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Time lines, personnel changes for dissolving agencies updated

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press 10/24/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Two executives of the Southern Baptist Convention Stewardship Commission, including President Ron E. Chandler, will take positions with the Baptist Sunday School Board as the commission prepares for its dissolution under the restructuring of the denomination.

Also, a North American Mission Board transition team chairman advised leaders of the three SBC agencies which will merge to form the NAMB to inform employees "there will be a considerable amount of staff reductions" in the merger.

"One thing is obvious," Jack Johnson, president of the Radio and Television Commission and chairman of the NAMB logistics transition team, said at an Oct. 17-18 meeting, "there will be a considerable amount of staff reduction. We must begin to tell our staffs that fact. We are as anxious as anyone to get to the point where we can tell our employees their future status." The RTVC, Brotherhood Commission and Home Mission Board will merge in June 1997 to form the North American Mission Board. The SBC "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring includes reducing the number of agencies and institutions from 19 to 12.

The three agencies which will form NAMB currently have about 500 employees. No employment total for the new NAMB was released by Johnson or the transition team. A model of NAMB structure is nearing completion and officials hope to unveil the model in November, according to David Hankins, chairman of the NAMB transition communications team and vice president for convention policy for the SBC Executive Committee.

"The restructuring process is proceeding according to the guidelines and time lines reported by the Implementation Task Force at the SBC meeting in June," Hankins said.

The Stewardship Commission's programs will be divided between the BSSB and the SBC Executive Committee. Decided during a number of meetings with the BSSB, the commission and Implementation Task Force officials, Chandler and Carl A. Hoffman, an endowment and capital giving promotion executive, will become consultants for the BSSB. Hoffman begins Jan. 1 in a commission/BSSB relationship while Chandler begins June 19, the official date of the commission's dissolution following the June annual meeting of the SBC. Also moving to the BSSB is Kay Campbell, Hoffman's secretary.

Previously announced was the employment with the SBC Executive Committee of James L. Powell and James L. Austin, Stewardship Commission executives in Cooperative Program promotion. Under the restructuring, Cooperative Program promotion is added to the Executive Committee while capital giving is moved to the BSSB.

Other Stewardship Commission employees have been notified of the employment ending date of June 19, 1997. Some have elected to take early retirement and some are seeking other employment opportunities, officials said. The commission has 12 Nashville, Tenn.,-based employees.

"Since the June 1995 vote by the SBC, my number one priority has been the personnel of the commission," Chandler told Baptist Press. "My goal was to place all of our employees into the new organization. I am pleased that we have almost succeeded and will continue to work to find places for those employees who cannot retire at the present time."

In other SBC restructuring news, Bill Summers, director of library and archives for the Historical Commission, will manage the library and archives in Nashville for the Council of Seminary Presidents. The commission will dissolve June 19, 1997, with the library and archives program given to the six SBC seminary presidents and other historical services assigned to the BSSB. Commission administrative assistant Carolyn M. Patton and staff members Jean Forbis and Peggy Hester also will remain full-time under the new structure. Other employees are taking early retirement or seeking other employment, officials said. The commission has 10 Nashville-based employees.

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**Midwestern Seminary trustees  
approve funds for campus plan**

**By James A. Smith Sr.**

**Baptist Press  
10/24/96**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees have agreed the time has come for planning new facilities at the nearly 40-year-old Kansas City, Mo., campus.

Trustees also cheered reports of an estimated 28 percent gain in student enrollment, approved a faculty development/study tour of the Holy Land, approved a unique faculty position in "church and the law" and addressed other business in their semiannual board meeting Oct. 21-22.

In a harmonious meeting which included unanimity on most matters under consideration, trustees voted to spend up to \$400,000 for completion of a campus master plan and schematic designs. The plans will entail replacement of the current administrative, classroom/faculty office, auditorium and library buildings. Cost of the plans will be paid out of capital needs funding the seminary has received as a result of the strong Cooperative Program receipts this year.

Trustees also empowered the board's executive committee to choose one of eight preliminary campus plan options presented by architects during the meeting, with the full board voting on the choice by mail ballot in the next several months.

The board voted to employ the Kansas City firm Abend Singleton Associates Inc. to produce the campus master plan and schematic designs.

The approved plan and designs will be completed by the architects for presentation at the board's meeting in April. The availability of the designs will permit the board to make decisions concerning a possible building project and consider funding options.

Midwestern Seminary President Mark Coppenger told the board, "I have a real peace about letting the board gel" on the how to proceed with building plans. Coppenger noted, however, the present campus facilities will not be adequate for the 21st century and decisions shouldn't be delayed too long.

The campus plan and schematic designs will anticipate future enrollment of 1,000 students on the Kansas City campus, which currently serves about 350 students. Estimates for the building project run as high as \$31 million, taking into account certain features of the plan.

Reagan Bradford, chairman of the board's architect selection committee, noted the approval of \$400,000 for the campus plan and schematic designs was an "upper-end estimate" and the committee anticipates negotiations will result in less expense. Bradford is a medical doctor from Edmond, Okla.

Before hearing the architectural presentation on the meeting's second day, trustees toured the campus and participated in a special two-hour chapel service with students, faculty and staff. The chapel service initiated a 40-day period of prayer and fasting in which the trustees and administrative officers will give heightened attention to seeking God's will for the seminary's campus planning.

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Trustee chairman Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church, Hot Springs, Ark., preached on the apostle John's encounter with Christ from Revelation 1:17 and urged the seminary community to have an increased level of intimacy with Jesus Christ.

Seminary must be "a place, first and foremost, where those who are doing the equipping and those who are being equipped come to a more intimate knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ," Rogers said. "Because the Christ that we take to the world will never be any better than the Christ that we know intimately."

The chapel service also included short video comments from 11 Southern Baptist leaders who applauded the seminary's direction and offered support for the future. President Coppenger narrated a slide presentation of the seminary's history and his vision for its future.

A time of prayer, testimonies and scriptural exhortations from administrators, faculty and students concluded the chapel service.

Asking the congregation to be "perfectly honest before the Lord," Coppenger said "it really takes just one person to mess things up." Coppenger added it's "scary" that he, as the seminary's president, could "stymie" the institution."

In his report to the board of trustees, Coppenger outlined 10 items which are cause for "celebration" and 10 things which cause him concern. Topping the celebratory list was the seminary's enrollment gains.

Coppenger reported preliminary statistics indicate student enrollment is 28 percent over last year, with a 32 percent increase in the seminary's master of divinity degree program. The official fall enrollment will not be available for several weeks.

Coppenger said this year's new students are the "first class to choose us knowing who we are" and have provided a "wonderful infusion of enthusiasm on campus."

The trustee board took several actions to enhance the faculty at Midwestern.

Trustees unanimously approved Coppenger's request to spend \$35,000 for a faculty development/study tour of the Holy Land next August. The trip will be funded with a portion of the program advance funds received by the seminary due to strong Cooperative Program receipts this year.

Noting many faculty members have never been to Israel, Coppenger said the trip will demonstrate, "We're standing up as a first-rank seminary in concern with the best things for our faculty."

The recruitment of new faculty will be enhanced by the "working trip," Coppenger added. Calling it an "outstanding investment," he urged trustees to "hit a home run with our faculty" by approving the request.

Approval was also given to the election of Michael Whitehead, the seminary's vice president for business affairs, as assistant professor of church and the law. Whitehead will maintain his staff position, while teaching several courses a year.

Whitehead, who holds the juris doctor degree from University of Missouri School of Law, served five years as general counsel to the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission before joining the seminary staff in January. Whitehead is a nationally recognized authority on church legal issues and has served as counsel on several important religious freedom cases, including the 1981 Supreme Court case, *Widmar v. Vincent*.

The faculty position is unique to Midwestern among all Southern Baptist seminaries, according to Lamar Cooper, vice president for academic affairs.

Coppenger told the trustees "the church is awash in legal issues" and "our pastors are crying out for help." In light of the clear need, "Midwestern stands beautifully positioned to help with the expertise of Mike Whitehead."

A recommendation to increase the pay scale for junior faculty members, assistant and associate professors also was approved by trustees. The new salary ranges will be from \$33,000 to \$35,000 for assistant professors and \$34,000 to \$37,000 for associate professors.

In other action, the board:

-- unanimously approved a resolution requesting an increase in the Cooperative Program funding ration for the six seminaries in anticipation of reallocation of budget funds brought about by convention's "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring. The resolution echoes similar actions this fall by the other Southern Baptist seminaries.

-- unanimously adopted a resolution of appreciation for Marty Blankenship, who resigned this month as director of public relations and alumni after serving in various capacities at the seminary for 17 years.

**Falwell joins ranks with SBC,  
 lauds 'theological renaissance'**

**By Art Toalston**

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (BP)--Jerry Falwell has confirmed that a monthly financial contribution to the new Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia state convention by Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Va., has, in essence, made him a Southern Baptist.

Falwell, in an Oct. 24 statement, noted:

"For many years, I have watched with admiration the theological renaissance within the Southern Baptist Convention. I have been preaching in Southern Baptist churches for nearly 40 years and Southern Baptist pastors and evangelists have been preaching in my pulpit over the same period.

"When inerrantists in Virginia formed the SBCV recently, the Thomas Road Baptist Church was quick to show its approval and to offer encouragement by beginning modest monthly financial support. While we have no intention of discontinuing our support to our missionaries who are affiliated with many different fellowships and faith mission boards, we fully intend to take our permanent stand with the national and Virginia Bible-believing conservatives who have rescued the Southern Baptist Convention from theological liberalism.

"Thomas Road Baptist Church will continue to be what Southern Baptist churches have always been, independent and autonomous. We are now happy to work in voluntary cooperation with Southern Baptist churches."

The church, thus, becomes dually aligned with the SBC and the Baptist Bible Fellowship, based in Springfield, Mo., encompassing about 3,500 churches, many proud to be known as fundamentalist. To be known as part of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, a church must provide support for the group's 800-plus missionaries on 98 mission fields and/or six affiliated colleges and ask to be listed in the fellowship's directory, published every two years. Another 900 to 1,000 provide financial support for missionaries or the colleges but have not asked to be in the directory, a fellowship official said.

The amount of the contribution to the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia was not specified in Falwell's statement.

The contribution will qualify the independent Baptist church to send messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, scheduled next year from June 17-19 in Dallas.

Additionally, the contribution will qualify members of the church for service on the trustee boards of the SBC.

To qualify for messenger representation at an SBC annual meeting, the convention's constitution states that a church in "friendly cooperation" with the SBC can name one messenger by being a "bona fide contributor to the Convention's work during the fiscal year preceding." The amount of the contribution is not specified in the SBC constitution. A church can qualify for one additional messengers for every 250 members or for each \$250 given to SBC work, up to a maximum of 10.

The new Virginia conservative Southern Baptist convention, founded Sept. 16 in Richmond, with offices in Virginia Beach, divides its receipts 50-50 with the SBC. The convention confirmed it received Thomas Road's first contribution on Sept. 25.

Bill Merrell, vice president for convention relations at the SBC Executive Committee, stated Oct. 24: "We are delighted to link arms with Thomas Road Baptist Church and any other evangelical, Bible-believing Baptist church in the gospel enterprises to which Southern Baptists are openly and enthusiastically committed."

Among other Southern Baptists' ties to Falwell-related ministries, Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla., is the current chairman of Liberty University's board of trustees. Among new trustees in 1996 are Gene Mims, vice president of the Baptist Sunday School Board's church growth group; Ronnie W. Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark., chairman of the SBC Executive Committee and president of the SBC Pastors' Conference; and Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga., and immediate past president of the Pastors' Conference, who has a daughter in her freshman year at the college.

Falwell founded Thomas Road Baptist Church in 1956 and has been its only pastor. He also is the university's founder and is featured on the national "Old Time Gospel Hour" broadcast.

**Recovery from snake bite  
more than luck, Dina says**

**By Mark Kelly**

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (BP)--Villagers in Mozambique and doctors in South Africa are marveling that a Southern Baptist missionary survived an Oct. 16 attack by a deadly snake.

John Dina, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board evangelist in Quelimane, Mozambique, was released from the hospital just five days after a green mamba bit him on the leg. Victims of such bites usually die when the toxic venom attacks their nervous system and they stop breathing.

The doctor in Johannesburg, South Africa, who treated Dina called him "a very lucky man." Dina and those around him believe it had more to do with the power of prayer.

Hundreds of thousands of Southern Baptists prayed for Dina when his name appeared on a missionary prayer calendar Oct. 12, his 34th birthday. Thousands of others prayed for him after the attack, when urgent notices were posted on the board's toll-free prayer line and CompassionNet electronic prayer network.

Dina, an Arizona native, and four Mozambican co-workers were walking in the bush about 37 miles from home when he felt a sharp pain in his right calf and turned to see a bright green snake. The men fled, and the snake pursued them briefly before turning back toward the trees.

"My leg was burning and I felt a pain in my stomach," Dina said. "All I could think about was that I had to get to that main road" (about 15 miles away).

Dina drove himself back to the main road, stopping only when nausea or exhaustion forced him to pause. It took him five hours to reach Quelimane. Dina's wife, Wanne, and Mark Nelham, an African Evangelical Fellowship doctor, stayed with him through the night as his pulse slowed and his breathing became more difficult.

A medical evacuation airplane landed at dawn, and Dina arrived at a Johannesburg, South Africa, hospital 21 hours after the bite. By that time, his breathing was very labored and the wound was infected. Gereth Edwards, Dina's attending physician and a snake bite specialist, administered large doses of antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs and kept a ventilator on standby.

Within two days, Dina had made a remarkable recovery, and Edwards said he would suffer no permanent damage from the bite.

"It only takes one drop of venom to kill a person," the doctor said. "Mr. Dina ... was a very lucky man."

"All Baptist people in Mozambique probably know by now what happened to John," said Wanne Dina, who remained in Mozambique with their three children while her husband was flown to South Africa for treatment. "The villagers are saying it's truly a miracle he's alive.

"People here are afraid of snakes. Many even take a traditional medicine they think will protect them from dying if bitten," she said. Some of the unbelievers thought a curse had been put on her husband.

"God has used this for the better. This is going to help John's testimony because people don't live when they're bitten. It's going to help them see how great God is, which will help spread the gospel," she said.

Dina said he knew people all over the world were praying for him and he believes the timing of the bite -- so soon after his birthday -- was not a coincidence. The prayers on his behalf positively affected his recovery, he said.

While this crisis will be used for God's glory, Dina said he doesn't plan to change his preaching.

"I'm not going to come out with some kind of five-point, super-power snake message," he said. "We have preached that God is all-powerful. God may have done this to testify to that, but I don't know. Only God knows how it will work" for his glory.

Dina develops churches in a largely unreached, but responsive area of Mozambique, said David Hooten, who directs Foreign Mission Board work in the country. Working in a supporting and training role with Baptist leaders in Zambezia province, Dina has been privileged to see "a large harvest" of converts. As many as 80 churches have asked for Dina's assistance since his return from furlough in June.

"I don't know if God allowed Satan to send this snake because we're working in a responsive area or not," Dina said. "But I do know that my life depends on God's control and that God has my life. That is what I know."

**FamilyNet to broadcast  
'Fasting & Prayer '96'**

By C.C. Risenhoover

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"Fasting & Prayer '96" will be televised live at 9 p.m. Eastern Nov. 14-15 on FamilyNet, the broadcast television service of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. The event, spearheaded by Campus Crusade for Christ founder Bill Bright, will be at America's Center in St. Louis.

Bright, his wife Vonette and evangelist Billy Graham are co-chairs of "Fasting & Prayer '96."

Bright, who received the \$1.1 million 1996 Templeton Prize last March, announced he would use the entire award to promote fasting and prayer.

"Fasting with biblical prayer is the most enriching and energizing of the Christian disciplines," Bright said. "Teaching laymen and women the importance of fasting with prayer as it relates to the Great Commission is one of the most important things we can do in seeking God's face."

Thousands of Christians, including many top religious leaders, attended "Fasting & Prayer" events in Los Angeles in 1995 and in Orlando, Fla., in 1994.

Using satellite communication, Bright said he hopes to link thousands of churches and millions of Christians together in the fasting and prayer effort for spiritual revival in America and the world.

Among those scheduled to be on the program are Tom Elliff, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla.; Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark., and president of the SBC Pastor's Conference; Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn., and a former SBC president; Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board; Henry Blackaby, director of the office of prayer and spiritual awakening at the Home Mission Board and author of "Experiencing God;" Bill McCartney, founder of Promise Keepers and former University of Colorado football coach.

Numerous other religious leaders also will be on the program, which begins at 5 p.m. Nov. 14 and ends at noon Nov. 16.

Floyd, in the convention sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans in June, initiated a fasting and prayer emphasis in the SBC from Sunday, Oct. 27, through the following Sunday.

Four thrusts are involved:

-- on Sunday morning, Oct. 27, Floyd urged pastors to preach on the subject of fasting and prayer, calling Baptists to fast and pray on Oct. 30.

-- on Sunday evening, Oct. 27, Floyd urged churches to hold a "solemn assembly" of prayer to call people to repent of personal sin and the sins of the nation, asking God for mercy on his people.

-- on Wednesday, Oct. 30, he urged churches to hold a day of humiliation, prayer and fasting for personal, church and national revival.

-- on Sunday, Nov. 3, in both morning and evening services, Floyd urged pastors to preach on the subject of personal, church and national revival, challenging God's people to do whatever it takes to see revival in America.

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**Christian schools important  
in values war, official says**

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
10/24/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Biblically based education for children and youth can be a key tool in winning the societal values war, according to a national leader of Christian schools ministry.

Glen Schultz, who became manager of Christian schools, home schooling and church weekday early education work at the Baptist Sunday School Board Oct. 1, said education which comes from a scriptural basis "teaches that God is relevant to all aspects of life."

"When a youth finishes school, the result will be a philosophy of life that is God-centered rather than person-centered. They will make decisions based on biblical standards."

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Schultz came to the board from a seven-year tenure as southeast director for the Association of Christian Schools International. He developed and coordinated services for approximately 600 Christian schools in eight states, conducting conventions, conferences and seminars as well as overseeing accreditation and certification among other administrative functions. Earlier, he was a teacher, principal and superintendent for 21 years.

From his experience, Schultz said, not every church needs to have a Christian school.

While no comprehensive figures are available, Schultz said, estimates vary from 15,000 to 25,000 Christian schools in the United States. The Sunday School Board has identified more than 600 schools sponsored by Southern Baptist churches.

"Our goal is not to see every Southern Baptist church have a school, but to have every pastor understand what the Bible says about training children and youth," he said, pointing to Scripture passages in Deuteronomy, Psalms, Proverbs, Exodus, Luke and Ephesians, among others, that address teaching today's student.

"If you follow the principles of Scripture," he observed, "the result is Christian schooling or home schooling. Public schools have removed God from the education process. That teaches that God is irrelevant to certain aspects of life."

Schultz said if a Christian school "with a basic doctrinal statement that supports the evangelical position" already operates in a community, "we don't need to reinvent the wheel and get into competition and egos." Schools that are not Southern Baptist but that have "sound philosophies with a good statement of faith" generally teach from biblical perspectives without getting into denominational matters. Most, Schultz observed, have students from many different churches enrolled in classes.

Churches that have adequate facilities and "feel God is calling them to start a school" should consider the matter, he said. Parental pressure or a desire to pay for church facilities with tuition fees are not good reasons to begin a school, he said.

Providing a solid education is not limited to large churches, Schultz added.

"I've seen many small churches operate great schools for a few students," he said. "Heartbeat and calling are more important than size."

Critics of Christian schooling and home schooling say children and youth are sheltered from "the real world," but, Schultz noted, "It's impossible to shelter them from the world if you drive down a highway that has billboards. Christian schooling may shelter them from a little of the real world, but it does not shelter them from truth."

Another concern some voice is that Christian schooling removes the potential for Christian witness from public schools.

Schultz agreed public schools need "mature Christians to be salt and light" for the unchurched, "but you have to train students before they can do that. You don't go into spiritual combat until you are spiritually mature," he continued. "There are lost people in cultic churches, but we don't send children there to lead people to Christ. We need to teach children and youth to be Christian witnesses in their neighborhoods and in their groups at church.

"Christian school educators are not trying to close public schools," he added, "but we need to be sure children are trained in values and beliefs that are biblically based. The message of Luke 6:40 is that you will be like your teacher when you are fully trained."

Cost, another consideration for parents and sponsoring churches, is a matter of perspective, he said.

"If you look at it as an expense, you'll never be able to afford it. If you see it as an investment in our children, then it will fit into the budget."

The assignment of Christian schools and home school ministries to the Sunday School Board was announced in June as part of the Southern Baptist Convention's "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring.

Schultz said the Christian schools staff, including Pam Boucher, a consultant in weekday early education, bus ministry and children's worship, and a yet-to-be-named specialist in home schools, will provide multiple resources.

During the first year of work, Schultz said the staff will:

- develop strategies to promote the necessity for Christ-centered, Bible-based education.
- identify key services important to people involved in Southern Baptist Christian schools.
- identify services needed by congregations who plan to begin schools.
- develop strategies to educate future pastors regarding issues of Christian schooling.

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- develop an SBC network for mentoring and sharing information and ideas to strengthen Christian schools.
- assist schools in developing policies and procedures to ensure financial accountability and stability.
- assist schools in developing and maintaining a biblical philosophy of education to ensure spiritual integrity.
- provide schools with information on Christian textbooks, resources and other materials needed for quality educational programs.

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(BP) photo posted in the SBCNet News Room under Schultz.txt.

**WMU stirred Wanda Lee to see  
her career as mission field**

**By Bob Murdaugh**

**Baptist Press  
10/24/96**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--When Wanda Lee's husband Larry proposed to her, she was satisfied as a registered nurse and he was training at seminary to be a preacher.

Realizing she would soon be a church pastor's wife, her immediate, emphatic response to his marriage request was, "I don't do (singing) solos, I won't play piano for anyone else but you and I won't do that WMU thing, no matter what."

Twenty-five years of marriage later, the Russellville, Ala., native is national WMU president. She serves as the organization's chief public relations representative at state WMU meetings and is president of WMU's executive board. Her duties also include service as a voting member of the SBC Executive Committee.

Wanda's first attraction to WMU in the early 1970s was its challenge for her to view her professional nursing role as a mission field. She had been influenced by advice from a nurse she met in nursing school.

"She had served in missions work in Gaza, and she told me, 'If you will give your nursing talents back to God, he will do great things,'" Wanda said. She recalls her four years of caring for her sick mother during high school as major preparation for nursing.

During her husband's first pastorate at Gilgal Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, Ala., Lee was mentored in WMU by two ladies who, like her, were full-time working professionals and who encouraged her to work with Acteens and Baptist Young Women. She credits Larry's mission-mindedness for their church's growth in interest in WMU projects.

"When we came, the church had come out of four years with a pastor who had discouraged missions and some women had prayed that God would bring a mission-minded pastor," Lee said. "Limited support did not relieve us of our responsibility to teach and do missions."

The Lees are former Southern Baptist foreign missionaries on Saint Vincent Island. He is currently a Home Mission Board-endorsed hospital chaplain in Georgia, where they reside.

Lee said she is greatly concerned about the lack of missions interest in numerous churches today. Believing the Great Commission is to every person, she described WMU's coed organizations as effective ways for churches to train mission teams. WMU's adult coed organizations, in particular, keep men and women in a learning mode of thinking, she said, and in inner-city churches where many of the members live outside the city, WMU's coed organizations for children help to alleviate some of the scheduling problems.

In some churches, coed organizations are the only way for effective missions education due to lack of leadership, Lee said. Furthermore, the fact most husbands and wives love to minister together adds credibility to the coed concept, she said.

"As career missionaries, Larry and I found that many of our most effective volunteer teams were coed," Lee said. "The teams that have been involved in missions in their churches are easier to train on the home and foreign mission fields. They know it will be hard work, and they are committed to working together."

The first step Lee takes in encouraging a church to consider WMU organizations is to meet with the pastor and some key women and/or men. "I let them share their church's vision and needs, knowing full well that there is at least one WMU organization that will suit their congregation," she said. "One of WMU's greatest assets is its emphasis on spiritual growth in small groups."

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One pastor told Lee that through WMU organizations, the women in the church "kept their eyes focused on missions" and as a result the church became mission-minded.

"During a church visit when I was invited to speak during a worship service, the pastor stood up and told the congregation that they had a strong church because of WMU," Lee said. "My most challenging duty as national WMU president is not to encourage churches to consider WMU organizations as much as it is to discern WMU's future in the SBC's design.

"WMU has a future, but I am not sure how we will interpret it," she said. "We won't have to make a place for WMU -- we have a job description in the church as its missions conscience."

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(BP) photo available from upon request from Alabama WMU at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 327.

**Expert: completed genetic map  
poses threats, opportunities**

**By Linda Lawson**

**Baptist Press  
10/24/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--With the completion of the map of the human genetic structure, perhaps by the end of the decade, the new millennium will include the cure of many diseases but also will pose incredible moral dilemmas that accompany the capacity to "control every aspect of genetic makeup," an analyst of emerging trends predicted.

Arnold Brown, chairman of Weiner, Edrich, Brown, a New York issues detection firm, overviewed 18 social, economic, political and technological trends in an Oct. 16 presentation to employees of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Biological issues, "perhaps more than any other, require intervention of religious institutions to ask the moral questions," Brown said. "It is necessary that there be a set of moral guideposts to help us deal with the power in this area."

On the positive side, he predicted "advances in genetic understanding" will lead to the cure of many diseases and the potential "for enabling people to live not only long lives but long, productive lives."

In other areas, a growing interest in religion, spirituality and stewardship of life, including a redefinition of the separation of church and state, led Brown's list of social trends.

"There has been a sense growing in recent years that separation of church and state should not necessarily mean the separation of religion and state," Brown said. "This includes awareness that we cannot have a morally based public life without a religious component in it.

"This will impose on all religious institutions the need to take stronger moral, religious stands and to take them publicly," he said.

While violent crime is registering a slight decrease, Brown noted that concern about it is increasing because the nature of violent crime is changing.

In the past, many victims of violent crime knew their perpetrators whereas now "over one-half of violent murders are by unknown assailants. It is the senseless random violence that's making people so afraid," he said.

He predicted random and senseless violence will increase.

Brown said racial tension in the country will gradually be outstripped by tension between classes.

"We are seeing a gradual emergence of a kind of culture in which race is not as important as it used to be, especially among young people," he noted.

In another area, people see in the continuing increase in options a corresponding gain in power and freedom, Brown said.

However, he emphasized while people want more choices, they may exercise their freedom by using only a small range of what is available to them.

A business or a church should provide choices for people but also "help them to see their best option," Brown said.

A major negative effect of options is "the more options people have the more quickly they become bored," he said. "As a result, our politicians now believe people are too bored to listen to anything more than 7 seconds."

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Society also is experiencing a shift from what Brown called "found identity to made identity."

In the past, a person's identity was largely shaped by his or her affiliations -- family, job, religion, education.

"We now live in a time where it's increasingly possible for people not only to change identities but to find multiple identities," Brown said. "Having multiple identities is seen as a good way to cope with the pace of change and complexity of society."

Related to identities, Brown predicted people will group themselves in new kinds of communities, such as cyberspace, where they are not bound by geography or even time.

In his final social trend, Brown cited a movement toward individual responsibility and self-reliance, "in a sense a return to the roots of the Protestant ethic. The era of entitlement is coming to an end."

In the economic arena, Brown said consumers are "becoming more informed and assertive instead of passive and uninformed. People are coming to expect things such as customization."

The future will include the development of a large global middle class in contrast with the present where the middle class is largely a Western phenomenon, he said.

"My guess is we will see a global economic boom of huge proportions," Brown said. Within 10 years he estimated the world's middle class could swell to 2-3 billion people.

The economic boom will be accompanied by a "great worldwide emphasis on materialism" that will be followed by a significant hunger for meaning in life, he said.

Control of finances in the United States is shifting from savings banks to the stock market. If the financial institutions managing investment funds "don't like the way a company operates, they will change the management," Brown said.

Other economic trends include a high emphasis on entrepreneurship, with 750,000 new businesses started annually; the rise of a new professional servant class offering services such as picking up cleaning or helping to buy a car; and "re-intermediation," a return to the use of intermediaries for help in making choices.

In the political arena, Brown said people are losing faith in the ability of government to solve problems.

"Keep in mind the way our founding fathers set up this country and the way the American people apparently prefer to continue is that there be tension between the different institutions in society that they keep each other from becoming too powerful. So the majority of people probably will want government to protect it against business, but they still want business to do the things it can do better than government," he said.

With the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the potential for conflict between two great world powers, "people are now looking for other things to fight over," Brown said. He predicted those conflicts will be based in religion and culture.

Also, he cited a growing gap between the elites of the world and their constituents. "People at the top are isolating themselves and protecting themselves from adversity."

In technology, Brown said the future will include a continuing decline of the cost of information, with the capacity of the computer chip doubling every 18 months.

One result is that the cost of starting a business is also getting cheaper. For example, he said "someone who wants to be a publisher needs about \$3,000 worth of computer equipment, a modem and a passion."

While change has always been a reality, the pace of change is increasing, Brown said.

"We are now living in such a time of massive change that everyone is frightened by it," he said. For example, he said, the collapse of the former Soviet Union was met not by euphoria but "we saw a great period of pessimism set in."

In the midst of the change, Brown said Christians have a positive message to share about an unchanging God.

## Court leaves decisions intact on homosexual ban, religious liberty

By Tom Strobe

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to grant reviews of appeals court decisions upholding both the ban on homosexuals in the military and the accommodation of religious expression in government-funded buildings.

In *Thomasson v. Perry*, the high court let stand a Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals opinion supporting the ban on homosexuals in the military, popularly known since 1993 as the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

In *Albuquerque v. Church on the Rock*, the justices refused to reconsider a 10th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling striking down a city policy prohibiting the showing of the popular evangelistic movie, "Jesus," in a senior citizens center.

"The Supreme Court's denial of writ in the *Thomasson v. Perry* case will almost certainly be regarded as a definitive position with regard to the 'don't ask, don't tell' policy in the military towards homosexuals," said Will Dodson, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's legal counsel and director of government relations. "A narrow issue was presented to the court, and the court upheld the ruling of the court of appeals. Therefore, it should send a clear signal to lower federal courts of what the result will be with regard to that one narrow issue.

"On the contrary, the court's denial of writ in the case of *Albuquerque v. Church on the Rock* will provide less guidance to lower federal courts with regard to the religious liberty issues raised in this case," Dodson said. "Certainly, it is good that the ruling of the 10th Circuit will stand. It would be even better, and it would be very beneficial, if the Supreme Court had accepted this case and then used the same kind of sound judicial reasoning which the 10th Circuit used in order to reach its results. We need more of the kind of sound judicial reasoning exercised by the 10th Circuit from the Supreme Court in religious liberty cases."

In the military ban case, lawyers for Paul Thomasson contended the "don't ask, don't tell" rule burdens free speech and violates the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection. The appeals court, however, rejected those arguments, ruling a challenge of the ban "cannot be viewed apart from the special legal status of military life."

While appeals courts in the Second and Eighth circuits also have rejected challenges to the homosexual ban, some are pending in the Ninth Circuit.

Thomasson challenged the new policy after it became effective in late 1993. In March 1994, Thomasson, a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, wrote a letter admitting his homosexuality to four admirals whom he had served. He was discharged in June 1995 after serving nearly 10 years in the Navy.

Under the new policy, homosexuality itself is not a bar to military service, but a person's statement he or she is homosexual qualifies as "homosexual conduct" and is a basis for discharge.

The federal court upheld the Navy's decision, prompting Thomasson's unsuccessful appeal.

In the religious liberty case, the 10th Circuit ruled the city of Albuquerque had issued a "viewpoint-based restriction on speech" in barring "Jesus" from being shown in a senior citizens center. The city's six senior citizen centers are designated public forums, the court said, and a ban on the film in such a setting limits speech "entitled full protection under the First Amendment."

The city of Albuquerque had adopted a policy identical to that in the Older Americans Act, which says federal grants for construction or renovation are dependent upon assurances the center will not be sued for sectarian instruction or religious worship.

In a brief with the Supreme Court, the city argued Congress has the right to enforce the Establishment Clause as a requirement for receiving federal funds and its refusal to allow the film is consistent with the high court's current views on free speech and establishment of religion.

Arguing the church's case in a brief with the high court, the American Center for Law and Justice said the city's policy would have allowed a film "on the Bible and Jesus Christ from a secular or skeptical perspective" but prohibits one "when it is presented from a religious perspective." The city's "argument that the Establishment Clause is implicated because some persons might perceive that the city 'sponsors' the 'religious' perspective of the film is meritless," the ACLJ brief said.

The controversy began when Don Kimbro, a Church on the Rock minister, asked permission to show "Jesus" and distribute New Testaments at a senior citizens center. The city denied permission, a decision which was upheld by a federal court before being reversed by the appeals court.

The court announced its decisions Oct. 21.

## Comfort, uniformity named enemies of reconciliation

By Sarah Zimmerman

ATLANTA (BP)—Comfort and expectations of uniformity are stumbling blocks on the road to reconciliation, leaders said during an Oct. 21-23 conference in Atlanta.

Frank Thomas, pastor of New Faith Baptist Church, Matteson, Ill., described a recent trip to South Africa where he admired the beauty of the country.

"As I sat in Capetown, I thought, 'I can understand why the privileged class has a hard time giving this up.' Maybe comfort and privilege are the real enemy of reconciliation," Thomas said. "The gospel does require us to give up some comfort and privilege, and I don't know what's more difficult than that."

David Porter, director of the Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland, said people will be disappointed if they expect the result of reconciliation to be that everyone agrees on political agendas or worship styles. He noted the competing political visions in Ireland each have validity from a biblical basis.

"Conflict and diversity of thinking are part of this growing, broken world," Porter said. "We need new models of accommodation. Repentance and reconciliation will not transform the issue but how we handle conflict."

The October conference was a planning meeting for Reconciliation '97, an international, multidenominational meeting scheduled for Sept. 1-7, 1997 in Coventry, England. Coventry was chosen because the cathedral there became a center of reconciliation after World War II. Bishop Stephen Verney chronicled the experience in the book "Fire In Coventry."

Reid Hardin, Home Mission Board coordinator for renewal and reconciliation, said next year's meeting will be a "parable-driven" conference with leaders sharing experiences and challenges of reconciliation. He suggested participants "ask God what your assignment is and come to report to us. Are you willing to pay the price, not of a trip to Coventry, but to reconcile with whomever you're broken?"

The planning meeting was an example of a parable-driven conference as individuals shared their stories.

Texas native Moises Rodriguez, HMB director of ethnic church multiplication, told of growing up in a migrant family. His father was told he shouldn't send his children to school because they had no hope of being anything but migrant farm workers. An Anglo store owner refused to sell milk to his father. Rodriguez' Sunday school teacher challenged his application for a college scholarship.

"How can I love, how can I work with people who have hurt me so much?" Rodriguez asked. "We must reconcile with God. He is the only hope we have. We must reconcile with ourselves and see ourselves as beautiful in his sight. We must reconcile with those who have hurt us and those we have hurt."

Other stories told during the conference indicated worldwide opportunities for reconciliation: hunger and famine devastating war-torn Korea, racial hatred between Anglos and aborigines in Australia, violence in families, oppression of women, wars in Bosnia and Israel.

In addition, Southern Baptists issued pleas for greater ethnic inclusion in decision-making places.

Joe Ratliff, pastor of Houston's Brentwood Baptist Church, said when he imagines the lion and the lamb lying down together, he thinks the lamb doesn't get much sleep for fear of the lion. "The issue is power. Are we willing to share it? Can I trust you to share it?"

Chicago's Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church where Don Sharp is pastor was the first predominantly black church to associate with the Illinois Southern Baptist convention. Sharp was the first African American elected president of the state convention. Yet he said Race Relations Sunday for Southern Baptists is like Ground Hog Day. "We come out of our holes, look at each other and go back."

Sharp agreed with Ratliff, saying people in control don't know how to give up power.

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis said churches must practice reconciliation by maintaining an open-door policy to people of all ethnic groups and seeking to "evangelize, congregationalize and minister to all people. We cannot practice selective evangelism or ministry."

As people from various racial backgrounds become Christians and church members, they "must be given absolute voice and vote in that congregation," Lewis added. "The same must be true on associational and denominational levels."

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For more information on the Coventry conference, contact Reconciliation '97, P.O. Box 1698, Lilburn, GA 30226-8278; fax, (770) 925-8278; or CompuServe 70420,2305.

**Georgia church honored  
for resort ministries**

**By Lynne Jones**

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)--First Baptist Church of Helen, Ga., is the 1996 Resort Church of the Year, chosen by the special ministries department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Pastor Kyle Woodfin will receive an appreciation plaque at the Nov. 12 meeting of the Georgia Baptist Convention in Perry, Ga.

"In a year of the 'Start Something New' emphasis, we have chosen to honor the pastor and congregation who best demonstrate that a young church can grow in a rapidly changing resort setting, as well as reach out to tourists in condos, campgrounds, apartments, shopping areas, holiday events and festivals," said Joel T. Land, associate director of the HMB department.

Helen is an alpine resort village in the north Georgia mountains which attracts 3 million visitors each year. In an effort to reach children and youth this summer, First Baptist Church sponsored as many as six day camps a day at local condos, hotels, campgrounds and apartments, and hosted concerts in the Helen town square.

Many opportunities to witness to adults also occur in the business community. Woodfin visits shopkeepers, managers, friends and community officials, all of which build trusting relationships. After many visits, one merchant said, "I'm tired of doing it my way. I'm ready to give my life to the Lord."

This summer the church began to realize gains from its outreach efforts. During June and July, 23 people joined the church. Future plans include a new education building and a new facility to house visiting volunteers.

The resort ministry gave the church an identity in this unique town, said Woodfin. "And the church gave the resort ministry credibility. The two really compliment each other," he said.

Woodfin added, "This is the most exciting and fun ministry in which I have been involved in my life."

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