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Historical Commission
To Interpret SBC Life

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Historical Commission in its annual meeting adopted a sweeping long range planning committee report that recommends, among other things, expanding the commission's role as interpreter of Southern Baptist Heritage and life.

Trustees also reelected three of their four officers, adopted record budgets for 1981-82 and 1982-83 and decreased their administrative committee from 10 to seven persons in a cost saving move.

They also approved participation in the Southern Baptist Video Network, a denomination-wide project, and will be responsible for developing six video productions on Southern Baptist heritage and polity for national distribution.

Commissioners adopted as theme for the 1984 joint meeting of the commission and Southern Baptist Historical Society "The Role of the Bible in Southern Baptist Life."

The long range planning committee report reaffirms the status of the "Historical Commission as a service agency for all aspects of Southern Baptist life, relating to the SBC, SBC agencies, state conventions, associations, local churches, and individual Baptists upon the basis of service, helping them to know and act upon insights from our Baptist heritage."

The three areas for focus are that the Historical Commission: 1) serve Southern Baptists by intensifying and expanding its role as interpreter of Southern Baptist heritage and life; 2) continue to develop a library containing all necessary materials to become a world center for the study of Southern Baptist heritage and life; and 3) continue to produce and distribute materials for the study of Baptist heritage and life.

The report recommends the agency explore all possibilities to expand its facilities. It is currently housed in the Baptist Sunday School Board building in Nashville.

The record budgets for 1981-82 and 1982-83, requested by the commissioners, are \$353,390 and \$409,850, increases of 4.4 percent and 13.8 percent.

Leon McBeth, professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, was reelected chairman. He was also chairman of the long range committee. Loulie (Mrs. Ollin J.) Latimer Owens of Travelers Rest, S.C., was reelected vice chairman, and W. Fred Kendall of Nashville was elected recording secretary. Commission Executive Director-Treasurer Lynn May was reelected executive secretary-treasurer.

Commissioners honored May for 25 years on the agency staff, including 10 as chief executive. He has the longest tenure of any staffer, having served all but five years of the commission's life. May was presented a check, a plaque and a portable television set in

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appreciation for his service.

The next annual meeting of the Historical Commission and Historical Society will be held in Charleston, S.C., April 26-28, 1982, to coincide with the 300th anniversary of First Baptist Church, Charleston.

The new president of the Southern Baptist Historical Society is J. Glen Clayton of Greenville, S.C. Vice president is Robert Gardner of Rome, Ga., and John Moore of Lexington, Va., is recording secretary.

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McGlothian Inaugurated
At American Seminary

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4/27/81

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Admitting at his inauguration that the school is at a "critical stage," Odell McGlothian became the eighth president of American Baptist Theological Seminary, a ministerial training school jointly supported by Southern Baptists and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

McGlothian cited the school's overcrowded dormitories and classroom facilities and chronic lack of funds as problems facing the seminary.

McGlothian nevertheless predicted the predominantly black school "will ride out the storms of history and stand as a monument to cooperation of black and white Baptists."

In an inaugural address, Harold C. Bennett, executive director-treasurer of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, called the seminary a place where Southern Baptists and National Baptists "may walk together in dreams for the future; a place where the future may be invented."

He praised the seminary's purpose—"to educate ministers of the gospel"—and the school's "commitment to greatness."

Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Seminary, called McGlothian a "man of vision and vitality. Our prayer is that he will also be a man of victory."

McGlothian, a native of Valden, Miss., is a veteran educator and denominational executive. An ordained minister, McGlothian was most recently director of publications of the Sunday School Publishing Board of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

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Brotherhood Ups Budget,
Votes Training Center

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission adopted a 1981-82 budget of \$2,837,822, gave the green light for construction of a training center, and asked for additional study on the formation of a national fellowship of Baptist men at their three-day meeting in Memphis.

Trustees were updated on the status of a \$3 million sexual harassment lawsuit pending against the commission, three of its executives and the Southern Baptist Convention, but took no action.

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A committee of commissioners, commission staff, state brotherhood leaders and lay supporters of the national fellowship proposal will bring a study report at a meeting Oct. 22. The fellowship was proposed in November 1980 by 101 laymen and pastors meeting in Memphis to find ways to utilize their skills in mission efforts of the denomination.

Trustees requested more study on the national men's fellowship after lengthy discussion about the relationship of the group to the commission's existing Baptist men's program.

The commission's 1981-82 budget, a 15 percent increase, calls for \$266,703 for Baptist men's programs, and \$258,173 for Royal Ambassadors, the commission's missions education program for boys in grades 1-12.

Another \$1,605,189 is for such program support areas as communications, \$360,390, and business, \$1,244,879. Budget for administration including associational Brotherhood work and church Brotherhood administration is \$600,421.

The action on the training center revives a project begun four years ago. Plans call for converting space at the commission building into a \$160,000 conference center for Brotherhood and other Southern Baptist groups.

The facility will include a large conference room, several conference rooms, audiovisual support equipment and kitchen facilities.

In other matters, the trustees recognized five retiring commissioners, revised a personnel policy manual and the commission's constitution, charter and bylaws, and voted to expand their computer capacity fivefold.

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FMB Sends Relief To
Displaced in Lebanon

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has released \$25,000 of general relief funds for victims of civil unrest in Lebanon.

The board also forwarded \$10,000 from the Baptist World Alliance for repair of the Badaro Street Baptist Church in Beirut. Approximately 100 people began sleeping in the church basement to escape violent shelling in the eastern Christian section of Beirut after severe fighting the first weekend in April.

Fighting in Lebanon among Christian and Muslim factions, the Syrian peace-keeping force and Israelis had lulled briefly but flared again April 20, two days before Emmett Barnes, president of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, called with the request. The organization of Southern Baptist missionaries asked that \$25,000 of hunger relief funds already allocated to Lebanon be redesignated general relief to provide food and clothing, repair homes and relocate displaced people in Gahlah, Haddagh, Ein al Romaine and in the Badaro Street area.

Barnes reported that Southern Baptist missionaries are unharmed, but his lights went out while he was talking. He said they had been unable to travel to nearby villages.

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Panel Hears Testimony
On Human Life Statute

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--During two days of predominantly one-sided testimony on a controversial anti-abortion bill, the chairman of a Senate judiciary subcommittee repeatedly emphasized that the hearings would be "exhaustive and extensive."

Sen. John East, R-N.C., warned critics not to judge the fairness of the hearings on the basis of one or two sessions.

At issue is a bill sponsored by fellow North Carolina Republican Senator Jesse Helms which declares that "actual human life exists from conception," and would thus provide fetuses with constitutional protection of life under the 14th Amendment.

During testimony before the Separation of Powers Subcommittee, seven witnesses from the medical-scientific field stated that human life begins at conception while only one, Leon Rosenberg of the Yale University Medical School, disagreed.

Both the structure of the hearings and the legislation itself drew criticism from sources within and without the judiciary panel.

Ranking minority member Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., charged in a letter to East that the sessions, as conducted, could not provide "thorough, balanced and fair hearings on a subject of vital importance to Americans."

Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, who withdrew his Subcommittee on the Constitution from joint support of the hearings, said he was "not comfortable" with the constitutionality of the proposed bill. But he told East he was glad the freshman senator would hold "exhaustive hearings" where alternative views would be heard.

The hearings will resume in May and extend into June. East indicated the panel would look at the constitutional implications of the bill, at overall change in the nation's abortion policy and may even examine the ethical and moral questions arising from the bill.

Some critics of the hearings, such as Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, objected to the fact that the committee considered only scientific evidence on the question of when human life begins.

In his letter to East, Baucus requested the hearings be expanded to include consideration of six different subjects, including one panel on the "philosophical, theological and ethical aspects of S. 158.

Supporters and opponents disagree over the full effect of the bill, but at a minimum, it would allow states to enact legislation which would outlaw all abortions.

Unlike a constitutional amendment requiring a two-thirds majority for passage, S. 158 would require only a simple majority in the Senate and the House where it has been introduced as H.R. 900 and H.R. 3225.

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New Congregation Begins
In \$1.2 Million Building

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The newest Southern Baptist church in Shelby County got off to a rousing start Easter Sunday in a \$1.2 million plant with 52 additions, four by baptism.

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The new pastor, William (Bill) Darnell, viewed the opening services of Kirby Woods Baptist Church in one of Memphis' most affluent sections as a promising first step.

The church is located in what was Central Church, a nondenominational church whose 1,300-seat sanctuary was purchased about 14 months ago by a group of Memphis area businessmen reportedly headed by oilman William M. Gurley. Gurley is the Tennessee lay representative on the 1980-81 SBC committee on boards.

Several pastors in the Shelby County Baptist Association expressed disapproval with the founders of the church for not going through the association to start the fellowship. However, Darnell said he wants his church to relate to the Shelby association and will work toward that end.

The new pastor said he is personally committed to the Cooperative Program as the method for funding ministries beyond his church, "but we haven't designed a budget yet."

Before coming as pastor of the new congregation, Darnell was pastor of First Baptist Church of Weatherford, Texas.

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FMB Urges Congress To
Expand Tax Exclusion

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
4/27/81

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board is urging a Senate finance subcommittee to increase the amount and scope of the current overseas income tax exclusion.

In written testimony to the Subcommittee on Taxation and Debt Management, the board asks the panel to increase the amount of the current \$20,000 tax exclusion and to make it applicable to all foreign countries, not just lesser developed ones covered under current tax law.

The senate subcommittee is considering several legislative proposals which would liberalize tax treatment of Americans working abroad. Some of the present proposals apply to all foreign earned income, not just that of charitable workers.

In its final days, the last Congress restored a \$20,000 tax exemption for charitable workers in lesser developed countries after an all-out effort by the board and other charitable groups to restore the exclusion which would have been removed by the Foreign Earned Income Act of 1978.

The board testimony describes as "highly desirable" legislation such as two of the proposals--S. 408 introduced by Sen. John H. Chafee, R-R.I., and S. 436 introduced by Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas.

Chafee's bill would exclude the first \$50,000 of foreign earned income plus one-half of the next \$50,000. Bentsen's proposal would exclude \$75,000 beginning in 1981, increasing to \$95,000 by 1985.

In its testimony, the board cites such benevolent programs as sanitation and public health, medical ministries, schools, literacy courses, community development centers, children's homes, agricultural centers and efforts to combat world hunger and respond to natural disasters and the needs of refugees.

Such "worldwide programs for human welfare" would benefit from legislation applying the exclusion worldwide and increasing its amount, it says.

The board was one of 19 organizations and individuals to provide testimony on the new tax proposals.

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