



SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

BAPTIST PRESS
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, CompuServe 70420,250
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232, CompuServe 70420,115
NASHVILLE Linda Lawson, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300, CompuServe 70420,57
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151, CompuServe 70420,72
WASHINGTON Tom Strobe, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223, CompuServe 71173,316

November 15, 1995

95-183

LONDON--CSI-sponsored tour opens eyes and hearts to World A.
PHOENIX--Ariz. Baptists tap Steve Bass as new executive director.
CINCINNATI--Griffin tells Ohio Baptists of 1997 retirement plans.
VIRGINIA--Va. Baptists voice opposition to religious equality amendment.
HONOLULU--Hawaii Baptists hold first 2-day meeting.
TENNESSEE--Church's 'I Am' banner stirred him to faith.
TENNESSEE--Correction.

CSI-sponsored tour opens
eyes and hearts to World A

By Don Martin

Baptist Press
11/15/95

LONDON (BP)--It's a cinch college students will be getting an earful about the unreached world because their state Baptist Student Union directors just got an eyeful.

Twenty-one state Baptist student directors, associates and campus ministers spent almost a week experiencing firsthand how Cooperative Services International workers reach World A for Christ. CSI is the Southern Baptist organization that specializes in placing Christians into World A -- that portion of the globe which has little or no contact with the Christian gospel.

"I plan to lay out a map in front of my students and speak from the heart about all that I have seen," said Bobby Pruett, BSU director from Boulder, Colo. "This program, CSI, makes me proud to be part of the Southern Baptist community."

"Amazing" was the word John Nance, director of student ministries for Canada, used repeatedly when describing his experience. "The openness of opportunity is the impression that will stay," he said. Nance will share insights he gained with BSU directors across Canada.

CSI arranged for Pruett, Nance and BSU leaders from 19 other states to see what CSI field workers actually do. The directors traveled with field workers -- known as strategy coordinators or team leaders -- into a restricted-access country to see how they craft and carry out plans for reaching a people group cut off from the gospel. The country must remain unidentified to protect Christians there and their work.

Some BSU leaders were able to hear firsthand from Christians who have suffered persecution and even imprisonment because of their faith. Such glimpses are often beyond the reach of typical tourists. CSI named the week, "Project Discovery."

"We were able to lead these BSU leaders into the inner circle of Christians in this country," explained one strategy coordinator. "It was an eye-opening experience. Some men actually cried when they later described encounters with these Christians."

Many BSU leaders jettisoned misconceptions about Christian work in closed countries during the week. Several participants were struck by the openness of people to talk about religion, recalled one CSI worker.

"There is a hunger for God that cannot be overlooked once you gain an entrance into the lives of a people who have been shut off from the gospel," the CSI worker said. "Your life changes when you experience this."

--more--

Brett Yohn, a BSU director from Lincoln, Neb., has taken students to Africa and Europe on past trips. But this week, he said, "was one of the most significant events of my life. I cannot imagine what my life would have been like had I not gone to this country." Other BSU leaders made similar comments when they met for an emotion-filled debriefing, reported Carolyn Bishop, one of the CSI organizers.

"Story after story stressed how this group was deeply touched by the lives and testimonies of the local Christians," she said. "The time for debriefing took on a spirit of worship. We had not expected such intensity in the sharing. It was surprising, yet wonderful, to be there to hear their reflections."

"The directors have influence over the next generation of workers who will carry the good news to the unreached," said David Bishop, who coordinated the project for CSI.

"We warned them before they came that they would never be the same after visiting World A," he continued. "In fact, we told them that's what we would be praying for."

Other BSU participants included Robert Lee of Sandy, Utah; Sean Lathrop of Honolulu; Tom Avants, Tucson, Ariz.; Kay Huggins, Cary, N.C.; Scott Carlin, Lafayette, La.; Robert Smith, Minneapolis; Sam Fort, Portland, Ore.; Loy Reed, Jacksonville, Fla.; Ron Brown, Columbia, Md.; Rodney Wilson, Brentwood, Tenn.; Diane Parker, Little Rock, Ark.; Nathan Byrd, Atlanta; Ralph Hopkins, Louisville, Ky.; Nell Magee, Northboro, Mass.; John Tadlock, Richmond, Va.; Janay Moody, Edmond, Okla.; Jack Greever, Dallas; and Jesse Parrott, Rolla, Mo.

--30--

**Ariz. Baptists tap Steve Bass
as new executive director**

By Elizabeth Young

**Baptist Press
11/15/95**

PHOENIX (BP)--Steve Bass has been overwhelmingly approved by Arizona Southern Baptist Convention messengers as the state convention's new executive director-treasurer. Bass has been executive director of the Tulsa Metro Baptist Association in Oklahoma since 1992.

The vote of approval on Bass, 38, came in the Nov. 14 opening session of the annual meeting of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention in Phoenix.

Bass had been elected unanimously by the state convention's executive board in special session Oct. 31 called to consider the executive director-treasurer search committee's unanimous recommendation.

According to the ASBC constitution, before assuming office the executive director-treasurer must be "elected by a two-thirds favorable vote of the Executive board and approved by a two-thirds favorable vote of the messengers in annual or special Convention session."

Bass, recently honored by the Home Mission Board as metropolitan director of missions of the year for the western United States, will begin his new assignment after the first of the year.

In the executive board meeting, convention president and search committee chairman David Butler, a member of Sabino Road Baptist Church, Tucson, told the board, "We've tried to find the perfect fit with our new organization. We wanted a planner, a leader, a thinker, a man with a pastor's heart, someone who can capture the vision and lead us on, a man of God who will stand firm in his convictions, a minister to ministers and a trust-builder, and we think Steve is the man."

Asked how he felt about the unique organization of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, with its strong agencies and small executive board staff, Bass said, "The kinds of structures that are in place here in the ASBC are the kinds of things we've been trying to do in our local association." The structure "is probably the very thing that excited me about talking to this committee," he said.

Bass said he had done research on Arizona and discovered the median age in the state is 32.9 years. "We have a mission field here that continues to grow," he said.

--more--

While he enjoys strategic thinking and "setting the big picture," he said, "my heart is in servicing our churches."

"Ultimately, as a denominational employee, we need to understand that the Great Commission was given to the local church," he said. "How are we going to service those churches to reach those people? That's the critical issue that I see for the state of Arizona. As the agencies meet, that is the focus and context out of which we have to do our work, in my opinion."

One of the "chief callings" of the executive director, he said, is "helping to cast the vision for all of the agencies as we move forward in the new century."

"The second calling of the executive director is to continually interpret that vision to our churches," he said. "What that means is I must spend time with the people of the state. I need to hear the pastors preach. I need to talk to them. I need to hear their heart."

Asked about his strengths, Bass said, "I am a visionary. I like to think about the big picture. I enjoy the sharing of ideas. I enjoy empowering people to do their job."

In terms of weaknesses, he said, as the vision caster, he needs to surround himself with detail people. He's impatient, at times, "if people are not serious about this business."

Bass is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and holds a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and a doctor of ministry degree from Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, Tenn.

Before his work in Tulsa, he previously had been pastor of three churches in Oklahoma.

He and his wife, Dottie, have two children, Stefanie, 12, and Lucas, 9.

One day each week, Steve and Dottie do volunteer mission work.

"At my age," Bass said, "I feel like when it comes to missions, people are not going to hear what I say unless they see what I do. I take Fridays, and that's my day for missions. I feel like if I don't do that, I lose perspective."

--30--

Griffin tells Ohio Baptists of 1997 retirement plans

Baptist Press
11/15/95

CINCINNATI (BP)--A key retirement and a key vote topped the annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, Nov. 5-7 at Cincinnati's Pisgah Heights Baptist Church.

Orville Griffin, 63, the convention's executive director, announced his retirement effective Jan. 15, 1997. Griffin assumed the post in April 1992 after having served as the convention's associate executive director from 1981-92 and evangelism director, 1976-81. Including his work as a pastor and director of missions, Griffin has devoted 41 years to Baptist work in Ohio.

In a 179 to 75 vote, messengers decided to continue sending the convention's newspaper free of charge to members of Southern Baptist churches in the state.

The convention's executive board had voted this summer to switch the Ohio Baptist Messenger to a subscription basis beginning in January, following through on long-range planning and restructuring initiated by the convention two years earlier.

During the annual meeting, however, layman Don Jump of the West Central Baptist Association brought the question to the floor. The association had adopted a resolution in October opposing the switch, voicing concern that the newspaper remain a convention communications vehicle without cost to church members and that a switch would lower the number of subscriptions, now totaling 31,700.

A 1996 convention budget of \$4,689,863 was adopted, including \$3,777,863 in anticipated Cooperative Program gifts from Ohio churches. Southern Baptist Convention national and international missions and ministries will receive 40 percent of the CP funds, the same percentage as the '95 budget.

--more--

All officers were re-elected: president, John Hays, pastor of Jersey Baptist Church, Pataskala; first vice president, Steve Hopkins, pastor of Whitehall Baptist Church, Columbus; second vice president, Guy Morton, pastor of Lakeview Baptist Church, Vermillion; and recording secretary, Dorothy Thorpe, a layperson from Far Hills Baptist Church, Dayton.

Next year's meeting will be Nov. 5-7 at Parma Baptist Church in the Cleveland area.

--30--

Va. Baptists voice opposition
to religious equality amendment By Robert Dilday

Baptist Press
11/15/95

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (BP)--Virginia Baptists approved with little debate an increased budget and a strategic plan for future ministry and elected officers without opposition during a quiet annual meeting, Nov. 9-10 in Virginia Beach.

The Baptist General Association of Virginia's 2,100 messengers took stands against a religious equality amendment to the U.S. Constitution and tuition tax credits, but declined to adopt a resolution condemning partial birth abortions.

In addition, they also inaugurated three new mission partnerships earlier approved by the Virginia Baptist general board -- with Baptists in Panama, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The \$15.4 million budget for 1996 -- which becomes effective Dec. 1 -- is \$400,000 more than the current budget and the first budget increase since 1992.

Little was changed in the budget, which allocates 62 percent to Virginia ministries, 2 percent to partnership missions and 36 percent to national and international causes.

As in previous years, churches may choose among three giving plans for national and international ministries -- one that funds Southern Baptist Convention causes, another that supports ministries of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and a third that funds a mixture of SBC, CBF and other ministries. In addition, churches may craft their own plans of giving.

Two efforts to amend the budget failed. One would have eliminated funding to any institution that permits the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages on campus. That amendment apparently was aimed at the University of Richmond, which recently opened a pub on campus. UR is allocated about \$290,000 in the 1996 budget.

"There is no place for beer on a Baptist campus," said Martha Wiles of Mount Lebanon Baptist Church, Boston, who supported the amendment.

But University of Richmond trustee Bill Slater of Marion noted that BGAV funds are used only to support the chaplain's office and campus ministries, not for the school's general operating fund. "The chaplain's office has never known greater success than it does right now," Slater said.

Later in the meeting messengers adopted a resolution reaffirming the BGAV's "long-standing opposition to the abuse of alcohol" and its "sale and abuse on the campuses of the schools and colleges affiliated with the BGAV."

A second amendment would have eliminated about \$2,100 allocated to Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a religious liberty organization near Washington. Martha Wiles claimed AU shares some of the same goals as atheist organizations and Jeff Riddle of Beulah Baptist Church, Warsaw, said AU is the only non-Baptist group included in the budget.

Larry Matthews of Vienna Baptist Church countered "Baptists have never needed allies in the fight for religious freedom any more than now."

The strategic plan for future ministries -- proposed by a study committee after nearly two years' work -- was adopted with little opposition. The plan focuses on ways to enhance mission giving and participation, to help churches carry out local ministries and on stimulating spiritual growth among Virginia Baptists.

--more--

The plan's recommendation to change the name of the Virginia Baptist General Board to Virginia Baptist Mission Board prompted lengthy discussion. In the end, messengers approved an amendment authorizing the board to change its name, but leaving the choice to board members, who will report at next year's BGAV meeting.

At several points the strategic plans instruct the general board to carry out assignments in cooperation with Virginia Woman's Missionary Union and the state's 43 district associations. An attempt to add the Southern Baptist Convention to that cooperative venture failed.

"Since we have had a historic relationship with the SBC, why not add it to the report?" asked one messenger.

Richard Clore of Bybees Road Baptist Church, Troy, opposed the effort. "We don't agree on everything that goes on in the SBC. We do agree on doing missions here in Virginia."

Elected as BGAV president for 1996 was Clint Hopkins, pastor of Churchland Baptist Church, Chesapeake. Joining him will be Alden Hicks, director of missions for the Pittsylvania Baptist Association, as first vice president, and Catherine Johnson, an attorney and member of Monument Heights Baptist Church, Richmond, as second vice president.

The three, who had been endorsed earlier by moderates, were the only candidates for each position. Conservatives had announced they would not put up nominees this year.

The three mission partnerships will replace others with Hungary, Costa Rica and Mexico City. During a Thursday night missions extravaganza, the conclusion of those partnerships and the beginning of the new ones were celebrated.

Messengers also adopted resolutions affirming Virginia Woman's Missionary Union and the Middle East peace process, along with recommendations from the BGAV religious liberty committee opposing tuition tax credits and a religious equality amendment.

The resolution on Woman's Missionary Union pledged "continued support" and noted its "unwavering commitment to our missionaries through prayer support, missions education endeavors and financial commitment remain unchanged."

The national Woman's Missionary Union and some of its state affiliates have come under fire recently as they have attempted to help churches pursuing a variety of mission endeavors, including the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The assassination of Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was the focus of the resolution on Middle East peace, which resolved "to pray that the courageous endeavors of peacemakers will not be negated" by the act.

Messengers registered their opposition to "any and all federal legislation which would provide financial aid, either directly or by means of tax credit vouchers, to private or parochial elementary or secondary schools."

They also opposed "efforts to alter the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, or to amend it by a new 'Religious Equality Amendment' or in other ways that would compromise its historic interpretation."

The earlier budget debate over the University of Richmond and its alcohol policy apparently sparked a resolution on substance abuse, which encouraged "our Virginia Baptist agencies and institutions to promote a lifestyle free of substance abuse."

One messenger asked why the word "abuse" was used instead of "use." Jim Baucom of Lynchburg, a resolutions committee member, responded a change would not be consistent with the committee's feelings. No amendment was offered.

Another resolution condemning partial birth abortion, a rare form of late-term abortion, was not reported by the resolutions committee. Messengers later voted not to bring the resolution to the floor.

In other action, messengers passed a motion creating a committee to study the process by which ministers are called to churches. The committee's task would be to "ask how we can best assist ministerial selection committees to discover appropriate candidates and how to assist ministerial candidates discern God's call and leading."

Hawaii Baptists hold first 2-day meeting

HONOLULU (BP)--The Hawaii Baptist Convention's 53rd annual meeting, Nov. 9-10 at Olivet Baptist Church, Honolulu, marked a change to a two-day gathering from the traditional three days.

Paul Kaneshiro, pastor of Pukalani Baptist Church, Maui, was elected to a second term as president.

Elected as first vice president was George Moyer, a layman from Hawaii Kai Baptist Church, Honolulu, who previously served as second vice president, and second vice president, Steve Irvin, pastor of Wailuku Baptist Church, Maui. Betty Petherbridge, a layperson from University Avenue Baptist Church, Honolulu, was re-elected to a third term as recording secretary.

The recommendation to adopt a proposed 1996 convention budget of \$2,353,798 was referred back to the executive board for reconsideration because of the estimated shortfall in Cooperative Program receipts of \$67,000 during the first 10 months of 1995. The executive board will revise the 1996 budget at its January meeting.

A recommendation for a restructuring of the associations and convention staff as proposed by the special committee was instead referred back to the executive board for further study.

Among several resolutions, Hawaii Baptists voiced:

-- opposition to legalized gambling, noting "all forms of legalized gambling oppose biblical values of loyalty, love, stewardship, work and influence and are detrimental to society;"

-- affirmation of "the biblical mandate for heterosexual marriages as they fulfill God's intent, follow the historical perspective, and continue the procreation of humankind." The convention also voiced "our prayers and support to encourage our leaders to promote and affirm heterosexual marriages through the political process, and that as private citizens we exercise our freedom to speak out in opposition to those who promote same-sex marriages as acceptable lifestyles."

-- affirmation of "the biblical prohibition against the taking of innocent human life." The resolution noted the Bible "teaches that God created all human life in his own image and declares human life to be sacred from conception until death." It bemoaned "an increasing awareness and acceptance of euthanasia and assisted suicide in the United States."

Other convention resolutions included appreciation to the agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention, which "serve as sources of resource and encouragement to the Hawaii Baptist Convention by providing financial assistance and program expertise;" appreciation to representatives of the agencies who addressed the convention; and to a number of volunteers involved in the Hawaii convention's ministries.

Next year's meeting will be Nov. 7-8, hosted by the Maui County Baptist Association.

--30--

Church's 'I Am' banner stirred him to faith

By Tim Ellsworth

Baptist Press
11/15/95

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Bob and Joyce Morton decided to start over in 1968, leaving family and friends in Hillsboro, N.C., and heading to Memphis, Tenn. Little did they know what was in store for them 20 years later.

"God was working at that time," Morton said. "I didn't know at that time he was working, but I know it now."

The move played a vital part in Morton's salvation experience. As a result of the banner ministry of Memphis' Bellevue Baptist Church, he accepted Christ in June 1988, leaving a life of alcohol and hostility to the Christian faith.

"I was raised in a Christian family," Morton said. "I walked the aisle and was baptized at 8 or 9 years of age, but I did it more for their convenience than mine."

--more--

He soon got mixed up in alcohol, cigarettes and a sinful lifestyle. After the move to Memphis, Joyce attended First Baptist Church of Fishersville, Tenn., and prayed regularly for her husband.

Morton, however, had little to do with Christianity but had felt a sense of conviction. "I'd tell her to go to Sunday school and that I would meet her at church, and then I wouldn't go," Morton said. "I felt like the preacher was talking to me only.

"I couldn't be satisfied with anything I did," he said. "I couldn't eat enough. I couldn't drink enough. It was the Lord dealing with me. He put me under conviction."

Attending Bellevue's annual Singing Christmas Tree presentation in December 1987 with his wife didn't help matters any.

"I was ignoring the whole thing, until the banners came up," Morton said. "The first one that came in front of my face was 'I Am.' That sort of struck a note in me to find out what 'I Am' was."

Morton struggled with a stronger conviction for the next six months, until it came to a head on June 19, 1988. On that Sunday afternoon, while barbecuing outside, Morton went into the garage and turned on the radio in his wife's car, planning to listen to some music. He found some music, but not the kind he expected. Instead, Morton heard Joyce's tape of Sandi Patty singing, "How Great Thou Art." And it made an impact.

That night, Morton went to church with his wife, walked the aisle and publicly confessed his faith in Christ. "Of course, I was saved that afternoon in the garage," Morton said.

God had answered Joyce's prayers, which she had continually lifted to him since her conversion seven years before.

"I had thought that it was hopeless and was so discouraged in my heart and spirit," Joyce admitted. "I can't describe the feeling and the gratefulness to the Lord for the work I saw him do in Bob's heart. It's like having a whole new husband."

"She was ready to scream," Morton said about his wife's reaction to his conversion. "She said that the Lord had told her this would happen. She stuck with me through DWIs and backed me all the way."

The change was immediate. "I poured out the whiskey and never even wanted another drink," Morton said. He also gave up the cigarettes a few weeks later, and he said his marriage has been greatly strengthened as a result of his salvation.

"We are best friends now," Morton said.

Joyce agreed. "There's a deepness to our love and commitment that wasn't there before, because now our lives are centered around Christ."

About a year after his conversion, the Mortons joined Bellevue, where Morton is now a member of the banner ministry whose Scripture-based banners seek to undergird the sense of worship at the church -- and whose "I Am" banner made such a profound impact on his life nearly eight years ago.

"I've gotten involved in everything I can get involved with," Morton said. "I'm not qualified to do a lot, because I don't have a lot of education, but the Lord has a place for all of us."

--30--

Ellsworth is a freelance writer in Jackson, Tenn.

CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Texas Baptists shift 2.5 percent in funds from SBC to state causes," dated 11/14/95, please correct a percentage in the fifth paragraph to 35.5 percent, not 35.3 percent.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)	BAPTIST PRESS 901 Commerce #750 Nashville, TN 37234
F I R S T C L A S S	Southern Baptist Library and Archives