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September 14, 1973

Wrapup

Christian Life Commission
Confronts Social Issues

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission spoke out against political abuses, honored two Southern Baptist leaders and listened to a searching probe of trends affecting Southern Baptist Christian social concerns during the commission's annual meeting here.

The commission approved a letter, designed for all U.S. Senators and Representatives, calling for "a recovery of integrity in the life of our nation" and support of legislation aimed at correcting political abuses.

It also urged consideration of a "plan for the public financing of political campaigns."

Noting the "shocking disregard for morality on the part" of those involved in Watergate, the letter called on Senators and Representatives to "encourage the Senate Select Committee to persevere with its bipartisan investigation to the end that no cover-up of lawlessness will be tolerated and all lawbreakers may be brought to justice."

The letter also encouraged the national leaders to help "bring about a recommitment to those basic moral principles on which this nation has traditionally stood."

The 30-member commission, social concerns agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, approved a \$291,000 budget, up \$7,000 from last year, and re-elected Cecil Sherman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C., as its chairman.

To reflect the Christian Life Commission's efforts to help Southern Baptists develop creative resources to minister to families, the commission changed the title of staffer Harry N. Hollis Jr. from director of special moral concerns to director of family and special moral concerns.

T.B. Maston, professor emeritus of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex., examined the future and implications of Christian social ethics in the denomination--probing trends which affect the Christian social concerns of Southern Baptists.

E. Clinton Gardner of the Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, Ga., addressed the commission on the Christian ethics scene outside Southern Baptist circles.

The commission's 1973 Distinguished Service Award went to Arthur B. Rutledge, executive secretary-treasurer, and Walker L. Knight, editor, of Home Missions magazine, both of the SBC Home Mission Board, for their team effort in leading Baptists to apply Christian principles.

Maston bared his feelings on Christian social implications to the denomination of "big business" attitudes, ultra-conservatism, anti-intellectualism, denominational publishing efforts, threats to freedom of press and conscience, the charismatic movement and maintenance of Biblical and theological foundations for ministry.

He warned that administrators of multi-million-dollar SBC agencies could develop a "big business perspective" and lose touch with the common man. The same could be true, he said, of denominational workers and church staffers who live in the suburbs and have a standard of living which would tend to divert their sympathies to the privileged.

Noting a trend toward ultra-conservatism in the SBC, Maston said "it is a threat" because "extreme conservatives have little interest in social morality or social concern in general."

Maston also expressed concern about a "constantly latent" anti-intellectual trend among Southern Baptists which stifles and "impoverishes."

He also defended freedom of state Baptist papers against encroachment from some state denominational leaders who would make the papers "little more than promotional agencies."

"It's doubtful if there's anything that threatens a democracy, religious or political, more than a controlled press," he said.

Maston also touched on the need for Broadman Press, publishing arm of the SBC, to publish more quality books which "will serve the needs of a segment of our constituency (the more educated and sophisticated) that tends to be neglected."

In clarifying his statement, Maston said Broadman Press "has published many fine books," but added, "they seem to be pushing mainly subjects they think will sell, such as on the charismatic movement."

He said, "All of us should work to cultivate an atmosphere among Southern Baptists" which would give greater freedom to Broadman Press and its writers. He said it is "tragic" that many books will never be written because potential authors, "particularly the teachers in our seminaries," are afraid to do so because of economic pressures from within Southern Baptist ranks.

The pioneer Christian social ethicist cautioned Southern Baptists to maintain concern for personal morality as well as social morality, to stay close to the Bible, to center ministry on people--especially the underprivileged and downtrodden--and "couple a basically conservative theological stance with our social concern."

Maston told the commission it has had impact on SBC programs and agencies during the past 20 years but warned it to guard itself against success.

"The better the work of this commission gets and the more established and accepted it is by the denomination, the greater will be the temptation of magnifying its ministry of service and minimizing its ministry of challenge.

"It must fulfill both a priestly and prophetic function in our denomination."

He said the Christian Life Commission and all those interested in applied Christianity lack the unifying and cohesive issue "to give us a sense of mission and urgency we had a few years ago with the race issue."

Increased concern with people and their needs, he said, will surface important social issues--including a possible rediscovery of the race issue.

In other action the commission approved a six per cent cost of living raise for staff members and slated its 1975 national seminar, which will deal with integrity, for Louisville, March 10-12. The 1974 seminar on economics will be March 25-27 in Houston.

Also approved were 1974 Christian Life Conferences, July 27-Aug. 2, at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, on Christianity and Women, and Aug. 10-16, at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, on the Bible and Christian social ethics.

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HAM Reports Indicate
Missionaries Safe in Chile

9/14/73

RICHMOND (BP)--An incomplete early report that Southern Baptist missionaries in Chile are safe following that country's military coup of Sept. 11 was presented at the September meeting here of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

In other actions, the board heard its executive secretary comment on the proposed 1974 budget, to be adopted at the October board meeting, and received an optimistic report on the missionary personnel outlook.

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Frank K. Means, the board's area secretary for South America, reported that he talked with a HAM radio operator in Miami who had contacted some of the Baptist missionaries in Chile. They indicated that so far "everything is OK" following the military takeover.

The Miami radio operator talked with missionaries Gerald Riddell in Punta Arenas in extreme southern Chile, and John H. McTyre in the capital, Santiago, through the "Halo Network" of HAM radio operators. The network is made up of missionary HAM radio operators in South America who have agreed to make daily contact with each other and with persons in the States.

President Salvador Allende allegedly committed suicide after the armed forces, siding with civilian opponents of Allende's regime, moved planes, tanks and ground troops in to seize the presidential palace.

According to wire reports, a military junta took control of the government and declared a state of seige.

Last July the Baptist missionaries in Chile declared themselves in a crisis period due to the country's political unrest. They advised the board to encourage new missionary appointees to Chile to consider reassignment to other countries until the political situation is more stable.

As soon as communication channels reopen, further contact will be made with the missionaries to determine in detail the effect of the coup on Baptist work in Chile.

At present, 43 Southern Baptist missionaries live in Chile, and six additional new missionaries have been appointed to serve there.

In his report, Baker J. Cauthen, executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, said the 1974 budget will be the largest ever considered by the board, but there will still be millions of dollars requested by the missions which can't be provided due to the normal growth of the work and to dollar devaluation and inflation.

"We are grateful to Southern Baptists for sustained increase in missionary giving so that we can meet these circumstances as well as possible," he said.

Louis Cobbs, secretary of the board's department of missionary personnel, said 1973 missionary appointments, already ahead of the 1972 total, may exceed 200 before the end of the year.

He reported commissioning of a record 75 missionary journeymen for two-year periods of service overseas and awarding of six medical receptorships to volunteer third-year medical students for some 10 weeks service overseas.

Cobbs also noted the success of 56 college students who served overseas this summer under the sponsorship of Baptist Student Unions.

He reported the itinerary for the new musical missions team, GRAIN, is now filled through December with 45 performances and programs in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

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Georgia Baptists Elect 3;
Propose Record Budget

9/14/73

ATLANTA (BP)--Georgia Baptists have three new state mission leaders, a proposed record-setting Cooperative Program budget for 1974 and a rough indication of what their planned new convention headquarters building will cost when built.

The convention's executive committee named R. Eugene Dailey, Brotherhood secretary for Georgia Baptists, A. Jerrell Prichett, Sunday School secretary and D. Eugene Briscoe, secretary of student work. All three had been serving as acting secretaries for these departments following a divisional reorganization of the executive committee's administrative structure in March.

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The Georgia Baptist Convention executive committee gave interim approval to a 1974 Cooperative Program budget of \$7,036,000, an increase of 3.5 per cent over 1973. The budget will be presented for approval at the annual meeting of the Georgia convention, Nov. 12-14 in Atlanta.

After deduction of about 10 per cent for shared promotional and administrative expenses, the budget would be divided equally between Georgia and Southern Baptist Convention causes.

The executive committee heard its executive secretary-treasurer, Searcy S. Garrison, report that the planned new Baptist administrative center in Atlanta would cost more than planned. Low bid for the building was \$6,343,000.

Garrison and the administrative committee were asked to revise plans to get a building costing about \$5,000,000 and to submit those plans and a financing plan for the building to the state convention.

Dailey and Prichett had been associates in the Georgia Sunday School department for several years after holding pastorates in Georgia. Briscoe had been in pastorates and student work in Georgia for 15 years, the past two years as campus minister at Georgia Institute of Technology.

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Larry Haslam Named
Glorieta Manager

9/14/73

NASHVILLE (BP)--Larry Haslam, program and promotion specialist at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, has been named manager of Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center according to Bob M. Boyd, conference center division director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here.

Haslam has been acting manager of Glorieta since the resignation of Mark Short in early August. Short, Glorieta manager for seven years, resigned to become church administrator for South Main Baptist Church in Houston, Tex.

Before he joined the board as a church recreation consultant in 1968, Haslam was employed by the Kentucky Baptist Convention as assistant manager of Cedarmore Baptist Assembly, Bagdad. Earlier, he was assistant manager of Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly, Talladega, Ala., and has held two pastorates in Alabama and four interim pastorates in Kentucky.

A religious education graduate of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., Haslam holds the master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. He received special training in the field of camping at Indiana University.

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BP PHOTO mailed to state Baptist paper editors

Gerald Martin Named
Hannibal-LaGrange President

9/14/73

HANNIBAL, Mo. (BP)--Gerald Martin, pastor of Poplar Avenue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., has been named president of Hannibal-LaGrange College, a Baptist school here.

Martin, 51, has been president of both the Southern Baptist Pastor's Conference and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Alumni Association and has served on the executive board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

The new Hannibal-LaGrange president earned a B.A. degree from Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., and a B.D. degree from Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex. He also has an honorary D.D. from Hardin-Simmons and a Th.D. from Luther Rice Seminary, Jacksonville, Fla.

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CORRECTION

In Baptist Press story mailed 9-13-73, headlined, "Maston, a 'Loyal Critic,' Probes Southern Baptists," for proper clarification, please change line three, in graph one to read: a "personally painful" examination of trends affecting Southern Baptist Christian social concerns.

--Baptist Press