatives to underscore SBC missions.  
ALABAMA--Hudson Baggett, Alabama editor, dies of heart attack at age 71.  
TENNESSEE--'Christy' to visit CBS on Thanksgiving night.  
OHIO--Vote on women's ordination prompts breakaway association.  
VIRGINIA--Virginia Baptists approve representation change.  
INDIANA--Indiana Baptists underscore Cooperative Program support.  
NEW HAMPSHIRE--New England Baptists adopt resolution against racism.  
OKLAHOMA CITY--Cooperation underscored at Oklahoma convention.  
PENNSYLVANIA--Penn/Jersey Baptists approve slight CP hike, Va. partnership.  
OHIO--Ohio Baptists oppose bookstore's closing.  
TEXAS--Eyewitness account moves woman to support relief work.  
TENNESSEE--SBCNet enrollment total takes third large increase.  
TENNESSEE--Correction.

Letter to Texas conservatives  
to underscore SBC missions

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
11/17/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Texas Baptist conservatives have taken initial steps to bolster the traditional Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program.

In the wake of the Baptist General Convention of Texas' vote to revamp its Cooperative Program thrust, the Texas Baptist Conservative Fellowship is sending a letter to conservative Baptist pastors and churches.

The letter will report "what their options are to carry out their convictions and mandates to world missions and local missions," said Miles Seaborn, president of the fellowship and pastor of Birchman Baptist Church, Fort Worth, who was finishing the letter Nov. 17.

The broadened Texas Baptist Cooperative Program now includes church gift for the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and other Baptist causes apart from those tied to the Southern Baptist Convention. The change was approved during the BGCT annual meeting Oct. 31-Nov. 1 in Amarillo.

Another concern of some conservatives: The new BGCT budget also cuts the percentage in the traditional Cooperative Program category for SBC causes, from 36.65 percent previously to 35.5 percent in 1995.

In east Texas, meanwhile, the executive board of at least one Baptist association has urged its churches to designate funds for the SBC.

By a 27-1 vote Nov. 8, the executive board of the Henderson Baptist Association in east Texas adopted a motion recommending its 34 churches and missions designate "a sizable portion" of their Cooperative Program missions giving to SBC causes. An amendment was passed adding a recommendation for funding of the Texas Baptist Conservative Fellowship.

Numerous churches and other associations likely will take the same stance, said E.L. Pennington, the Henderson association's moderator and pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Trinidad.

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"We just happened to be the first one to do it, and I think there's going to be a lot more," Pennington said.

BGCT Executive Director William Pinson issued a response Nov. 17 to the conservative mailing and the Henderson association's vote: "Certainly Baptist churches are free to direct their giving according to the vote of their members. I prayerfully hope that Baptist churches in Texas will not act to undermine efforts to reach the Texas mission field for the Lord Jesus Christ and to build here an even stronger base for Southern Baptist world mission causes."

Roger Hall, BGCT treasurer, meanwhile, targeted the change in Texas-SBC Cooperative Program percentages, contending it was "not a reduction in dollars for the SBC," but a transfer to the Texas budget -- as requested by the SBC Executive Committee -- of expenses previously shared in Cooperative Program promotion and the Annuity Board's Ministers' Protection Plan for retirees.

"It would seem unfortunate," Hall said, if the SBC request "would become a reason for some to reduce their gifts to the BGCT."

Seaborn, commenting on the successful initiative of BGCT leaders to revamp the state's Cooperative Program, said, "I am fully persuaded that they're trying to de-emphasize Southern Baptist causes and emphasize their own Texas Baptist agenda."

In addition to the revised Texas CP, Seaborn cited the rhetoric of BGCT President Jerold McBride that Texas Baptists are not "a farm team" for the SBC and were exercising "states' rights" over "federal control."

Seaborn said the letter to pastors and churches was commissioned during a meeting of about 250 people affiliated with the Texas Baptist Conservative Fellowship the night of the BGCT's Nov. 1 vote to change its CP thrust.

BGCT leaders "have not really thought through what this was going to do to the Cooperative Program and our way of doing world missions," Seaborn said, commenting on conservative reaction to the vote. "Or if they did, it means that they deliberately were trying to redirect it (the Cooperative Program)."

One fact the letter will underscore, Seaborn noted, is that churches must indicate monthly any special designation of funds to SBC causes on forms supplied by the BGCT.

To Pennington in east Texas, meanwhile, a budding relationship between the BGCT and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is worrisome.

When the SBC this summer directed its agencies to no longer receive funds channeled through the CBF and, several years earlier, when the SBC defunded the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the BGCT subsequently added each entity to its budget, said Pennington, a pastor for 47 years.

"We're going to support the Southern Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist agencies with our money," Pennington said. "I guess this is, in essence, a protest of the takeover by the CBF."

Quoting one Texas official as saying only 137 churches channeled funds through the CBF last year, Pennington said, "That's why we're so puzzled how 137 churches could get in control of such a strong convention as the Texas convention."

"The Texas convention has been in the hands of the CBF leadership for a long time," he also stated, citing BGCT President McBride and his church, First Baptist Church, San Angelo, as key CBF supporters in the state.

McBride acknowledged the San Angelo congregation had channeled money through the CBF but much of it was designated for SBC agencies. Of \$34,644 given through the CBF from January-October 1994, \$17,044 went to CBF causes, according to figures released by the church, with \$7,820 actually kept within the CBF organization.

The church's overall mission gifts during the 10-month period totaled \$193,242. McBride said he also has gone on four volunteer missions trips in the last 13 months, each related to Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board work, and the church made special gifts to various FMB-related projects in Russia, Ukraine, Brazil, Mexico and Peru during 1993.

Hudson Baggett, Alabama editor,  
dies of heart attack at age 71

By Keith Hinson

POINT CLEAR, Ala. (BP)--Hudson D. Baggett, editor of The Alabama Baptist since 1966, died of a massive heart attack Nov. 17.

Baggett, 71, and his wife, June, were visiting Point Clear, Ala., for a day's vacation following the Nov. 15-16 annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention in nearby Mobile. He had planned to return to his office in Birmingham Nov. 18.

According to family sources, Baggett had taken a walk before breakfast and returned to his hotel room. Shortly afterward, he suffered a massive heart attack and died.

"Hudson Baggett not only edited The Alabama Baptist, but he was Mr. Alabama Baptist," said Mike Shaw, chairman of the newspaper's board of directors and pastor of the First Baptist Church, Pelham. "There was not a more beloved personality in Alabama Baptist life than Dr. Baggett. He will be sorely missed by all Baptists and all Christians."

Troy Morrison, executive secretary-treasurer of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, said, "Dr. Hudson Baggett's death leaves a numbness all across the Alabama Baptist State Convention. He was my close personal friend and a friend to each who knew him. He will be remembered as a true servant of God and as a devoted husband, father and grandfather.

"His fairness and forthrightness as editor of The Alabama Baptist endeared him to each of us. There was never any question about his love for the Lord and his love for Alabama Baptists. He was a giant and a gallant Christian. He will be greatly missed. We extend our prayers to his family," Morrison said.

Before coming to The Alabama Baptist, Baggett was a professor in the department of religion and philosophy at Samford University from 1958-1966.

Baggett earned a bachelor of arts degree in 1947 at Howard College (now Samford University) where he majored in religion and minored in history and social studies. He was also a graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., where he earned three degrees: bachelor of divinity, master of theology and doctor of theology with a major in homiletics. Baggett has served as a member of SBTS's board of trustees.

A native of Arkadelphia in Cullman County, Ala., Baggett served as pastor of churches in Alabama and Kentucky, including Shades Valley Baptist Church in Jefferson County, Ala.; Salem Baptist Church, Meade County, Ky.; and First Baptist Church of Florence, Ala.

For three years, he served as moderator of the Salem Baptist Association in Kentucky and also served as interim pastor of numerous Baptist churches in Alabama.

Besides a weekly page of editorials in The Alabama Baptist, Baggett had written Sunday school lessons for the Baptist Sunday School Board and was a contributor to The Southern Baptist Encyclopedia. He had also published articles on preaching in Proclaim, a BSSB publication.

Baggett is survived by his wife, the former June Stewart of Reeltown, Ala.; three sons, Mark, a professor of English and law at Samford University and writer for The Alabama Baptist, Dale and Tim, all of Birmingham; a sister, Amy Willoughby of Cullman; a brother, William R. Baggett of Atlanta; and six grandchildren.

The family will receive visitors Friday evening, Nov. 18, at Johns-Ridout's Elmwood Chapel, 800 Dennison Ave. S.W. in Birmingham. Additional visiting hours will be from 9-10 a.m. Nov. 19 in the parlor at Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham.

The funeral will be at 10 a.m. at Shades Mountain. The church's pastor, Charles T. Carter, and Hugh Chambliss, former SMBC pastor and retired director of missions for the Madison Baptist Association, will officiate. Burial will be in Elmwood Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be sent to The Hudson Baggett Endowment Fund, c/o The Alabama Baptist, P.O. Box 59685, Birmingham, Ala. 35259.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is reprinted with permission of the author for periodicals in circulation Nov. 21 and thereafter.

'Christy' to visit CBS  
on Thanksgiving night

By Terry Mattingly

TOWNSEND, Tenn. (BP)--Once again, CBS is flirting with the virtuous maiden named "Christy."

When viewers last saw her, the heroine of Catherine Marshall's famous Christian novel was struggling to educate children at an early 20th century mission in east Tennessee. She seemed to be making progress in her spiritual war with superstition and poverty.

Behind the scenes, "Christy" was struggling in the Nielsen ratings race. After a highly-rated Easter special and a five-week trial run, "Christy" was gone. Viewers were stunned when the series didn't appear in the fall lineup, even though its producers said CBS received a record number of calls, cards and letters.

Now, "Christy" is back for a two-hour special at 8 p.m. Eastern on Thanksgiving. Then the series will vanish again. CBS has ordered 11 additional episodes, to air sometime this spring.

"I keep hoping that a miracle will happen and that she'll be able to stay," says the mission's preacher in the Thanksgiving show, when it appears Christy may have to leave the cove.

Tell that to the lords of network television.

Little has changed in Cutter Gap, near where the series is filmed. The mountains are still wrapped in clouds and frame almost every scene. Christy Huddleston, played by actress Kellie Martin, still fingers the cross on her necklace when seeking guidance. The highlanders read the Bible, pray, sign hymns and see visions. And executive producer Ken Wales continues to plead for another round of support from those who claim to want to see an alternative in prime time.

"This is our second chance and you rarely get a third," said Wales, a Hollywood veteran who went to film school with George Lucas. "I fought this battle a year ago, and now here I am fighting it again. In the spring, we'll have to fight it all over again."

"Christy" faces obvious hurdles. After the Easter special, the series was a big loser in the weekly statistics gathered in America's 30 largest metropolitan areas. However, "Christy" was a hit in smaller markets in middle America, especially in the Bible Belt. This pulled the ratings back up.

Everyone knows "Christy" isn't popular among viewers in two crucial audiences -- urban viewers between the ages of 18 and 35 and, especially, young males, said Wales. It's hard to sell cars, beer, fast food and hot movies during a show about missionaries helping the poor in Appalachia.

It's also possible that "Christy" may have trouble reaching many in a key target audience. In his recent book, "Virtual America," market analyst George Barna describes a Christian subculture that isn't radically different, in terms of its entertainment values, from the secular mainstream.

For example, "Born-again Christians are less likely than non-Christian adults to watch such fare" on cable TV, on video or in theaters, writes Barna. "However, the behavioral gap ... is not as large as might have been expected: 26 percent of born-again adults watch R-rated movies in a given week, while 38 percent of non-born-again adults do so."

This raises disturbing questions for those who want to offer religious values, themes and symbols in prime time.

Will the values of Christian children raised with cable TV and VCRs in their bedrooms be significantly different from others? Of course, their parents may watch "Christy." But maybe not. What if -- after years of TV training -- they would prefer to watch sports, prime-time soaps or cops and robbers?

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Wales said his mail keeps his hopes alive. So far, more than 100,000 people have managed to find his home address, after they have pleaded their case to CBS officials.

"People say, 'We're watching this show as a family, or we're taping it and watching it later. Then we sit and we talk about it,'" Wales recounted. "I've started calling this 'appointment television.' ... We know that people are choosing to watch 'Christy,' because this is a show that holds up values that are worth supporting and adopting and practicing. It's not bogus to tell real stories about people knowing what's right and what's wrong."

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Mattingly teaches communications at Milligan College in Tennessee and writes this weekly column for the Scripps Howard News Service.

Vote on women's ordination  
prompts breakaway association

Baptist Press  
11/17/94

CINCINNATI (BP)--A new Baptist association has been formed in the wake of a vote by the Cincinnati Baptist Association that fell short of opposing the ordination of women as pastors and deacons.

An amendment to the association's constitution limiting membership to churches that do not ordain women received a 147-80 vote in the association's Oct. 3 annual meeting, but the tally was 23 votes shy of the 75 percent needed to amend the constitution. Six of the 227 registered messengers did not vote. That night, an announcement was made that individuals interested in forming a new association would meet the next night at New Bethel Baptist Church in nearby Norwood. More than 150 members from 22 congregations attended the meeting, according to New Bethel pastor Kirk Pike. He said a second meeting, Nov. 1, drew 131 people from 20 churches.

While a proposed constitution is to be voted on either at the upcoming Dec. 6 or Jan. 3 meetings, the new association has named itself the Ohio Valley Baptist Association and elected Pike as moderator pro tem.

The vote by the Cincinnati association stemmed from a year of controversy over the ordination of a woman deacon at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, home church of Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, moderator of the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and retired executive director of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union. Her husband, Joseph, is Mt. Carmel's pastor emeritus.

The woman who was ordained, in March 1993, is single and a medical doctor in her 30s who grew up in the church.

The proposed amendment to the association's constitution would have added a clause referring to the Baptist Faith and Message: "In addition, we interpret Article 1. The Scriptures to mean: Any church that chooses to place a woman in the office of deacon or pastor shall be considered in violation of these Articles of Faith."

That wording will be the major difference between the new association's constitution and the Cincinnati association's constitution, Pike said.

The association's director of missions, Robert Dunn, stated to the Ohio Baptist Messenger newsjournal after the vote, "We did not vote to approve the ordination of women deacons or pastors. We did not say we believe in women deacons. We did not say we do not believe in the Bible. We did not vote that we did not stand on the Word of God. We did say again we do believe that the choice of deacons is the business of the church. We did say again that the association was not to interfere in the church's business."

Pike told Baptist Press, "We hold no animosity against (the Cincinnati association), but this was just an issue over which division would have to come.

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"The question is not, Can we limit what local churches can do? We believe in the autonomy of the local church. The question is, What can a local church do and still be a part of an association of churches? There have to be limits there.

"We think these are clear biblical issues," Pike said. "Our association does not want to be identified with churches that ordain women as deacons and pastors. We believe that it is very, very clear that a deacon is a man, the husband of one wife." Pike added, "I personally do not believe that ordaining a woman as a pastor or a deacon is the worst sin a church could commit, but it is a step in the wrong direction. We don't believe that God can bless the way he way he wants to those who begin moving in the wrong direction."

The Cincinnati association's vote on the proposed amendment followed an associational request to Mt. Carmel at last year's annual meeting, by an 84-59 vote, for the congregation to report its reasons for electing a woman deacon.

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Will Pollard and Art Toalston contributed to this story.

Virginia Baptists approve  
representation change

By Robert Dilday

Baptist Press  
11/17/94

SALEM, Va. (BP)--Virginia Baptists voted Nov. 16 to base representation from their churches on gifts to state causes alone, instead of contributions to state, national and international ministries.

The action -- taken during the annual meeting of the 600,000-member Baptist General Association of Virginia Nov. 15-16 -- is the first by a state Baptist convention to make contributions to state ministries the sole basis for church representation. Unlike many other state conventions, BGAV congregations qualify for representation only through financial contributions, not through a combination of money and church members.

Meeting in the southwest Virginia city of Salem, the 3,375 messengers also adopted a \$15 million budget for 1995 -- \$500,000 less than the current one -- and elected moderate Margaret Wayland of Danville, a Woman's Missionary Union leader, as president.

The change in representation, proposed by the Virginia Baptist general board, garnered 73 percent of the vote, above the two-thirds majority necessary for approval. Similar proposals had received majorities in each of the past two years but fell short of the required two-thirds.

Proponents said the change was needed because Virginia's previous financial plan permitted churches to contribute money only to national ministries -- such as the Southern Baptist Convention or the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship -- and still be represented at the annual BGAV meeting.

"This is neither right nor fair," said Roy Thomas of Crozet during debate on the constitutional amendment. "Churches which do not support Virginia Baptist ministries should not decide the issues among us."

But opponents said the proposal was aimed at diminishing representation from conservative churches, many having reduced or eliminated gifts to the BGAV to protest what they claim is a weakening of ties between the moderate-controlled state association and the more conservative SBC.

"This proposed action is one of exclusion and division designed to keep conservatives from participating in the BGAV," said Terry Collier of Pound. "It will send us on a course of division from which we will not return. One day the only ties between the BGAV and the SBC will be in our memories."

Following the vote, outgoing President Ron Crawford said "the argument ... that representation should be based on money given won the day. ... The margin of victory means that many conservative churches do not see it as exclusionary."

Crawford disputed some observers' claims that the new guidelines will increase direct gifts to the SBC. "I do not believe it will affect giving patterns (of churches)," he said.

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"I think most Virginia Baptists understood there was no attempt to exclude anyone," noted Reginald McDonough, BGAV executive director. "The issue was to adjust our system to the changing scene in the (national) denomination.

"I don't see that this makes us any less Southern Baptist. My hope is we will continue as Virginia Baptists to reach out to other Baptists in cooperation to advance the Redeemer's kingdom."

At a later press conference, McDonough told reporters, "This takes away the threat of a small group with a political agenda trying to take over the General Association."

But conservative strategist T.C. Pinckney of Alexandria said the move "will hurt the BGAV considerably," although he added it is too early to predict how.

"Taken in context -- and that is important -- it is punitive and consequently divisive and can only worsen the relationships within the BGAV," he said. "When you look at the principle in isolation, you can make a good case that those paying the bills do the voting. But when you take it in context -- conservatives would not believe that that is the primary motive of this change."

Pinckney attributed the lopsided margin favoring the change to the fact "moderates did a better job getting people motivated to come, as they should."

Howard Baldwin, interim executive director of the organization of Virginia conservatives, agreed the impact of the change will be "significant."

"The BGAV clearly indicated it is going in a direction away from the SBC," he maintained. "I was in favor of the amendment as far as fairness was concerned. People ought to give to that to which they belong. But I opposed the spirit in which I felt it was presented.

"Very few churches in Virginia give only to the SBC or the CBF without giving to the BGAV. The amendment was unnecessary."

In another matter, William Wilson, chair of the BGAV budget committee, said the reduced 1995 budget was an attempt to project "a realistic goal." "Our (Virginia Baptist) agencies have had enough of planning on 90 to 91 percent" of their allocation, he said, referring to the BGAV's failure for several years to meet its budget goal.

Although \$500,000 less than the current one, the 1995 budget will be divided the same way -- 62 percent for Virginia Baptist ministries, 36 percent for national and international ministries and 2 percent for partnership missions, which will subsidize joint ministries between Baptists in Virginia and those in Hungary, Mexico City and the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South New Jersey.

The national and international ministries portion of the budget will continue to be distributed according to one of three pre-designed "giving tracks" -- World Missions 1, 2 or 3 -- selected by Virginia churches or through specialized plans crafted by congregations.

World Missions 1 is distributed according to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program budget; WM 2 is divided among SBC and other Baptist ministries; and WM 3 is channeled to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Newly included in the WM 2 giving track are the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union; additional funds for the missions partnership with Pennsylvania/South Jersey; and a seminary scholarship fund.

Margaret Wayland, elected by a 72 percent margin over conservative John Simms of Salem, a retired attorney, is a former president of Virginia WMU. The Danville homemaker is a member of West Main Baptist Church there.

In his nomination speech, Salem pastor Stuart Carlton called Wayland a woman of "vision, courage and commitment," and said she "believes in missions, she practices missions, she encourages missions."

Scott Humphrey, an Alexandria, Va., layman who nominated Simms, called the candidate "a champion of missions" who is a "pray-er" and a "lover of God's book."

Also elected as first vice president was Kirkland Lashley of Roanoke, director of missions for the Roanoke Valley Baptist Association and second vice president, Marvin Kerby, pastor of First Baptist Church, West Point.

Both men were backed by moderates over conservative challengers.

In an unusual twist, the resolutions committee reported it received no resolutions -- a significant break with past practice, when the committee had been inundated with potentially divisive expressions of opinion.

"I do not know why the Lord has spoken to the messengers of this General Association and asked them not to submit resolutions," said Elizabeth Fogg of Richmond, chair of the resolutions committee. "But he has and I am grateful," she added, to laughter and applause from messengers.

Unanimously approved was a routine expression of appreciation for the host city and convention organizers.

Messengers did adopt a recommendation from the religious liberty committee praising the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs "for their effective leadership in securing passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act" and thanking "each Virginia member of Congress who voted" for the RFRA.

The legislation, passed by Congress 1993, guarantees strong legal protection of religious practices.

In other action, the BGAV denominational relations committee reported it is exploring the possibility of joint ministries with three other Baptist denominations, as instructed by messengers at last year's annual meeting.

Committee chair David Sapp of Richmond said continuing negotiations with the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A, the Progressive National Baptist Convention and the predominantly African American Baptist General Convention of Virginia are not "merger talks."

"It is your committee's understanding that this does not involve anything relating to merger or dual alignment but is simply a chance to look at ways we can work together with other groups," said Sapp.

Next year's meeting will be Nov. 9-10 in Virginia Beach.

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Indiana Baptists underscore  
Cooperative Program support

By Tammi Ledbetter

Baptist Press  
11/17/94

MARION, Ind. (BP)--Southern Baptists in Indiana honored the work of laymen and laywomen in their churches, re-elected their officers and made clear their commitment to the Cooperative Program during their annual meeting Nov. 15-16 at Sunnycrest Baptist Church, Marion.

Layman Sanford Peterson of Calvary Baptist Church, Greenwood, was re-elected to a second term as president, along with Steve Marcum, pastor of Graceland Baptist Church, New Albany, as first vice president and Don Moore, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Evansville, as second vice president.

Peterson devoted his address to heralding as "champions of the faith" laymen and laywomen in Indiana for their years of service to the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana and their local churches. Twenty-seven Southern Baptists from around the state were nominated for special recognition. Peterson said it was time to recognize those "who have in a very sincere and dedicated way quietly and humbly served God without recognition, year after year."

The 1995 budget of \$3,191,827 was approved unanimously, up from \$3,030,689 in 1994, and continuing to send 32.25 percent of receipts to the Cooperative Program of an anticipated \$1,962,655 in CP giving by the state's churches.

A motion introduced by L. Sid West, pastor of Waynedale Baptist Church, Ft. Wayne, was unanimously approved without dissent and instructed the state's executive board to "maintain our present policy regarding gifts to the cause of Christ as sent by our churches throughout the Cooperative Program." The motion thanked Indiana churches for their support of the Cooperative Program without any negative designation.

Expressing his brokenheartedness of a decision by Texas Baptists to redefine the criteria by which Cooperative Program gifts from local churches are considered acceptable, West said they will now recognize gifts to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as Cooperative Program dollars.

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"I believe there needs to be a hedge placed in our state for now and in the future and say this is where we stand," West said. He appealed for passage of the motion to serve as "a clarion call from Baptists in Indiana" to continue to serve the Lord in support of the Cooperative Program.

Resolutions unanimously approved by messengers opposed gambling and Medicaid funding of abortion, and called on Congress and President Clinton to "heed the Contract With America lest a lack of confidence become firmly entrenched." The resolution offered by David Wood, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Floyds Knobs, urged "those in the House and the Senate to frame this new legislation within the clear precepts of the Word of God" and called for prayer for elected leaders.

Other resolutions commended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President R. Albert Mohler for "a total commitment to the Word of God" and in recognition of his "visionary leadership."

Next year's convention will meet at Tree of Life Baptist in Gary, Nov. 14-15.

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New England Baptists adopt  
resolution against racism

By Dan Nicholas

Baptist Press  
11/17/94

NASHUA, N.H. (BP)--A resolution condemning racism was adopted by messengers attending the Baptist Convention of New England annual meeting Nov. 10-11 at the Sheraton Tara Hotel, Nashua, N.H.

With 251 registered messengers representing 73 churches, the convention also approved wording changes to its constitution and bylaws and adopted a \$2.3 million budget.

The resolution on racism "wholeheartedly reject(s) all forms of racism," calling it "one of the greatest barriers to world evangelization" and publicly repenting for "condoning and perpetuating individual and systemic racism in our past and in our lifetime."

The resolution noted "one of the precipitating factors (though not the only factor) in the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention was the desire to protect the institution of slavery."

"While we may not have personally participated in such distant acts of evil as slavery, and while we cannot undo the past, we desire to express our sense of grief for the injustice of our former days," the resolution stated.

By an overwhelming majority, messengers adopted the convention's slightly revised constitution and bylaws after discussing various wording changes. The document will be reviewed annually by the administrative committee of the BCNE board of directors.

Messengers unanimously approved a \$2,387,714 budget for 1995, which is \$81,000 or 3.3 percent less than the 1994 amount. In Cooperative Program giving, the budget includes an anticipated \$557,000 and retains the same 79-21 division between New England and Southern Baptist Convention causes.

The reduction in the overall budget was possible when several short-term, cyclical projects either ended or were not renewed, John Ambra, director of business services and stewardship, said after the convention's board of directors meeting in October.

As planned, several church planter apprentice positions were not included in the 1995 budget and block grants from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board were "shifted to alternative means of funding," he said.

Nominations for BCNE officers were received from the floor at the annual meeting and brief nominating speeches were delivered.

Re-elected were: president, Mary Beth Caffey, an Auburn, Maine, travel agent; first vice president, Richard Wright; second vice president, Sandra Williams,

Other resolutions adopted by the convention honored Floyd and Betty Collins and Doran McCarty in their retirements and expressed support for the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program.

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Collins will retire Dec. 31 as director of missions for the Rhode Island-based Southeastern New England Baptist Association, a post he has held since 1987. Collins previously was director of missions in the northern suburbs of Detroit for 12 years. He was a church planter and a pastor before that. Asked about highlights he experienced as director of missions in southeastern New England, Collins included the association's growth from 12 to 22 congregations during the past seven years.

McCarty retires Dec. 31 as coordinator of the Northeast Baptist Education Consortium and as executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's Seminary Extension office in Nashville, Tenn.

Henry Blackaby was among the featured speakers setting the tone for the convention's meeting.

"Yesterday's anointing is not sufficient for today's assignment," the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's spiritual awakening specialist said.

Revival was never accomplished by prayer in opposition to something or for others, Blackaby commented. Throughout history, revival came when Christians prayed for themselves to have evangelistic boldness.

Revival comes not when God changes the world, but when he changes his people, said Blackaby, calling prayer a prerequisite for renewal.

The 1995 annual meeting will be Nov. 9-10 in the Hartford, Conn., area.

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Cooperation underscored  
at Oklahoma convention

By Dave Parker

Baptist Press  
11/17/94

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Harmony, cooperation and evangelism highlighted the 89th annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma Nov. 14-16 at Southern Hills Baptist Church, Oklahoma City.

Messengers also approved a 1995 budget of \$17.45 million, which keeps the split at 58 percent for Oklahoma missions and 42 percent to the Southern Baptist Convention causes.

There were 1,247 messengers in attendance at the meeting, which focused on the "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now." evangelistic effort planned Jan. 9-March 9, 1995.

Officers elected were Charles Graves, pastor of Quail Springs Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, president; Wade Burleson, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Enid, first vice president, and Lloyd Campbell II, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sentinel, second vice president.

Resolutions passed were:

- against the French abortion pill RU-486.
- encouraging continued cooperation.
- endorsing the "Here's Hope" campaign.

The only discussion was on the RU-486 resolution. Larry Bishop, a lawyer and member of First Baptist Church, Norman, said he supported the resolution except for a section urging Southern Baptists to boycott the Roussel Uclaf Co. and its German parent company Hoechst AG, as well as American subsidiaries Hoechst Celanese and Hoechst Roussel.

Bishop said many people have patented medication prescribed for them, medication that is available from only one supplier. He questioned if any research had been conducted to determine which medicines would be included in the boycott.

Jim Paslay, pastor of First Baptist Church, Maysville, and member of the BGC0 Christian Life Committee, said the resolution was exactly the same resolution passed by the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando. He said no such research had been done.

Messengers voted in favor of the resolution, with Bishop voicing the only negative vote.

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The resolution on continued cooperation, quoting Philippians 2:1-2, notes God has blessed the BGCO, and resolved "as Christians who believe in and are striving to be obedient to God's Holy Word, we pledge to love, live and work in harmony with all our fellow Oklahoma Baptists so that we might, through the Cooperative Program, be obedient to His commandment, reap the benefit of that obedience individually and collectively, and that we commit ourselves to even greater levels of cooperation in fulfilling God's Great Commission."

It passed unanimously, as did the other resolutions.

Graves was elected president in a runoff election over Nick Garland, pastor of First Baptist Church, Broken Arrow. Graves received 53 percent of the 456 votes cast.

The first ballot had four nominees, including Bill Barnett, pastor of Indian Nations Baptist Church near Seminole, who had just completed two terms as first vice president and was the first Native American to be elected to a statewide office in the BGCO.

Votes were counted by having messengers stand. In the first election, it appeared all four men did well, with Graves ahead.

Three candidates also ran for first vice president. Burleson won on the first ballot.

In the second vice president election, Campbell outdistanced one other nominee. Terry Wilson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Okemah, nominated Campbell, noting none of the officers were pastor of a church with fewer than 200 members. Campbell's Sentinel church had 458 members and an average attendance of 162 in 1993.

The 1995 convention will be Nov. 13-15 at First Baptist Church, Edmond.

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Penn/Jersey Baptists approve  
slight CP hike, Va. partnership

Baptist Press  
11/17/94

MIDDLETOWN, Pa. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey approved increasing its portion of Cooperative Program gifts by .15 percent for national and international Southern Baptist causes and agreed to enter into a partnership with the General Baptist Association of Virginia during its 24th annual meeting Nov. 3-5 at Valley Baptist Church.

With 213 registered messengers and 120 visitors attending, the convention approved a 1995 operating budget of \$2,018,368.

The budget includes a projected Cooperative Program giving total of \$594,800, with a percentage-of-budget increase of .15 percent in gifts to national and international Southern Baptist causes, moving from 22.60 percent to 22.75 percent, or totaling \$135,317.

Upon recommendation of the convention's executive board messengers agreed to enter into at three-year partnership with the BGAV. The mutual relationship will involve churches and individuals in both convention's working on projects in both conventions.

Ray Wise, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hershey, Pa., was re-elected president. George Sanders, pastor of Altoona (Pa.) Baptist Church, was re-elected first vice president in balloting over Paul Broyles, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, West Chester, Pa. Andrew Stabler, layman from First Southern Baptist Church, Williamsport, Pa., was re-elected second vice president.

Messengers approved resolutions including:

- opposing any legislative initiatives to legalize riverboat gambling.
- publicly repenting of racism.
- supporting and encouraging churches and individuals to set aside the first Monday of each month for a time of prayer and fasting in anticipation of the Here's Hope revivals in 1995.

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-- proposing a series of evangelistic goals for 1995 with set levels of goals: Victory Goal of 2,500 baptisms, approximately 312 per association; Challenge Goal of 3,000 baptisms, approximately 375 per association; and a Hallelujah Goal of 3,500 Baptisms, approximately 438 per association; and to have at least 250 churches by the annual convention in 1995. The convention now has 225 churches and chapels.

The 1995 annual meeting will be the convention's 25th and will be Nov. 2-4 at Emmanuel Baptist Church, West Chester, Pa.

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Ohio Baptists oppose  
bookstore's closing

Baptist Press  
11/17/94

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP)--Opposition to closing the Baptist Book Store in Columbus, Ohio, was voiced in a resolution adopted during the 41st annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

The bookstore, slated to close Dec. 31, is located in the Baptist building in low-traffic shopping area of downtown.

Don Murray, a regional representative of the Baptist Sunday School Board, addressed the convention to say the board will be considering a future Baptist Book Store with greater traffic flow and potential in Ohio.

John Hays, pastor of Jersey Baptist Church, Pataskala, was elected convention president in a runoff after an initial ballot with four nominees. Hays also is a trustee of the Foreign Mission Board.

Steve Hopkins, pastor of Whitehall Baptist Church, Columbus, was elected first vice president in a runoff after an initial ballot with five nominees. Guy Morton, pastor of Lakeview Baptist Church, Vermilion, was elected second vice president without opposition.

A 1995 Cooperative Program budget of \$3,515,798 was adopted in anticipated giving from the churches, with 40 percent to be forwarded to Southern Baptist Convention national and international Cooperative Program causes, the same percentage as last year.

The 1995 convention will be Nov. 7-9 at Pisgah Heights Baptist Church, Cincinnati.

A total of 491 messengers registered for the convention, held at Highland Baptist Church, Grove City.

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Eyewitness account moves  
woman to support relief work

By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press  
11/17/94

NACOGDOCHES, Texas (BP)--The plight of Rwandan children lost in the refugee camps at Goma, Zaire, moved Betty Claunch deeply.

More than 1 million Rwandans flooded into Goma during three days this past July, fleeing a genocidal bloodbath that killed an estimated 500,000 people. Adrift in the ocean of refugees were thousands of children who had been orphaned or separated from their parents.

In September, Southern Baptists opened a camp at Goma capable of housing 500 "unaccompanied minors." Journeyman Elissa Wilkins, a friend of Claunch's, was one the Southern Baptist relief workers at the children's camp.

The sea of humanity flooding the refugee camps overwhelmed Wilkins, a recent graduate of Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas. She wrote to Claunch, whose family had "adopted" her as part of a student ministry program at Oak Grove Baptist Church in Nacogdoches.

She told Claunch about the children she had met -- how they clung to her in their hunger for a loving touch.

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The letter had a deep effect on Claunch, even though she's no stranger to missions. She is active in Woman's Missionary Union work in her church, and she and her husband, Ron, have both participated in short-term volunteer projects. Her brother, Mike Key of Togo, and her cousin, Jerry Key of Brazil, are both missionaries of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"I thought about those poor children separated from their parents and my heart just went out to them," Claunch said. "It sounded as if Elissa was overwhelmed by the need."

As she wondered about what she could do to help, Claunch read an article about the refugee crisis in the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of Texas Baptists. The article said every penny given to Southern Baptist foreign missions for humanitarian aid goes straight to relief projects.

Claunch, who baby-sits an infant four days a week, decided to take some of the money she earned and give it to the children's camp at Goma. Although the amount wasn't large, she knew all of it would reach the children.

By contrast, most relief organizations use at least 15 percent of their hunger and relief receipts for administrative or fund-raising costs, said Jim Foster, human needs consultant for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

While relief needs have multiplied in the last decade, resources for meeting those needs are at an all-time low, Foster said.

In October, Foster's office approved 67 projects estimated to cost more than \$2 million. Yet relief receipts that same month totaled \$462,668. In 1993, offerings designated for humanitarian relief sank to the lowest levels since 1983.

Southern Baptists must ponder their commitment to aid projects like the one in Goma, Foster said.

"It doesn't appear the world situation will improve anytime soon," he said. "The need for relief work will only increase. The question we must ask ourselves is, 'Are we going to have the resources to respond?'"

Not unless many others like Betty Claunch are moved by the plight of less fortunate people.

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Kelly is a staff writer at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

SBCNet enrollment total  
takes third large increase

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
11/17/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The number of people joining SBCNet, the Southern Baptist data communications network, has made a third substantial jump in 14 months with the addition of more than 500 new users from August to November.

Total membership increased from 2,500 in August to 3,000 on Nov. 9, according to David Haywood, coordinator of the network

The increase follows a doubling in the number of SBCNet members in just over eight months from 1,000 on Sept. 1, 1993, to 2,000 on May 19, 1994, followed by a 500-member increase from May 19 to Aug. 10.

The number of on-line hours per week within SBCNet has increased from 116 to as high as 1,000 since August 1993, when the flat rate of \$7.95 per month for SBCNet charges was instituted. Individuals accessing the network during that time increased from 393 to 1,300 per week.

Services available on SBCNet for both church staff and lay leaders have also increased in number and variety, according to Haywood.

Effective Nov. 15, Woman's Missionary Union added to existing SBCNet services "MissionsNet," a library to carry information about missions education. Haywood said other new services, now in the planning stages, are expected to be announced in the next few months.

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Other SBCNet services include supplemental teaching helps for adult and youth Sunday school lessons in Life and Work, Bible Book, and Convention Uniform series; Baptist Press, the official Southern Baptist news service; News Room, offering news and feature stories from Southern Baptist agencies and state conventions; Facts & Trends, the Sunday School Board's newsletter for church and denominational leaders; and Facts & Trends Information Service, news briefs from the Sunday School Board, Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board with usage suggestions for church newsletters.

Also included is Clip Art, a collection of ready-to-use art pieces; Bold Mission Prayer, requests for prayer from home and foreign missionaries; DiscipleLife Plus, a youth discipleship supplement; Innovative Ministry Library; and Minister's Corner, a collection of sermons and illustrations.

Among the 60 CompuServe Basic Services available to SBCNet subscribers are Communications Exchange, which provides the opportunity to read classified ads, support forums and the member directory; News, Sports and Weather, which provides Associated Press Online, Accu-Weather Maps/reports, National Weather Service and "U.S. News & World Report" magazine; Travel Services; Shopping Services; Games and Entertainment; Reference Library; and Money Talks, including stock quotes and other financial services.

Cost of SBCNet is a flat rate of \$7.95 monthly, plus CompuServe's standard plan charge of \$8.95 monthly.

SBCNet may be accessed by using a computer, modem and a membership kit distributed by the Sunday School Board. Kits, at \$20 each, contain software, account information and a \$15 credit toward usage, plus a free month of CompuServe's basic services. Kits are available in DOS, Macintosh and Windows versions and may be ordered by calling 1-800-458-2772. Additional information about SBCNet may be ordered by calling Haywood at 1-800-325-7749, ext. 2895.

People who are already members of CompuServe may join SBCNet by simply typing "GO SBCNet" at any CompuServe prompt without purchasing a kit.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "N.C. messengers OK 3 giving plans, alter theological education funding," dated 11/15/94, please change the spelling of name of James Langford in the 9th and 14th paragraphs to James Lankford.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

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**(BP)**

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