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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Baptist workers send condolences
in wake of Rabin assassination**

By Marty Croll

**Baptist Press
11/6/95**

TEL AVIV, Israel (BP)--Workers in Israel related to the Southern Baptist Convention sent messages of condolence to government offices and to the family of slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin after Rabin was assassinated Nov. 4.

Meanwhile, Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry was accompanying President Clinton's delegation to Rabin's Nov. 6 funeral, at Clinton's request. Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., was a part of Clinton's delegation to an October 1994 signing ceremony for a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan on the countries' mutual border.

Rabin died shortly after he was gunned down by a 27-year-old extremist Jew who said he wanted to stop Rabin from giving away Israeli land in peace negotiations with Arab leaders, including Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Rabin and Arafat shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

Messages on behalf of the Baptist Convention of Israel went to the offices of the prime minister and religious affairs minister and to Rabin's wife, Leah.

In Jerusalem Nov. 5, Leah Rabin was seen slowly walking up to Rabin's coffin where it was on display in front of the parliament building. Her son, Yuval, and daughter, Dalia, supported her. From time to time, her face sank into her hands, and she slumped on her son's shoulders.

Later, to supporters holding candles outside her Tel Aviv home, she remembered the gunshots that rang out at the end of a peace rally. "In his last moments he heard loud applause and cheers," she said. "Those were his last moments."

Southern Baptist evangelist Billy Graham asked Christians to pray that the hatred and violence that trouble Israel and the area around it will be replaced with compassion and tolerance.

"When Mr. Rabin was Israel's ambassador to the United States, we spent many hours together," Graham said in a statement released to news media. "I respected him greatly, but I also loved him as a friend and had looked forward to seeing him again. "Modern Israel truly has lost one of its greatest leaders, and the world has lost a valiant and courageous champion of peace."

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Although Rabin's movement toward offering self-rule to Palestinians on Israeli-occupied land had been detested by many Israelis, few people would have predicted Rabin's assassination by a fellow Jew.

"The Jewish people have prided themselves that they have not had this kind of thing happen before," said Thomas F. Hocutt of Birmingham, Ala., administrator of Southern Baptist Convention personnel in Israel. "The most significant thing is that a Jew did this."

Youth were especially shaken by the assassination, Hocutt added. "They've really taken it very, very soberly. A lot of them are going to the place it happened or to the prime minister's house to pass by the coffin, and they're just standing there crying. It really made an impact on them."

The Southern Baptist Convention workers relate to Baptist churches among Arabs in Israel and a loosely knit group of Messianic congregations (Jews who believe in Jesus as Messiah). Its workers take an apolitical stance.

The shock of such Jew-against-Jew violence "may well open people's minds and hearts to the fact that nothing is certain," Hocutt said. "In that sense it might be good for people to ask questions about what life is about -- 'Where is God?'"

Evan Thomas, pastor of a Messianic Jewish congregation north of Tel Aviv, agreed. "It will definitely create a deep soul-searching," he said. "When man begins a deep soul-searching, there's an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak into our lives."

Thomas was in Jordan with a group of believers, some Messianic Jews and some Palestinian Christians, and one Jordanian believer, when he heard the news.

"We shared the tragedy together in prayer and in mutual support," he said. "We wept together. We shared a common burden, and it was wrapped up in a common grief."

Thomas referred to a statement attributed to one of Rabin's friends: "We look at our nation, and we see that by Rabin's passing, his assassination, that our nation is ill."

To Thomas, "It was like a word of a prophet of old, gauging the spiritual state of the nation. ... Not all our enemies are without. We have an enemy deep within."

In Gaza, where Southern Baptist Convention representatives have worked since 1954, Baptist physician Dean T. Fitzgerald Jr. of Tulsa, Okla., told how Palestinian women in his church prayed for Leah Rabin.

"I think there are many people who are saddened by this," he said. "Of course the 'wild men' are not sad, the people who would like to wreck the peace process. They're going to be happy about it. I haven't talked to any of them, but I know what reaction they'll have."

"There are wild people in both camps that would like to take a shot at people who try to make peace. There are many wild people who would like to bring it down."

Gazans would ask Christians to pray for leaders looking for peace, Fitzgerald said.

"Awful things have happened right along, every month it seems, since the whole thing (accords to grant Palestinians self-rule) started," he said. "And we keep thinking these things will wreck (the peace process), but it seems to be going. So we just pray that it will continue to go and that peace will eventually come."

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Mike Creswell, Erich Bridges and Art Toalston contributed to this story.

SBC seminary enrollment:
Up at 4 schools, down at 2

By Cameron Crabtree

Baptist Press
11/6/95

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Student enrollment at four Southern Baptist Convention-owned seminaries increased this fall, but the two largest seminaries saw enrollment figures drop.

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The seminaries officially compar fall-to-fall enrollment figures in late October based on the "non-duplicating headcount" of students enrolled in pre-baccalaureat programs, basic degree programs and classes for academic credit.

Overall, total enrollment at the six SBC seminaries is down just slightly, from 9,190 students in fall 1994 to 9,177 students this fall.

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., with 1,098 students enrolled this fall, posted an 18.7 percent gain over the previous fall enrollment of 925 students.

"We are both pleasantly surprised and infinitely grateful for God's blessing upon the seminary," said Southeastern President Paige Patterson. "God help us to be good stewards of his largess."

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., with 494 students enrolled, rose 16.5 percent over the previous fall enrollment of 424 students.

"We're surprised and delighted at enrollment gains in this period of transition," said Midwestern President Mark Coppenger. "We look forward to more as the word gets out on Midwestern's course for the future."

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., with 1,142 students enrolled, saw an 11.2 percent increase over the previous fall enrollment of 1,027 students.

"Our mission to help shape effective Christian leaders for the churches of tomorrow continues to attract high-calibre men and women who sense God's call for spiritual leadership in his kingdom," said Golden Gate President William O. Crews. "With all of the options available for quality theological training, we are delighted that an increasing number of students entrust Southern Baptists' seminary in the West with their education."

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, with 1,796 students enrolled, improved by 6 percent over the previous fall of 1,692 students. The fall 1994 enrollment figure does not include term 2 registration.

"We are grateful for our continued strong enrollment increase for the first semester," said Landrum Leavell II, interim president at New Orleans Seminary. "This reflects our ongoing emphasis on quality theological education in the finest setting for Christian ministry to be found anywhere. We thank God for his continued blessing on this seminary."

The two largest SBC seminaries reported declines in enrollment this fall.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., with 1,621 students enrolled this fall, saw a 13 percent drop from the previous fall's count of 1,868 students.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, with 3,026 students enrolled, had a 7 percent drop in enrollment from the previous fall's 3,254 students.

"The fact that Southwestern has been able to maintain a strong enrollment figure in a transition time is a very healthy sign," said Southwestern President Ken Hemphill. "The healing process is well under way, and you can see the enthusiasm in class, chapel and around the campus."

Thousands of other students at the seminaries are included in a "total cumulative headcount" report of enrollment in non-credit courses, such as continuing education programs, student spouse programs, sports and recreation programs and students who audit various seminary courses.

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Historical Comm. asks to attend
Implementation Task Force sessions

Baptist Press
11/6/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Implementation Task Force named to coordinate the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention has been asked by the Historical Commission to open its meetings to a representative of the agency, which is among several scheduled for dissolution.

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The request, voted on by the Historical Commission's administrative committee Oct. 25, was forwarded in a letter by commission chairman Ronald Martin, of Garden Grove, Calif., to Morris H. Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president, and Robert Reccord, Implementation Task Force chairman and pastor of First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va.

Reccord issued a response Nov. 3: "The Implementation Task Force looks forward to working with each of the SBC agencies involved in 'Covenant for a New Century.' Contact is being made with each agency to establish the needed communication for the future implementation process."

"Covenant for a New Century" is the name of the restructuring plan approved by messengers to the 1995 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta and scheduled for a related bylaws vote during the 1996 SBC meeting in New Orleans. The plan, framed by a seven-member Program and Structure Study Committee, was forwarded to the convention by the SBC Executive Committee, acting on a referral from the 1993 SBC annual meeting in Houston.

Dissolution of the Historical Commission, along with the Stewardship and Education commissions, is one of several key facets of the restructuring.

Martin's letter noted: "The Historical Commission's trustees have responsibility for the operation and dissolution of the agency as provided by the Southern Baptist Convention and the laws of the state of Tennessee, and as defined by the charter of the agency.

"Consequently, it is essential that the Implementation Task Force and we, the trustees of the Historical Commission, cooperate in the implementation of the dissolution of the Commission and the continuation of the Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives."

The Historical Commission's administrative committee requested that the agency's interim executive director, Slayden Yarbrough, or his representative from the staff, attend the Implementation Task Force meetings in order to comply with various legal obligations.

"My letter was simply written to remind the task force of the legal responsibility our trustees have to the agency as it is dissolved," Martin said in an interview.

Said Yarbrough: "Without question, open meetings of the Implementation Task Force with agency representation present will provide the smoothest, most efficient approach in the transition period related to the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Implementation Task Force needs not only our cooperation but also our awareness of the many and often minute details related to the dissolution, including obligations to commission employees and input into the program assignments of the Historical Commission to other agencies."

The 10-member Implementation Task Force was appointed during the Sept. 18-20 Executive Committee meeting. The Task Force has been assigned to both develop and implement the SBC restructuring by the end of the June 1997 SBC annual meeting in Dallas.

Historical Commission officials said the agency's charter calls for its trustees to pay or make provisions for the payment of "all of the liabilities of the corporation, distribute all assets of the corporation for the purposes of the corporation in such manner ... organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, or religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an organization or organizations described in Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954."

"We are certain that the Executive Committee's task force wants to abide by the charter in dissolving the agency with commission representation," Norma Pugh, administrative committee member and chair of the commission's finance subcommittee, said. "We look forward to a time of open discussion with the Implementation Task Force."

Missouri messengers
debate CP, BJC, Bible

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Messengers to the 1995 Missouri Baptist Convention annual meeting elected Doyle Sager president of the MBC over Jeff Barnes, then made Barnes their choice for first vice president. Besides electing four new officers and conducting other business, the 2,697 registered messengers and visitors to the annual meeting, Oct. 30-Nov. 1 at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center Hotel in Kansas City, debated several business items and made time for worship, prayer, preaching and music.

In Tuesday's presidential election, Sager, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sedalia, received 695 votes over 427 for Barnes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Blue Springs. Tellers found six votes to be invalid.

The next day, Barnes was elected first vice president over Springfield layman Arthur Mallory on a vote of 428-405, and Mallory then was elected second vice president over Gary Taylor, pastor of First Baptist Church, O'Fallon, 492-267. In the final race, messengers elected Drew Hill recording secretary over Bill Smathers, 508-254. Hill is pastor of First Baptist Church, Lamar; Smathers is pastor of First Baptist Church, Potosi.

Sager moved up from the office of first vice president, as had his predecessor Paul Brooks, pastor of First Baptist Church, Raytown. The church Sager leads supports the Cooperative Program with 18 percent of its undesignated receipts.

In business sessions characterized by intense debate and close votes, messengers opted to retain current Cooperative Program allocation percentages, membership requirements and convention display policies.

Messengers approved by only a seven-vote margin a motion to limit, for the time being, any increase in the percentage of Cooperative Program funds forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention from Missouri. The motion was offered by Robert L. Reading, a member of Second Baptist Church, Liberty.

The current percentages are 58.25 percent for Missouri Baptist causes; 37.75 percent for SBC causes; and 6 percent for joint causes.

Reading's motion proposed there be no attempt to raise the percentage of CP funds given to the SBC until more definite information is available about the impact of the SBC restructuring plan, adopted earlier this year, on the relationship between the national convention and state conventions. Explanatory paragraphs included in the motion note that the restructuring plan "could limit or eliminate allocation of Home Mission (Board) funds to our state ... thereby requiring larger expenditures from the portion of Cooperative Program funds retained in Missouri to maintain existing programs."

Reading's motion received 384 yes votes, or 50.46 percent, and 377 no votes, 49.54 percent. His motion was one of two on the subject, taking opposite positions.

The second motion, made by Rick Auxier, co-pastor of Canaan Baptist Church, St. Louis, proposed the MBC executive board's administrative committee recommend an increase in the SBC's percentage allocation for the years 1997 through 2000. Auxier withdrew his motion following the announcement of the vote on Reading's motion, stating he was doing so "in the interest of harmony in this convention."

Speaking for his motion prior to the vote, Reading pointed out the already-approved increase in this year's state budget goal from \$15.2 million to \$15.3 million increases the dollar amount going to the SBC by \$35,000, provided that the goal is met.

Speaking against the motion, Paul Callahan, pastor of First Baptist Church, Warrensburg, called messengers' attention to the CP giving record of Reading's church.

"He is a member of a church that has elected to eliminate Cooperative Program support," Callahan said. "They gave last year \$775, according to the annual, to cover their staff's annuity participation."

Regarding the motion itself, Callahan said, "I think any negative message is not necessary at this time."

Werner Strick, pastor of First Baptist Church, Wright City, spoke in favor of the motion, calling on messengers to "help us to safeguard the status quo." Strick, a trustee of Missouri Baptist Children's Home, noted MBCH already is "having to plead for the level of support that we need." He pointed out there is a tremendous mission challenge in Missouri, with half of the state's more than 5 million people presumed to be lost. He called on messengers to avert any action that would reduce support for Missouri missions and ministries.

Duane Trimble, pastor of First Baptist Church, Joplin, and chairman of the MBC executive board's church services committee, joined with Auxier in making a statement to the convention on Wednesday afternoon. "It is evident that messengers of the Missouri Baptist Convention are deeply concerned with the urgent need to increase Cooperative Program funding for both Missouri Baptist and Southern Baptist causes," the statement said.

In light of "uncertainty about how Cooperative Program funds should be divided as we look toward the year 2000," the statement continued, "we believe that the most positive step we can take immediately is for all Missouri Baptist churches to earnestly seek to increase their Cooperative Program giving percentage for 1996. This action will immediately increase monies available for missions in Missouri and through Southern Baptist mission endeavors."

Messengers defeated in a raised-ballot vote a motion offered by Roger Moran, messenger from First Baptist Church, O'Fallon, "that the Missouri Baptist Convention rescind the exhibit privileges of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs."

The Southern Baptist Convention ceased funding the BJC in 1991 and formally severed its ties with the religious liberty watchdog organization in 1992. A 1991 attempt to include the BJC in the Missouri Baptist Convention budget was defeated by messengers. The BJC continues to have a booth in the exhibit hall at the MBC annual meeting.

Jim Hammock, pastor of Northeast Baptist Church, Clinton, spoke in favor of the motion to rescind exhibit privileges, stating: "The Baptist Joint Committee has been excluded from the budget now for about three years. We have fought the battle on this; we ought to end the battle. They're not part of us, and we just need to close the books and say, 'Enough's enough,' and get this controversy out from among us. By having a booth down there, it keeps it going."

W.B. Tichenor, a messenger from Memorial Baptist Church, Columbia, raised a point of order, questioning whether the motion to rescind the BJC's display privileges was in order, since the BJC had a contract with the convention and was paying for the display space. MBC President Paul Brooks ruled the motion was in order and recognized Tichenor to speak against it.

Tichenor asked messengers, "Are we at such a point that the information distributed concerning religious liberty threatens us? ... Are we as Baptists who have championed the cause of religious liberty so frightened of this institution ... that we wish to banish it from simply having a booth and allowing you as an individual messenger to walk by and not pick up anything or to stop and take that information? That's what this is really all about -- people who are ... fearful of hearing the truth, people who want to keep you from the opportunity to accept or reject what the Baptist Joint Committee offers."

Wes Thrush, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Fredericktown, countered the issue is not religious liberty, but "that the Baptist Joint Committee has aligned itself with a group of radical liberals who are trying to destroy what we stand for, and we are aligning ourselves by admitting them to our exhibit area."

Both Tichenor and Rudy Pulido, pastor of Southwest Baptist Church, St. Louis, expressed displeasure with printed materials that had been handed to messengers entering the convention hall, which they said contained misinformation about the Baptist Joint Committee. Those materials, produced by an organization called the Missouri Baptist Laymen's Association, criticized allegedly pro-homosexual statements made by the BJC, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and other organizations. The materials also took issue with Word & Way for not carrying two June 1995 Baptist Press articles concerning the BJC's participation in a 1994 publication titled, "How to Win: A Practical Guide for Defeating the Radical Right in Your Community."

John Hughes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Independence, also spoke against the motion to rescind the BJC's exhibit privileges, citing the BJC's leadership of efforts to get the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act passed by Congress.

In answer to a question, MBC Executive Director Don Wideman said the exhibit policy, set by the MBC executive board, makes space available to "institutions and agencies that are a part of our budget or that have had longstanding relationships with the Missouri Baptist Convention."

A motion by Pulido to refer the motion to the MBC executive board was defeated prior to the vote that killed the motion.

Another motion considered by messengers would have amended Article VIII of the MBC bylaws to require that "members of convention committees, boards of any agencies, and commissions shall be persons who believe and affirm that God inspired the writers of the Bible so that they were kept free from writing any kind of error."

On a raised-ballot vote, the motion, made by Robert L. Garringer, pastor of First Baptist Church, Memphis, Mo., failed to gain the two-thirds majority needed to amend the bylaws.

Garringer said his motion was "based on the conviction that most Missouri Baptists believe that God inspired the writers of the Bible so that they were kept free from writing any kind of error. This has been the clearly stated ... belief of great Baptists in the past; it's what Jesus taught about the Old Testament; it's what he promised regarding the New Testament; it's confirmed in many places in the Bible. Also, I'm sure that it's what most of us expect those who lead this convention to believe and to hold."

Implementation of the motion would require nothing more than a question of the nominating committee to each potential nominee, Garringer stated. If the nominee's answer did not reflect the required belief, "the nominating process would end."

Former MBC president Lee Beaver, a member of Edmundson Road Baptist Church, St. Louis, spoke against the motion, saying, "I don't think we need this. We've done very well with the provisions of the present constitution."

Gary Urich, pastor of First Baptist Church, Princeton, argued the present constitution would allow an individual to serve who does not believe the Bible is true and does not "hold to the statement of faith that we have as Southern Baptists."

Chuck Williams, pastor of First Baptist Church, Washington, also argued for passage of the motion, stating inerrancy "is the least common denominator through which all other doctrines funnel."

John Justice, pastor of Grant Avenue Baptist Church, Springfield, told messengers he believes in the inerrancy of Scripture but he opposed the motion on the basis that "I don't believe that this is all that enforceable." He added, "I'm not sure this is an issue that is a great problem in our boards and agencies' at this time."

John Owen, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cape Girardeau, reminded messengers in Baptist polity, "conventions do not tell churches who is acceptable. Churches tell conventions who is acceptable as messengers, as leaders, as members of committees and boards. This (motion) would totally reverse that polity."

"Why will we stop trusting the churches?" he asked.

John Tindel, messenger from First Baptist Church, Cabool, offered a motion to postpone Garringer's motion indefinitely. The motion to postpone was defeated.

Messengers did approve, 461-403, a motion by Ralph Sawyer, pastor of Hallsville Baptist Church, calling for the credentials committee to report on how it implements article IV of the MBC constitution with respect to churches who are aligned with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Article IV sets forth the requirement that churches cooperate with the MBC in its program of single alignment with the SBC.

While Sawyer's motion sought only an answer to a question, messengers used the opportunity to air their views on CBF.

Hammock used a hunting illustration in speaking for the motion as he insisted CBF should be regarded as a denomination. "If it looks like a duck, if it walks like a duck and talks like a duck, you take your rifle and you aim and you shoot.

"They have a missions program, they have an education department, they have staff, they do everything a denomination does."

Bill Miller, pastor of First Baptist Church, Farmington, and Gary Parker, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, commented if contributing to the CBF constitutes dual alignment, then perhaps the same stance should be taken with respect to para-church organizations such as Focus on the Family, AWANA, Wycliffe Translators, Campus Crusade for Christ or the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

"They all compete with what we are trying to do as Missouri Baptists and Southern Baptists," Miller said.

"If the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is of men, it will fail," Miller told messengers, "If it is of God, we ought not to stand in the way of it. We are independent Baptist churches in this convention, and we don't need and we don't want any further instruction from the convention about what we do and what we support.

"Don't sweat it. Cooperative Program receipts are up."

Credentials committee chairman Alisa Fishel, a member of First Calvary Baptist Church, Kansas City, reported for the committee on Wednesday afternoon. She said actual implementation of Article IV would take place only if a messenger were challenged. If the credentials of a messenger to the 1995 annual meeting were challenged on the basis of involvement with the CBF, the credentials committee would conclude that the challenged messenger was not in violation "until such a time as the Missouri Baptist Convention defines single alignment. Therefore, we encourage the convention to appoint a committee to study this issue."

In answer to a question from David Tolliver, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, St. Louis, Brooks noted that a motion to appoint such a committee could not be introduced at the 1995 annual meeting, since the time for such business had passed.

In other business, messengers:

-- passed an amendment to the state goal for the 1996 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. The executive board had recommended a goal of \$2.8 million -- down from the current year's goal of \$3 million.

Timothy Faber, pastor of Santa Fe Trail Baptist Church, Boonville, made a motion to retain the \$3 million goal. No one else spoke for or against the motion and it passed easily on a show of ballots.

-- approved a \$3 million construction project to add lodging and conference rooms at the Windemere conference center. Construction is expected to begin later this year on the first of three phases, which includes two "mini lodges" for 48 guests and a conference building to hold up to 250 people. Funds for the project will be borrowed, with income from additional revenue generated and from gifts expected to retire the debt within 15 years.

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-- authorized an "adopt-a-child" fund-raiser, enlisting Missouri Baptists to sponsor 3,000 Belarussian children, providing each of them with thyroid testing and a year's supply of vitamins, at a cost of \$20 per child. Churches and individuals began responding with gifts immediately after the recommendation was approved, including an initial \$1,000 gift from Liberty Manor Baptist Church, Liberty.

Next year's meeting will be Oct. 28-30 at the Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia.

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Provided by the staff of the Word and Way, Missouri Baptists' newsjournal.

Ark. Baptists elect
Rex Horne president

By Trennis Henderson

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11/6/95

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, was elected president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Nov. 1 by a vote of 482 to 398. He defeated Stephen Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church, Russellville, and a trustee of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Horne and his congregation gained national attention during the 1993 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting when a messenger challenged Immanuel's credentials because the congregation is the home church of President Bill Clinton. Bo Hammock, pastor of Providence Village Baptist Church, Lake Butler, Fla., charged the members of Immanuel were "by their silence, supporting Bill Clinton's endorsement of the homosexual lifestyle."

The SBC Credentials Committee voted unanimously to "heartily affirm" Immanuel "is in friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention and sympathetic with its purpose and work." Immanuel Baptist, which has led Arkansas Baptist giving through the Cooperative Program for more than 30 years, ranked 13th nationally in total CP giving last year among all Southern Baptist churches.

During the same session in which Horne was elected president, messengers adopted resolutions opposing homosexuality and affirming the sanctity of human life. Horne, who has frequently shared his personal views on those subjects, said in an interview prior to Clinton's inauguration that "I have long supported the sanctity of all life." He added "the Bible clearly teaches that homosexuality as well as many other things are sins in the sight of God."

In other elections, Rich Kincl, former chairman of the Arkansas Baptist executive board, was elected first vice president. He defeated Grant Ethridge, 1995 Arkansas Baptist Pastors' Conference president, 446-388. Kincl is pastor of Central Baptist Church, Magnolia, and Ethridge is pastor of First Baptist Church, Lavaca.

Frank Lady, an attorney and member of Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, defeated Sam Whitlow, pastor of Chicot Road Baptist Church in Little Rock, for the office of second vice president, 369-330. Whitlow preached the president's message during the opening session of the convention, substituting for outgoing President Ronnie Rogers who underwent successful quadruple bypass surgery four days prior to the annual meeting and remain hospitalized throughout the convention.

During business sessions, messengers approved a \$17.25 million Cooperative Program budget for 1996, including 41.77 percent for Southern Baptist CP causes, the same percentage as the current budget. The '96 CP goal is a 3.92 percent increase over the current budget goal of \$16.6 million.

Messengers approved a recommendation to extend the state convention's current missions partnership with the European Baptist Convention an additional year, moving the completion date to December 1997. They also approved plans to extend a partnership with Iowa Baptists an additional five years, concluding in 2001.

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Arkansas Baptists also launched a five-year emphasis on "Arkansas Awakening," with the 1996 theme focusing on "Live the Word." Priority projects approved in conjunction with the emphasis include the 1996 State Evangelism Conference, Prayer for Spiritual Awakening Conference, Institute for Christian Discipleship, Spiritual Awakening Worship Workshop, Truth Alive student ministry project and Ministering to Children in Crisis Conference.

Messengers also approved an executive board recommendation to allow Williams Baptist College to conduct a two-year fund-raising campaign among Arkansas Baptist churches. The proposal also would permit Ouachita Baptist University to conduct a comparable campaign following Williams' effort.

In addition to two years of direct solicitation by Williams fund-raisers, the plan calls for a three-year budget commitment from participating churches. Williams officials said the campaign's financial goals are to raise \$3-5 million, with 60 percent to be used for endowment, 39 percent for capital improvements and 1 percent for fund-raising costs.

Messengers also heard a report the executive board had established a steering committee and three subcommittees "to study and recommend a plan by which the Arkansas Baptist State Convention can most effectively meet the challenges of the 21st century."

An additional feature of the Oct. 31-Nov. 1 meeting at First Baptist Church, Little Rock, was recognition of executive director Don Moore's 13-plus years of service to Arkansas Baptists. Moore announced earlier this year he will retire as executive director by the end of February 1996. A video presentation highlighted Moore's years of ministry. In addition to a convention resolution honoring his work, Moore received several plaques and other recognitions from convention entities.

Other resolutions adopted by messengers opposed pornography, alcohol and other drugs and gambling. Messengers also adopted a resolution affirming racial reconciliation, as well as one expressing concern about proposed constitutional revisions in the state.

In addition to messages by Moore and Whitlow, keynote speakers included Tony Evans, pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, Dallas; Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board; and W.A. Criswell, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Dallas.

A total of 1,328 messengers registered for the two-day meeting. Next year's state convention annual meeting will be Nov. 19-20 at Geyer Springs First Baptist Church in Little Rock.

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Miss. Baptists approve
change in SBC funding

By Tim Nicholas

Baptist Press
11/6/95

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Messengers to the Mississippi Baptist Convention approved without debate a 1996 budget of \$23.3 million that includes a change in funding of home missions work in the state.

Among a large slate of resolutions likewise approved during the annual meeting, Oct. 31-Nov. 1 at First Baptist Church, Jackson, one resolution voiced opposition to a late-term abortion procedure called dilation and extraction. The U.S. House of Representatives voted Nov. 1 to ban the procedure. The measure now goes to the Senate.

The Cooperative Program budget for 1996 totals \$23,280,983, a 2.98 percent increase over 1995. Of that amount, 37 percent, or \$8,613,965, will go to Southern Baptist Convention causes outside the state.

One difference in the CP budget from past years is that an amount equal to the money sent to Mississippi by the Home Mission Board for jointly funded projects, \$249,530, is being set aside for home mission work in the state. Thus, the quarter million dollars usually returned to the state for joint projects is freed to go to pioneer mission work and not be sent to Mississippi.

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The HMB will receive the same amount it received in 1995, which was \$1,635,673. The convention is making the funds available from gifts during 1995 over the basic budget. Such funding provisions traditionally continue from year to year, convention officials said, although technically the provision for funds from basic budget surpluses applies only to the 1996 budget.

The 37 percent of 1996 budget designated for SBC causes is the same percentage as in the current budget.

Other resolutions opposed gambling in general and the potential opening of gambling establishments in Jackson in particular; opposed the opening of nude and topless dancing establishments; favored better preparation for marriage through counseling; opposed loosening of divorce laws; favored respect for Sunday as a day of worship; and opposed domestic violence.

Three resolutions were voted by messengers to be referred without convention action to other committees. One called for increasing the SBC causes section of the budget 1 percent each year for the next three years. Another would have declared objection to The Baptist Record's use of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship news that would "encourage, enhance, or create growth and development for the CBF or any of its leaders." And a third would have asked the convention's communications office to produce television advertising for MBC and SBC causes.

Messengers approved sale of the property of Clarke College, the former Baptist-affiliated junior college at Newton which closed in 1992. Not finding a buyer for the entire 233-acre complex, the convention will sell off the campus piecemeal. Individual buyers have indicated interest in virtually all of the property.

Officers elected were Jimmy Porter, pastor of First Baptist Church, McComb, president, in a 635-590 vote over Clark Steward, pastor of Harmony Baptist Church, Crystal Springs; Clarence Cooper, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Grenada, first vice president, winning a 50.37 percent first ballot in a three-way race; and Edgar Lee Wright, pastor of New Sight Baptist Church, Brookhaven, unopposed for second vice president.

Two bylaw changes proposed for consideration in 1996 were to change the number of trustees at Mississippi Baptist institutions from 15 to 24 and to require institutions to make charter amendments only with the OK of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

A total of 1,635 messengers registered for the convention. The 1996 convention will be Oct. 29-30, at First Baptist Church, Jackson. The sermon will be delivered by Clarence Cooper of Grenada.

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Kansas-Nebraska Baptists
celebrate 50th anniversary

By Eva Wilson

Baptist Press
11/6/95

DERBY, Kan. (BP)--The Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists celebrated its 50th anniversary while recognizing the need to continue planting churches in every people group in the two states.

The convention's 50th anniversary annual meeting was held Oct. 16-17 at Pleasantview Baptist Church, Derby, Kan. This part of the meeting drew approximately 640 people, including 490 registered messengers. A final celebration on Tuesday night, Oct. 17, at Century II Concert Hall in nearby Wichita attracted about 975 people.

KNCSB began in November 1945 when four churches met to form the Kansas Southern Baptist Fellowship. In March 1946, the Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists was formed. The new convention petitioned the Southern Baptist Convention for membership in 1947.

After much debate, the Kansas convention became a cooperating constituency of the SBC in 1948. This action broke the comity agreement with Northern Baptists in which Southern Baptists had basically agreed to work below the Mason-Dixon line.

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Acceptance of the Kansas convention opened the door for Southern Baptists to become a national, instead of regional, denomination.

Soon after the Kansas convention formed, concern turned northward to Nebraska, where Southern Baptist churches began to form in the mid-1950s. The Kansas convention added Nebraska to its name in 1973.

Today, Southern Baptist congregations in Nebraska range from the largest, Westside Church in Omaha, to Bible studies on remote farms and ranches.

In November 1968, the convention reached the most critical point in its life when its loan agency, the Church Loan Association, was on the verge of bankruptcy.

Monumental efforts on the part of Southern Baptists in Kansas and Nebraska, as well as gifts from the Home Mission Board and other state conventions, helped the convention overcome the crisis.

People who played a role in the convention's founding shared their testimonies during the annual meeting, including Wanda Westmoreland, widow of the late N.J. Westmoreland, the convention's first executive director. Westmoreland now lives in Corisicana, Texas, where she is active in First Baptist Church.

Participants also learned KNCSB reached its "200 by 2000" church-starting goal five years early. In 1980, the convention adopted a goal of starting 200 new churches by the year 2000. This goal was reached in February 1995 with the formation of Eden Baptist Church, an African American congregation in Omaha, Neb.

Messengers elected a new president and vice president by acclamation. Neal Alford, pastor of First Baptist Church, Douglass, Kan., is the new president after serving as the KNCSB vice president the past two years. Don Lacy, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Valley Center, Kan., is the new vice president.

The remaining KNCSB officers were re-elected, also by acclamation: recording secretary, Bryan Jones, pastor of Wanamaker Road Baptist Church, Topeka, Kan.; assistant recording secretary, Marie Clark, consultant for Kansas City, Kan., Baptist Association; and historian, James Shope, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Columbus, Kan.

Messengers approved the 1996 KNCSB budget totaling \$3,767,940. Cooperative Program receipts from Kansas-Nebraska Southern Baptist churches are expected to total slightly more than \$2 million for the first time. Of this, 30 percent, unchanged from the 1995 budget, will be sent to Southern Baptist national and world causes.

The 1996 annual meeting will be Oct. 28-30 at the Holiday Inn Holidome in Lawrence, Kan.

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Nev. Baptists honor 1st church
to pass 1,000 in Sunday school By Mike McCullough

Baptist Press
11/6/95

RENO, Nev. (BP)--Messengers at the Nevada Baptist Convention annual meeting experienced more of a celebration of faith than a business meeting Oct. 24-25.

The tone of the meeting was set in part by the preaching of Nevada pastors Steve Colquitt, Walker River Baptist Church; Jaffus Haley, Calvary Baptist Church, North Las Vegas; and Larry Dailey, First Baptist Church, Minden.

Michael Rochelle, pastor of West Oakey Baptist Church, was given a plaque from the convention's historical committee, recognizing West Oakey Baptist Church as "Church of the Year." The plaque honored West Oakey for being the first church in the convention's history to have more than 1,000 people in Sunday school.

Roy Fish, evangelism professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas, and Dan Yeary, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, also added to the revival atmosphere.

A total of 168 messengers and 60 visitors registered for the 17th annual meeting of the Nevada Baptist Convention. The theme for the meeting, at South Reno Baptist Church, was "Go Make Disciples ... Live God's Word."

Business highlights included the re-election of Keith Minty as convention president. Minty is a retired layman from Nellis Baptist Church, Las Vegas.

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The first vice president, Russ Daines, pastor of El Camino Baptist Church, Las Vegas, also was re-elected. Haley was elected second vice president. He served in the same position in 1983.

All three officers were elected on an unanimous ballot without any opposition.

In other business, messengers adopted the 1996 budget without opposition. The \$1,896,176 budget anticipated \$660,000 in Cooperative Program receipts from the state's churches, up \$50,000 from the 1995 budget amount. Actual receipts for 1995, however, are now projected to be over \$630,000.

The 1996 budget also raises the percentage of giving to national and international missions. For 1995, 26 percent of all Cooperative Program dollars received by the convention was forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention for distribution to the various SBC boards and agencies. The 1996 budget raises the percentage to 26.25 percent.

The 1996 Nevada Baptist Convention annual meeting will be Oct. 22-23 at Desert Hills Baptist Church, Las Vegas.

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Nobles competent to stand trial
on 20-count federal indictment

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Baptist Press
11/6/95

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Former Mississippi College President Lewis Nobles is competent to stand trial on charges he diverted at least \$1.7 million in donations intended for the Baptist-affiliated college in Clinton, U.S. District Judge William Barbour ruled Oct. 31 in Jackson.

"The burden of proof is on the government to prove the defendant is competent to stand trial. The court finds that he is (competent)," Barbour said, after hearing about two hours of testimony from a single government witness -- Noble's psychologist at the U.S. Federal Prison Hospital in Springfield, Mo.

Barbour earlier this year ordered a competency evaluation for Nobles, 70, after he failed to appear for a pre-trial hearing in Jackson on Jan. 26. Nobles faces a 20-count federal indictment.

FBI agents tracked Nobles to a San Francisco hotel late in the evening of Jan. 26, where court testimony has indicated he swallowed cyanide as the agents closed in on him.

Nobles was rushed to a nearby hospital, where two emergency surgeries saved his life. However, he apparently suffered a brain disfunction during recovery from the surgeries.

Robert L. Denney, a clinical psychologist and neuropsychologist at the federal prison hospital in Missouri to which Nobles was later transferred, testified he originally was pessimistic about Nobles' competency when he first evaluated him on March 2, 1995.

A battery of psychological tests indicated Nobles suffered less brain damage than originally estimated, Denney reported.

Those tests led to his professional conclusion that although Nobles suffers "residual difficulties," he exceeds the level for competency to stand trial, Denney testified.

"He has the ability to assist in his defense," Denney said.

Denney, who is also an adjunct professor at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., said the tests showed Nobles had difficulty with "visual/spatial integration" and "visual motor coordination," but his full-scale IQ at the end of treatment was measured at 117, which is in the above-average range.

Denney also reported Nobles suffers from "confabulation," which he described as a mental condition in which a person consciously or unconsciously makes up stories to fill in memory gaps.

Under intense cross-examination by Nobles attorney Amy Whitten of Oxford, Denney agreed his original diagnosis of Nobles was "basically dementia" and Nobles' thinking would be slower than before the brain injury.

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Denney also admitted Nobles was the first case he had handled that involved the combination of brain injury and cyanide poisoning. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jack Lacy of Jackson responded by asking Denney if Nobles understands the charges lodged against him in the indictment. "Certainly," Denney replied.

In addition to finding Nobles competent to stand trial, Barbour discharged him from the Missouri prison hospital and ordered attorneys to consult with the court on a trial date. Attorneys said Nobles is not expected to stand trial before March 1996.

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**BSSB employees celebrate
'incredible' turnaround**

By Charles Willis

**Baptist Press
11/6/95**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Year-end revenues for the Baptist Sunday School Board's 1994-95 fiscal year have exceeded earlier projections for a good financial year, and Nov. 3 was set aside as "Celebration Day" to mark the occasion with an employee meeting and coffee breaks hosted by executive management.

Ted Warren, executive vice president and chief operating officer, said revenues exceeded earlier projections presented to agency trustees in September, reaching a total of \$247,814,000, compared to a projected \$244.5 million. The budgeted revenue goal had been \$243,405,000.

President James T. Draper Jr. told the agency's Nashville employees, "The turnaround this year is absolutely incredible and phenomenal.

"A year ago when I stood before you, it was probably the unhappiest day of my life," Draper said. "I had to announce to you we had come to an \$8.2 million shortfall. That reflected some great needs and problems, and we began to address those problems."

He said the agency's financial success this year translates "into what we have accomplished in ministry terms." Among those he cited are people singing from 3.4 million hymnals published; videos, such as "Christy" and "Secret Adventures," which have pushed the board to the forefront in providing wholesome, biblically based entertainment; an average of 1,300 copies of "Experiencing God" provided to people each working day; more than 110,000 people trained this year at Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) conference centers; more than 3 million customer transactions handled in the national chain of 63 Baptist Book Stores and Lifeway Christian Stores; people in more than 33,000 churches using board-produced Bible study materials and products; and meeting people's needs through more than 593,000 orders for products and materials.

"Good stewardship has enabled us to provide more than \$3 million to the Southern Baptist Convention to help carry the gospel around the world," he said. "Good stewardship in business is necessary for us to provide the resources and services needed by churches and believers in our worldwide ministry."

Funds Provided from Operations (FPO), revenue above operating costs used for expanded ministries, reached \$5,579,000, compared to a budgeted \$100,000 and the previous year's \$8.2 million loss. However, FPO did not reach the projected \$5.6 million announced in September because of additional charges, such as accelerated depreciation, taken in the 1994-95 year rather than the 1995-96 year and beyond.

All four strategic business units of the board exceeded revenue for the previous year, Warren said.

The church growth group, which produces dated and undated church materials, exceeded 1993-94 revenues by more than \$12 million; the retail group, which includes the national bookstore chain and directing marketing, exceeded the previous year's income by more than \$9 million; trade publishing, which includes Broadman & Holman products, gained almost \$4 million in revenue; and the national conference centers increased revenue by more than \$400,000. After reductions for interboard sales activity, total revenue exceeded 1993-94 actual income by \$23.2 million.

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In their September meeting, BSSB trustees approved a 1995-96 budget of \$266.7 million, including Funds Provided from Operations of almost \$6.5 million.

While praising employees for their work, Draper emphasized: "Not any of us is smart enough to do what we've done this year. God has blessed us. It's taken a lot of diligence, a lot of faithfulness and a lot of blessing from God."

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EDITORS' NOTE: On Saturday, Oct. 14, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionary Stanley Stamps of Prentiss, Miss., was driving from Santa Rita to El Progreso, Honduras, when his car struck and killed a pedestrian. Stamps drove to the police station and then spent the weekend in jail while an investigation cleared him of wrongdoing. In the following first-person account, Stamps recalls the horror of the accident, the uncertainties of being jailed and the ways God used the situation to draw people closer to himself. His wife, Glenna, is from Hillsboro, Texas.

FIRST-PERSON

Accident reinforces importance
of freedom, advocacy, prayer

By Stanley Stamps

Baptist Press
11/6/95

EL PROGRESO, Honduras (BP)--Each time I pass by that spot on the highway, images of what happened there flash through my mind.

I remember my headlights picking up the vague form of a man walking along the highway's center stripe. I hit the brakes. He staggered into my lane. He was so close I couldn't avoid striking him. I remember a dull thud as he flew into my windshield. The car screeched to a halt, and the motor died. I saw his body sprawled in the middle of the highway.

Stunned, I got out of my car. The man was dead. My car was badly dented and the windshield cracked. The last two passing vehicles ignored my appeals for help. It was late and the highway was abandoned.

What was I to do? Many in Honduras would have driven on, and the newspapers would have reported a hit-and-run death. In the daylight, a driver might be killed by infuriated family or neighbors. The thought of jail was frightening. If I turned myself in, what would the authorities do? How would my friends and acquaintances react? I fought the urge to run.

Suddenly, I felt calm. I knew the Lord was beside me, and I knew I had to report the accident.

After pulling the body to the side of the road, I drove to the police station. The officer on duty was reading a Bible. I explained what had happened, and he had me drive him to alert the coroner and judge, and we went to the scene of the accident. The body was where I had left it. When the investigation was complete, they loaded the body in my car and had me drive it to the morgue.

The victim, a 65-year-old widower, was a "campesino" (peasant farmer) who lived with his only surviving son in a community near El Progreso. Later I learned the man had been spotted by someone else earlier the same night staggering -- apparently drunk -- down the middle of the road.

Back at the police station, I was placed in detention and called my wife, Glenna. My quarters was a conference room where another man was being detained for similar reasons. My bed was a bench made out of wooden slats. Although outwardly composed, my nerves were shattered, and I tried to find a sleeping position on the hard wooden bench.

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Early the next morning, Glenna called a couple of missionary colleagues to activate our prayer chain, then brought me breakfast. (Honduran jails don't provide meals.) Then she went on to Santa Rita for Sunday school. Later that morning a friend who is a retired police captain came to visit and assured me the problem would be solved in a day or two. I had an opportunity to give New Testaments to my "cellmate" and his wife and watched as he read God's Word for the very first time.

After church services were over, a group from Bethany Church in El Progreso came to visit. One of them, a seminary extension student of mine, offered to be my lawyer. Before they left, we stood in a circle and they prayed for my well-being and quick release. It was profoundly moving to be surrounded by a group of people I knew loved me and whom I loved.

A group from Mount Calvary Church followed them. The pastor, whom we had seen accept Christ 12 years earlier, read Psalm 103. I sensed this was the Scripture passage I needed most.

That afternoon, Glenna brought fellow missionary Frank Harrison, who had substituted for me in Sunday school and worship. Later missionaries Tom and Susan Canady and Ken Cummins came by. It was comforting and encouraging to feel the support and concern of my missionary colleagues. I learned later that Glenna received dozens of phone calls from people who were concerned about me.

While I was eating, our electrician came to visit. He is not a believer, but when members of the accident victim's family came to see me, he became my intercessor and personally went with the family to select a casket. He even paid for the casket and advanced some money for burial expenses. (Honduran custom expects people in my situation to pay the burial expenses of the victim.) After I was released, I visited him and repaid the loan. I was grateful for the strength of friendship bonds that form over the years.

Sunday afternoon a large delegation from the Santa Rita church came to see me. They told me the incident had caused them to reflect on the "Experiencing God" lesson about the body of Christ we had studied together Saturday evening before the accident.

What had impressed them most, however, was that I had turned myself in to the police. Every one of them knew most people would have driven away from the accident. The fact I had done the right thing said more to them than any number of sermons or lessons could have.

Monday morning the other detainee and I were taken to court in a pickup truck. While we waited, a group of men -- members of the dead man's family -- came in. My lawyer brought them over to me, and I explained the circumstances of the accident. They seemed satisfied when I told them my car was insured for cases like this and accepted my offer of New Testaments. I was relieved, because many times accidents like this lead to perpetual vendettas and vengeance killings.

I waited at the courthouse all morning and through the judge's three-hour absence at lunchtime. But a little after 3 o'clock, my lawyer emerged from the judge's office, and I walked out of the court a free man. I had a greater appreciation for what it means to be free. I also had a better understanding of what it means to have an advocate. My lawyer friend had been by my side and intervened for me at every turn of events.

All that afternoon and the next day the telephone rang with calls from concerned colleagues and friends, both local and overseas. The prayer networks had been alerted at the Foreign Mission Board and in my home state of Mississippi. Later, letters from numerous friends and prayer supporters began stacking up.

I am profoundly grateful for the extensive network of prayer partners who daily pray for foreign missionaries. I know from personal experience what it means to be the object of concern in someone's prayers.

Those prayers are not in vain. I am deeply grateful to everyone for holding me up in prayer. I am grateful to God for his deliverance from evil and for his constant strengthening presence.

Robert Wagoner named consultant
in large-church music for BSSB

Baptist Press
11/6/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Widely known church musician Robert Wagoner has been named to fill the newly created position of large-church/worship consultant in the Baptist Sunday School Board's music department.

Wagoner, currently minister of music at Eagle Heights Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, will work with ministers of music in larger Southern Baptist churches, as well with all SBC churches in the areas of worship and growth, according to Mark Blankenship, director of the music department.

"Robert brings a varied background, multiple professional experiences and excellent relational skills which make him ideal for this new role," Blankenship said. His responsibility will be to establish a network with larger SBC churches and to consult in worship interpretation, addressing the denomination's wide spectrum of diversity.

Wagoner has been minister of music in churches in Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas since 1968, including two years as a music evangelist. His church experience in Oklahoma includes First Baptist in Moore, Sheridan Road in Tulsa, Wilmont Place in Oklahoma City, First Baptist of Chandler and First Baptist of Broken Arrow. He served at First Baptist, Springdale, Ark., and at First Baptist, Euless, Texas.

A native of Tulsa, he earned the bachelor of music degree from Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, with a major in voice.

He has taught in conferences and workshops across the nation, including Church Music Leadership Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. He was a member of the 1991 Baptist Hymnal committee.

He has led 50 youth and adult choir tours in the United States and Europe, as well as directing music in more than 150 revivals and crusades.

Wagoner and his wife, the former Anita French of Lawton, Okla., are the parents of three children.

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