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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

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 Strobe, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

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Southern Baptists help
refugees from Chechnya war

By Mike Creswell

Baptist Press
5/30/95

GROZNY, Chechnya (BP)--Baptists in war-ravaged Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, continue to minister despite the death and destruction around them, say two Southern Baptist missionaries who visited there.

Jack Shelby and Norman Lytle, both based in Moscow, visited Grozny and Vladikavkaz (also known as Ordzhonikidze), about 70 miles away, to evaluate refugee needs and the use of Southern Baptist hunger relief funds. They traveled with Michael Zhidkov, a Russian Baptist leader, and Boris Godunov, a Russian Baptist photographer.

The team made the trip in late April, but the report was only recently made available.

The visitors brought away vivid memories of bombed buildings, sniper fire, land mines and bodies of victims slain in the fighting.

Chechnya is a small, predominantly Muslim republic in the Russian federation located east of the Black Sea. Russian troops attacked when leaders there declared independence. Intense fighting has dragged on for months.

Before the fighting broke out, there were about 300 Baptists in Chechnya, about two-thirds of them in Grozny. Today only about 150 Baptists remain in the war-ravaged city. Two Baptist women, ages 60 and 80, were killed when Russian troops pounded Grozny with artillery shells. About 20 homes of Baptists have been destroyed.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board appropriated \$50,000 in February to help war refugees in the region. The money -- sent in five installments -- is being used by Baptists in Grozny and by Vladikavkaz Baptist Church in Vladikavkaz and North Ossetian Christian Mission in Ossetia. Both congregations are led by Baptist pastor Peter Lunichkin. About 70,000 refugees from Georgia, Ingushetia and Chechnya are in Ossetia, a state adjacent to Chechnya.

Shelby recommended the board send another \$50,000 after verifying the funds were being managed with integrity and that supplies bought are indeed reaching needy people. The team flew from Moscow to Vladikavkaz and then made a grueling six-hour drive to Grozny in a Russian-made military ambulance pulling a trailer laden with food and clothing. Roads were pocked with potholes, rough and dusty, with numerous military checkpoints.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

"We distributed Russian Bibles and New Testaments to the soldiers at each post and shared our testimonies with them," said Shelby.

As they approached the city, they began to see damage and bullet holes. In the city center they saw military vehicles and machine gun posts. "We passed by block after block of bombed out buildings. Not even a utility pole was left standing," Shelby said.

"We walked through the center of town, handing out New Testaments and candy to the soldiers and civilians we met and talking with them about Christ," Shelby said. "We were warned it would be OK to walk down the main street, but that we should walk quickly, since snipers were active.

"The day before, two men had been shot dead by a sniper when their car slowed to go through a flooded overpass about 100 meters down the street we were walking on," he said. "Later, when we drove through the same flooded underpass, everyone in the van was very quiet until we were clear of the area. The tension was palpable."

He described seeing unexploded mortar shells buried in a sidewalk which were kicked by one of the group. "We tried to stay on the well-trodden paths on the sidewalks to avoid mines," he said.

Shelby described a mosaic on world peace, riddled with bullet holes. "Across the street, an elderly woman squatted by the roadside, washing her laundry in a large mud puddle created by a bomb crater."

Rows of decomposing bodies lay in a cemetery, some barely recognizable as human. The team also saw graves in what once had been a park and playground.

The team stayed with a Baptist pastor in Grozny one night. A unexploded rocket lay buried in front of the house. A Baptist church had been riddled by bullet holes. At night they could hear mortars and machine gun fire. Shelby and Lytle preached the next morning.

"We emphasized the power of the resurrection and the peace and security found only in Christ," Shelby said.

~~The team distributed parcels~~ of food to church members. The parcels included bread, sausages, powdered milk, tea, corned beef, flour, sugar, barley, dried fruit, canned goods and dextrose tablets. They distributed the rest of their supplies throughout the city, sharing them with Muslim and Christian families alike.

Moving quickly to avoid sniper fire, they shared Russian Bibles, New Testaments and sweets to people standing in line to collect water.

"Over and over, the people in Grozny expressed their gratitude for our help. Tearfully they told us how grateful they were that we had come to visit them in their time of trouble," Shelby said.

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Bulgarian officials counter
Baptist construction plans

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
5/30/95

SOFIA, Bulgaria (BP)--The city government of Sofia, Bulgaria, has moved one step closer to confiscating property where Baptists were building a school, orphanage and church.

In its most recent action, Sofia's mayor and city council referred an investigation of the Baptist project to the Commission for Education and Culture, which claims to be hostile to it.

Sofia is the capital of Bulgaria, one of many Eastern European nations struggling with the responsibilities of freedom after decades of communist rule. Former communists, who now call themselves socialists, control much of the government there and align themselves with the powerful Bulgarian Orthodox Church bloc. The mayor is a socialist.

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The Hamburg, Germany-based European Baptist Press Service, which has followed the story, has called for prayer vigils to sway the mayor, council and Bulgarian people to stop persecuting Baptists.

On Feb. 17 the city notified Baptists they had begun investigating the project and ordered that the construction halt. But the council repeatedly postponed action on the matter after a storm of protests through Bulgarian consulates in several countries and letters and faxes to city officials.

The Baptist Union of Bulgaria and Sofia Baptist Church secured necessary documents and approvals before beginning construction in 1994. Records show the union received a lease for the property in 1992 and won a permit to build on it in 1993. Baptists already have spent about \$175,000 on the project.

Most recently the matter was proposed for the city council's consideration May 23 but instead was referred to the commission.

The commission fears "Baptists will influence the orphans for which they will care, and so predetermine their fate," said Theo Angelov, president of the Baptist union in Bulgaria. Also, officials feel "it is not so good for the Baptist orphanage to be so near (two state schools) because of the influence Baptists may spread."

These fears reflect the hysteria towards Baptists that has run rampant in the media and political circles since shortly after the country shook off repressive leaders as communism fell throughout Europe. After Bulgarian Baptists enjoyed the fruits of rapid growth and response to the gospel, things slowed down two years ago as negative rumors began circulating about Baptists.

Baptists have tried to establish themselves as historically grounded in Bulgaria along with other legitimate evangelical groups, pointing to their presence that predates communism. They also have emphasized their stance for freedom of religion and choice.

Still, stories continue to circulate against Baptists, who have had no success in publicly replying to their accusers, Angelov said. One such story, run in a reputable newspaper, was published with the headline, "Baptists Eat Babies for Breakfast."

Under communism, Bulgarian Baptist membership had been reduced to less than 1,000 believers because of imprisonments and political disappearances.

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Foreign Mission Board missionary Stanley Crabb of European Baptist Press Service contributed to this story.

Bob Terry elected editor
of Alabama Baptist paper

By Keith Hinson

Baptist Press
5/30/95

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Bobby S. "Bob" Terry has been elected editor of The Alabama Baptist, effective Aug. 1. Since 1975, Terry has served as editor of Word & Way, the state Baptist newsjournal of Missouri.

The board of directors of The Alabama Baptist unanimously elected Terry during its regular annual business session May 26. Terry succeeds Hudson D. Baggett, who served as editor from 1966 until his death Nov. 17.

A native of Decatur, Ala., Terry, 52, previously served as associate editor of the Western Recorder, state Baptist newspaper of Kentucky.

In commenting upon his election, Terry said, "When first contacted by the committee, I told my wife it would be a miracle if the search committee for The Alabama Baptist were to select me.

"Their unanimous vote today, I believe, is a miracle from God, and I take it as confirmation of the dream the Lord planted in my heart some years ago to serve as editor of The Alabama Baptist.

"I am humbled by the election. I look forward to being part of the Alabama Baptist family and serving God through the people of Alabama known as Baptists," Terry said.

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Terry is a 1965 graduate of Mississippi College, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree and majored in history and communications. He served as news director at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary while working toward a master of divinity degree, which he earned in 1968. In 1979, Terry earned a doctor of ministry degree from SBTS.

Terry has served as pastor, interim pastor and staff member of churches in Michigan, Mississippi and Kentucky. As an inspirational speaker and preacher, he has addressed at various conventions, evangelism conferences, revivals, and retreats.

Terry is married to the former Eleanor Ruth Foster of Vicksburg, Miss., who is senior associate dean of student affairs at William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo. They are members of First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, Mo.

The Terrys have two children: Brent Terry, an attorney in Atlanta, and Catherine Jean Cullen, a social work student at Southern Seminary.

Mike D. McLemore, chairman of the search committee and pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church in the Birmingham Baptist Association, said in a statement, "Dr. Terry is well qualified to assume the position of editor of The Alabama Baptist, following the great leadership of our past esteemed editor, Dr. Hudson Baggett. ...

"(Terry) is widely considered to be one of the top state editors in the Southern Baptist Convention. He was highly recommended to our committee," McLemore said.

Other directors on the search committee included H.L. "Lindy" Martin, pastor of First Baptist Church, Vincent; Herman L. "Bubba" Scott of Montgomery, retired executive director of the Alabama High School Athletic Association; Jean B. Slaughter of Wetumpka, a retired schoolteacher; and Stephen E. Stewart, publisher of The Monroe Journal.

Gary Fenton, pastor of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Homewood and newly elected chairman of The Alabama Baptist board, said, "I have known Bob Terry for 20 years. I've observed his work as editor of Word & Way as having great integrity and a very high degree of professionalism. He has a great love for Baptists and Baptist churches.

"Having read his editorials for 20 years, I know he is very much a believer in the local church. I think the search committee is to be congratulated on such an excellent choice," said Fenton, who is a native of Missouri.

Fenton, who ~~formerly was~~ pastor of two churches in Missouri, said the newspaper should be able to "build on the excellent foundation that has been laid by Hudson Baggett and previous editors and continue the great tradition of our newspaper. ... I congratulate the search committee on the process that they used and feel that the unanimous vote by the board was not only an endorsement of the choice but also of the procedure used in arriving at the choice."

Troy Morrison, executive secretary-treasurer of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, said, "I want to commend the search committee on their excellent work and outstanding recommendation.

"When Hudson Baggett passed away, I did not think he could be replaced -- and he cannot. However, Bob Terry will make his own mark. He will find his way into the hearts of Alabama Baptists.

"I have known Bob Terry for a long time. He will do an excellent job as editor. I am well pleased with his election. I pledge to him my prayers and cooperation as he begins his new work," said Morrison, who is an ex-officio member of The Alabama Baptist board.

In making its unanimous recommendation to the board, the search committee cited Terry's high regard among Missouri Baptists for "his professionalism and fairness." During Terry's editorship in Missouri, Word & Way won 57 awards in national and international competitions. Terry himself has won awards from the Baptist Public Relations Association, Associated Church Press and Evangelical Press Association. Terry is a past president of the Southern Baptist Press Association and currently serves as its executive secretary-treasurer, a part-time position.

Although he mostly grew up in Michigan, much of his family's roots are in Alabama. Terry was born in Decatur, and his parents, Lee and Opal Terry, are native Alabamians who now live in Decatur where they are members of Parkview Baptist Church.

He has served as president of Southern Seminary's national alumni association and as a member of its board of directors. He is also a past president of the Southern Seminary Missouri alumni chapter.

Terry has long worked as an advocate with the U.S. Postal Service for state Baptist newspapers and other religious mailers. Since 1990, he has represented the nation's religious press on the Mailers' Technical Advisory Committee, a group of mailers that meets quarterly with senior management of the USPS about mailing issues.

He has also been involved in various missions and evangelism projects, including as coordinator of the "Bold Mission Taiwan Project," a three-year mission effort between Missouri and the Chinese Baptist Convention in Taiwan; state media chairman of the "Good News Missouri" campaign; a member of the national media committee for "Good News America;" and a steering committee member for Bold Mission Thrust in Missouri.

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6-year-old computer user
finds SBCNet 'really neat'

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
5/30/95

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Not every computer network user has to sign off for a nap or early bedtime.

But 6-year-old Hannah Whitehead sometimes does just that, despite the occasional important people with whom she converses on-line.

Hannah, daughter of Janet and Mike Whitehead, members of First Baptist Church, Raytown, Mo., has always lived around computers.

Mike Whitehead, who serves as general counsel for the SBC's Christian Life Commission, said Hannah, the youngest of their three children, began playing games with the computer at age 2 or 3.

In April, Hannah began to explore SBCNet, Southern Baptists' computer network, and soon learned how to convene a group for conversation. Her older brother, Jonathan, and sister, Holly, Mike observed, wonder aloud if Hannah realizes those are "real people" she is talking with.

Since she does all her own keyboarding, Hannah likely puts some adults to shame, both with her ability to type hunt-and-peck-style and her comfort level with technology.

On a recent day, Hannah engaged in conversation Julie W., a pastor's wife in Cincinnati, and Bill Taylor, director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's Bible teaching-reaching (BTR) division in Nashville, Tenn.

Though the conversation was brief, Hannah gained some information and demonstrated moral support for her new friend, Julie.

When Julie asked Taylor to translate "BTR," Hannah quickly added, "It's OK, Julie. I didn't know either."

Hannah, who gets "on the net" right after kindergarten ends and before giving lunch a second thought, said, "Usually I like talking to people. I've met a few kid friends on there.

"I talked to one man, Simon, in London, England. He told me he is 32."

Hannah also said she likes to read the on-line messages "to see what's in there and go to the libraries to figure out what's there."

Hannah has developed some pen pals among children of other SBCNet users. Sometimes she meets the children who happen to be watching when their parents meet Hannah on the network.

For all the adults in the Southern Baptist Convention who have been afraid to try using a computer, Hannah has words of encouragement.

"I showed my grandpa how to use SBCNet yesterday," she announced with obvious pride. "He liked it."

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And to point to the fun persons miss when they don't use SBCNet, Hannah added, "SBCNet is a really neat thing to do. I've made about 20 friends on it."

SBCNet is Southern Baptists' computer network, coordinated by the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. Its services include supplemental teaching helps for adult and youth Sunday school lessons in three curriculum series; Baptist Press, the official Southern Baptist news service; and a variety of other services aimed at specific interests of church staff persons and church members.

Effective May 1, the network expanded to three forums, adding more message and library areas and providing for expansion in services for the future.

SBCNet, may be accessed by using a computer, modem and a membership kit distributed free by the Sunday School Board. Kits, which provide access to services of CompuServe and SBCNet, contain software, account information and a monetary credit toward initial charges. They are available in DOS, Macintosh and Windows versions. The flat-rate cost of SBCNet, \$7.95 monthly, and CompuServe basic services, \$9.95 monthly, provides users the ability to read and download files and participate in on-line conferences, without per-minute charges.

The CompuServe charge provides unlimited use of more than 120 basic services, including a limited time each month on the Internet. Thereafter, additional charges apply for additional time on the Internet and for extended services. People who are already members of CompuServe may join SBCNet by simply typing "GO SBCNet" at any CompuServe prompt.

Among the CompuServe Basic Services available to SBCNet subscribers are news, sports and weather; the opportunity to read classified ads, support forums and the member directory; travel and shopping services; games and entertainment; Reference Library; and Money Talks, including stock quotes and other financial services.

To order an SBCNet kit or to obtain additional information, call 1-800-325-7749.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press. The cutline, hannah.txt, is posted in the SBCNet News Room.

~~BSSB trustees to meet~~
during SBC in Atlanta

Baptist Press
5/30/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A special meeting of the trustees of the Baptist Sunday School Board has been called for Wednesday afternoon, June 21, in Atlanta to consider candidates for two vacant vice presidential positions, according to BSSB President James T. Draper Jr.

The meeting will be held at the Georgia World Congress Center during the afternoon the convention is in recess.

Draper said the positions of vice president of the finance and business services group and vice president of the retail group have been vacant since a reorganization of the executive management group in November 1994.

The vice president for finance and business services oversees the work of the business and finance, production services, facility management, distribution services, human resources and information systems departments. The vice president for retail directs the work of Baptist Book Stores and direct marketing.

"We did not feel it was in the best interest of the BSSB to wait until our September meeting to present these candidates for consideration," Draper said. "By calling this meeting during the SBC when many trustees already were planning to be in Atlanta, we are able to keep meeting costs lower."

Draper said the two candidates have been interviewed by a trustee selection committee.

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Advisory committee convened
for conference center planning By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A blue ribbon committee of Southern Baptist pastors, laypersons and denominational leaders met May 24-25 at the Baptist Sunday School Board to draft a proposed mission statement for Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) conference centers to become a foundation for improved programming and facilities into the 21st century.

"It is my conviction that the conference centers can and must play a vital role in the denomination as we move into the 21st century," BSSB President James T. Draper Jr., told the 15 committee members attending the meeting. "They must be seen as places of healing and reflection. They must continue to be places where life-changing decisions are made, where people hear and respond to the call of God in their lives."

Draper said the committee was brought together to draft a mission statement for Glorieta and Ridgecrest from which master program and facilities plans will be completed by the end of 1995. He said a 10-year decline in attendance and changing lifestyles point to the need to look at varied topics and formats for future conference center events.

Committee members were provided input from BSSB components and other SBC agencies about the conference centers. They spent about five hours in small-group discussions, drafting mission statements and identifying needed actions to fulfill the mission.

The final draft states: "Glorieta and Ridgecrest Conference Centers will be the first choice for providing spiritual experiences in a Christian atmosphere for all our guests. These life-changing experiences will nurture vibrant faith, develop effective leaders, encourage healthy families and mobilize believers for mission and ministry."

Mike Arrington, BSSB executive director for corporate affairs who oversees conference center work, said the statement drafted by the advisory committee will be circulated for input and refinement among conference center, BSSB and SBC agency personnel who conduct conference center programs.

"It is imperative that we have the best creative thinking of conference center employees and programmers to enable the conference centers to have a continued and even increased impact on the lives of Southern Baptists and others who attend Glorieta and Ridgecrest. It is impossible to count the persons who have made life-changing decisions at the conference centers and gone on to serve as pastors, church staff members, missionaries and dedicated laypersons," Arrington said.

Committee members said fulfillment of the conference center mission will require "flexible, relevant programming and excellent facilities at an affordable cost." They urged pursuing "funding and land development initiatives to meet capital needs," along with seven other actions.

Arrington said consideration is being given to a capital campaign targeted to a small number of large donors to fund \$15-20 million in improvements at the conference centers. He emphasized no decision will be made until work is completed on the master programming and facilities plans which will be undertaken cooperatively by the board's church growth group and conference center personnel. Any proposal for a capital campaign would include careful planning to avoid competition with the Cooperative Program, Arrington said. A capital campaign would require the approval of BSSB trustees and the SBC Executive Committee.

The committee will meet again in September to review the master program plan and initial work on the master facilities plan.

Jerry Davis, chairman of the committee and president of the College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, Mo., shared his experiences at Ridgecrest as a teen-ager, citing especially the influence of Willard Weeks, who directed Ridgecrest at that time.

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Despite a busy schedule, Davis said he "will do anything I can to make sure others continue to meet God at Glorieta and Ridgecrest and make decisions that impact their lives for eternity."

In addition to Davis, committee members participating in the meeting included: Mark Brister, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, La.; Charles Q. Carter, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Ga.; Dan Cathy, layman and executive vice president of Chick-Fil-A, Atlanta; Claude Cone, executive director of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico; Dan Francis, pastor of First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn.; Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas; and Bill Hall, layman from San Clemente, Calif.

Others were: Kirk Humphreys, president of Century Investments of Oklahoma City and chairman of BSSB trustees; David Maddox, layman from Fullerton, Calif.; Darold Morgan, retired president of the SBC Annuity Board, living in Richardson, Texas; Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville; Bill Tanner, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma; June Whitlow, executive vice president of Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham, Ala.; and Glenn Wilcox, president of Wilcox Travel, Asheville, N.C.

In addition to Draper and Arrington, eight BSSB leaders served as resource persons to the committee.

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(BP) photos of committee members in work sessions during the May 24-25 meeting mailed to individual state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press.

EDITORS' NOTE: This is the last article in "The Spirit of Southern Baptists, 1845-1995" series by the Historical Commission, SBC.

The SBC: then (1845)
and now (1995)

By William Fletcher Allen

Baptist Press
5/30/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern and Northern Baptists parted company in 1845 when almost 300 delegates (now called messengers) from eight Southern states and the District of Columbia met at Augusta, Ga., on May 8-12 to form the Southern Baptist Convention.

The major catalyst in the split was slavery. The 31-year-old Triennial Convention's thread of cooperation snapped when its Home Mission Society, previously neutral on the issue, ruled prospective missionaries could not be slave holders.

However, missions remained the distinctive priority for the fledgling Southern Baptist Convention, with the preamble to the constitution stating their "purpose of carrying into effect the benevolent intentions of our constituents, by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining and directing the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort, for the propagation of the Gospel, agree to the following rules, or fundamental principles."

Article II spelled out the missions directions: to "promote Foreign and Domestic Missions, and other important objects connected with the Redeemer's kingdom, and to combine for this purpose ... (and) respect the independence and equal rights of the Churches." They laid the groundwork for the election of officers and boards of managers for "as many boards as ... will be necessary."

In shaping the new convention's constitution, the delegates in 1845 followed the structure of the old General Missionary Convention of 1814, which certainly had been successful. Missions was the mainstay. The two mission boards formed at the Augusta sessions were placed at Richmond, Va., (foreign) and Marion, Ala. (domestic). The framers also considered theological education and publications, but neither was birthed until later. Financing the boards was another matter of concern.

A century and a half later, except for the basic foundation and ideals, there has been a galaxy of change. The Southern Baptist Convention is much, much larger and, for the most part, better.

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Basis of SBC membership. During the earlier years, membership was based on financial giving, proportioned to allow those giving larger sums to have more representatives, not to exceed five. A contribution of \$100 was the minimum. Membership requirements have changed somewhat, however. Today's Article III says that one messenger is allowed for each church in friendly cooperation with the convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work and during the preceding fiscal year has been "a bona fide contributor to the Convention's work." One additional messenger is allowed from each such church for every 250 members or for each \$250 paid to the work of the convention during the previous fiscal year. No church can have more than 10 messengers.

Methods of financing. In 1845 Article V contained an open-ended statement allowing the convention to have as many boards as it deemed necessary, but Article III did not provide an adequate formula for funding them. For many years this arrangement, though fair, hindered the progress of the convention. The mission boards and other Baptist entities found it necessary to solicit funds from individuals, churches and associations. They had decided about membership based on giving, but sufficient financing was stymied until 1925.

William B. Johnson, a leading South Carolina Baptist, was largely responsible for the wording of Article V. He had used it five days earlier in addressing a special session of the South Carolina Baptist Convention. He had proposed a centralized body, with all missions concentrated into one organization -- the Southern Baptist Convention. He called it "judicious concentration."

Now, in 1995, the Cooperative Program, the greatest funding effort of any denomination, functions as the primary source of money for Southern Baptist ministries. The Cooperative Program is the supportive link between individuals and churches, through state Baptist conventions, and on to the Southern Baptist Convention and its ministries.

Doctrinal views. In the past the convention benefited from a peculiar kind of loyalty. Before 1845, the Primitive (Hardshell) Baptist movement and the Campbellite movement caused those Baptists of the South to cling tenaciously to strong denominational principles. After 1845, denominational loyalty and unity accelerated in the SBC. The Civil War and debilitating Reconstruction period deepened sectionalism and brought the churches closer together in allegiance to the still-young convention.

From the beginning the SBC constitution did not contain statements concerning Baptist doctrines, God, Christ or the Bible. Nothing was said about the church. Messengers were expected to be Bible-believing Baptists. But through the years, convention messengers frequently have approved motions and resolutions involving Baptist theological and moral beliefs. The 1963 Baptist Faith and Message, a revised version of a similar 1925 statement, is now the primary Southern Baptist confession of faith, although the Bible remains the sole written authority for Southern Baptist faith and practice. Throughout history, Southern Baptists have not been creedal, but confessional.

Qualifications of leaders. Since the SBC's 1845 beginning, the great majority of Southern Baptist leaders have been pastors. This is especially true of the presidency. Most messengers to the conventions of today also are pastors. For more than a century, most presidential nominations came with little preliminary posturing, but in recent years pre-convention announcements of candidates have become more common.

Generally messengers today elect leaders who have a record of evangelistic fervor, generous giving through the church for convention causes and a strong belief in missions. These qualifications held true in the formative years of the SBC as well, though there was no funding plan then. Proven leadership at the local church and state level always has been a standard for pastors and laymen.

Communication through state papers. Six of the Baptist state papers now publishing have been in circulation (either they or direct predecessors) since before the SBC was born in 1845. The oldest is a descendant of the Columbian Star, now the Christian Index of Georgia, founded in 1822. Today there are 39 papers publishing regularly with 15 of them publishing weekly.

Missions thrust. Since the SBC's beginning, missions forces through its foreign and home boards have increased to almost 9,000, about half sponsored by each agency. The Home Mission Board has missionaries in all 50 states and the Foreign Mission Board has work in 126 nations. The mission boards also are using thousands of volunteers to work alongside missionaries. Annual missions offerings for state, home and foreign mission work provide much-needed funding for many projects otherwise unfunded, supplementing the Cooperative Program. In 1845, the founders said that their energies and plans would be dedicated in "one sacred effort for the propagation of the Gospel." Southern Baptists remain a missions people, heart and soul.

Looking at where we are. From a very modest beginning, Southern Baptists have grown rapidly. The convention, with more than 15 million members in about 39,000 churches, is the largest Protestant denomination in North America. The founding fathers and mothers would express surprise perhaps at the surging growth, and gratitude that the doctrines they espoused are still the driving force behind Southern Baptist ministries.

Thirty-seven Baptist state conventions have been formed and, along with several fellowships, relate to the SBC in missions and ministries. The convention has four general boards: Annuity, Foreign Mission, Home Mission and Sunday School, which also is its publishing board. It has birthed six seminaries. The Southern Baptist Foundation (financial investing) and Seminary Extension in Tennessee are other children.

Seven commissions have Southern Baptist assignments: the Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary (African American), Brotherhood, Christian Life, Education, Historical, Radio and Television and Stewardship. All are located in Tennessee except the Radio and Television Commission in Texas. An auxiliary of the convention, Woman's Missionary Union, is a missions education organization that plans and supports women's mission work in the churches, and promotes two major Southern Baptist missions offerings annually.

Those founders also might be surprised that after 150 years the genius of their idea ~~has spawned~~ financial growth in an unprecedented manner. Messengers to the 1994 convention approved a sesquicentennial budget goal of \$150 million for the Cooperative Program!

We've come a long way. In 1934 Frank S. Mead wrote a little book for Broadman Press called "The Baptists." The book was published again and again. Mead briefly traced Baptist beginnings up to his day, concluding with a stirring summary of Baptist influence on the world:

"The world has done its best to stop them (Baptists). We have tried to shame them by whipping them, and they have made us ashamed of our whipping posts. We chained them in jail and discovered that the other end of the chain was fast about our own necks. We let their blood in Boston and the South, only to find the fairest American flowers we know growing from that very soil. Addlepatated world! You tried to stamp them out, and all you got for it was to have them leave their stamp on you!"

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A longer version of this article is available in the SBCNet News Room under twelve.hc. To receive free guidelines and to purchase resources to help celebrate the SBC's 150 anniversary, write the Historical Commission, SBC, at 901 Commerce St., Suite 400, Nashville, TN 37203-3630, or call toll-free 1-800-966-BAPT.

**Inner-city residents' needs
focus of Minneapolis outreach**

By Gomer Lesch

MINNEAPOLIS (BP)--The stories of Munira and Zerena are just two that can be told by Karyl Buchanan, director of after-school ministries for children and youth at the Twin Cities Baptist Ministries in Minneapolis.

Munira Said is a 14-year-old Ethiopian Muslim. She has lived in three countries and, since coming to the United States four years ago, two major cities. In her lifetime, she has seen the horrors of war, famine and refugee camps. In Africa and in the United States, she has seen and experienced poverty, homelessness and domestic violence. As if that were not enough, circumstances have forced Munira to take a leadership role in her family.

Her mother speaks very little English and relies on Munira to provide translation when she goes to the welfare office, the doctor or any other place where she is forced to communicate in English. Munira is the oldest of seven children, the youngest of whom is 3.

In another family, 9-year-old Zerena has one older sister, two younger sisters and one on the way. Zerena and her siblings all have separate fathers. Like Munira, Zerena has seen a lot in her brief lifetime, including a family member who has HIV.

Zerena's mother, Laura, loves her daughters dearly and struggles to provide enough food and clothing to care for Zerena and her sisters but is currently limited due to her pregnancy and related health problems.

Zerena loves to come to the Baptist ministries' activities. She and her sisters crave hugs and affection. They long for someone to sit and listen to whatever they want to say.

Buchanan, a Southern Baptist US-2 worker under the Home Mission Board, can be found teaching children's Sunday school, leading an after school activity for children one day a week, an after school activity for teen-age girls another day and coordinating volunteer tutors a third day. She ministers to inner-city families by ministering to their children.

"My goal is for each child or young person I come in contact with to know without a doubt that I love them and that Jesus loves them even more," Buchanan says. "The Lord is at work at Twin Cities Baptist Ministries.

Munira's mother, Amina, is a devout practicing Muslim. She spends most Wednesdays praying. Buchanan and the other staff at Twin Cities Baptist Ministries provide Munira and Amina with food, transportation and other miscellaneous means of support when they need it without asking anything in return.

They have never conditioned their help on a request or a hint that they expect Amina to convert to Christianity. The lifestyle of Zerena's mother, Laura is not one most Christians would approve of. Many of her problems are of her own making. Again, Twin Cities Baptist Ministries does not wait for Laura to change her behavior before supplying her with the help she needs.

"Laura knows that we do not approve of her lifestyle, Buchanan says, "but she also knows that, like Jesus, we are going to love her regardless of her sin. We seek to provide the people we minister to with a glimpse of Jesus' love for them and allow God to convict them of their sin and to bring them to himself. We have tried to meet her and her family where they are as Jesus did when he was on earth."

There are people who would say that these mothers should be working harder to get off welfare and to provide a more adequate and appropriate life for their children.

Buchanan does not entirely disagree, but says, "I am getting a firsthand look at how difficult that task is. There are so many extenuating circumstances and so many issues that are not black-and-white.

"However, I do know this: both mothers love their children dearly and would give their lives for them. They truly do want the best for their children, and the staff at Twin Cities Baptist Ministries is trying to help them do just that."

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Buchanan acknowledges church buildings, Sunday schools, worship services, and discipleship training are very important means for reaching the lost and for growing new Christians. However, there are many people who will never step into a traditional Southern Baptist church, she says. They do not feel comfortable, and it does not speak to them and to the circumstances in which they live. This is especially true of the inner city.

The only way these people are going to be reached, Buchanan says, is by getting involved in their lives, by saying, "What can I do to help you?" and then doing it. This will require Christians to go places and to do things that are not pleasant, she says, adding, "Some of our families live in absolute filth, but I have learned to ignore the sights and the smells and to take care of business. These people, especially the children, need someone to love and accept them with all of their dirt, all of their smells and all of their sin."

Buchanan recalls Jesus saying in Matthew 25, "When you do these things for the least of my brothers, you have done them for me." "Following this mandate is hard work and it can be very emotionally draining," Buchanan says, "but it is the most rewarding thing that I have done thus far in my life."

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S. African educator honored
for efforts against apartheid By Vincent Carpenter

Baptist Press
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WACO, Texas (BP)--Correcting the social wrongs of a society has never been the result of governmental due process, but the heroic efforts of selfless individuals. The end of apartheid in South Africa is no different.

One such individual, Richard Edward Hudson-Reed, rector emeritus of Treverton College, a preparatory school in Mooi River, KwaZulu, received an honorary doctor of law degree from Baylor University during May commencement exercises.

The Baptist educator played a role in the abolishment of apartheid through efforts to upgrade black townships, establish black-owned housing, foster literacy programs for blacks and develop a news media for rural black South Africans.

Under apartheid, all black housing was owned by the government, said Hudson-Reed, who described his accomplishments as small compared to the great needs of blacks in South Africa.

"When I think of the part that I played in South African history, I am afraid ~~that my overwhelming indignance was why I didn't do more,~~" he said. "How is it possible for people to live through a lifetime of injustice without laying down their lives for those who were underprivileged? I see myself as one who has been on the receipt of goodness and charity rather than one who has dispensed it."

An example of Hudson-Reed's focus is his hometown of Natalia, which has about 600 black homes. The largest has only four rooms, none have bathrooms and each house averages 12 to 15 occupants.

The Natalia Development Board, on which Hudson-Reed served, directed the investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in upgrades for rural black towns, including the addition of electricity and running water in the homes and local libraries in the townships. As the mayor of Mooi River, a post he held for five terms as well as serving on numerous administrative boards, Hudson-Reed has also led the way in the development of environmental studies in South Africa.

While improving living conditions brought significant changes to the face of South Africa, Hudson Reed said nothing gave the people more dignity than winning their freedom to vote.

"Though 14 townships received a fair share of upgrading, what they really wanted deep down was the freedom that would allow them to make their own agenda -- the sort of freedom that would allow them to make decisions relevant to their own circumstances," he said.

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Last summer's democratic election allowed black South Africans their first opportunity to choose their own government leaders. The people did not take their new rights for granted as they stood in lines several miles long to vote, said John Jonsson, Baylor professor of religion and director of the university's African studies program. Jonsson, a native of South Africa, is co-founder of Treverton College with Hudson-Reed and was also active with him in opposing apartheid legislation. Without efforts like those of Hudson-Reed, Jonsson said, black South Africans would not be in position to build a democratic society.

"He contributed to the development of a black middle class," Jonsson said. "He helped them get a slice of the economic pie."

Through the many years of segregation and social injustice, much pain and bitterness has developed between South African blacks and the minority white population, Hudson-Reed said. But he praised the leadership of President Nelson Mandela for leading the country into social reconciliation.

The challenges that still have to be overcome for this new democratic nation are mainly in the areas of finances and education, Hudson-Reed said.

"There is not enough money and the needed resources are inadequate because the cost of apartheid was enormous." Two-thirds of the land in the Natalia township, for example, is occupied by one-third of the people, making redistribution of land a very important issue, Hudson-Reed said.

However, the scarcity of resources has caused a unity among the people, he said. "If somebody has a meal, they share it with those who need it. The government welfare system will provide food to people, provided they have performed some act of community service."

Among numerous areas of needed growth in South Africa, Hudson-Reed said he will devote the rest of his life to the area of illiteracy. One out of two adults in the richest and most powerful nation on the African continent cannot read or write. The literacy rate was termed by Hudson-Reed as the secret shame of South Africa, but he said it is a problem that can no longer be hidden or ignored. The pride people gain in themselves once they can do something as simple as sign their own name is what Hudson-Reed said motivates him to see millions of functionally illiterate people become educated.

"People live in fear and embarrassment," he said. "It is a human weakness not to hear the cry of those who are in trouble and we have not heard the cry of those who are illiterate."

The lack of education is also aggravated by the problem of violence, he said. The country is in much need of social anthropology to try to solve some of the interwoven problems that lead to violence. Last year's democratic elections were the source of many threats of riotous violence, and Jonsson, who was in South Africa during the elections, said there was much unreported violence in the country at that time.

"I am sad to read that in your wonderful country you have had something that has caused the whole nation to mourn," Hudson-Reed said referring to the federal building bombing in Oklahoma City. "That is a daily occurrence on a smaller scale in the land that I come from."

"I tried to do things in a way that would not be provocative," said Hudson-Reed of the efforts he made through peaceful means. "There were those who marched with banners, but I infiltrated the organizations that had the most control."

"I do not pretend that what I have done was a big thing. I was a small voice asking the government to open their doors."

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Carpenter is a senior newswriter at Baylor.

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