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March 16, 1982

82-42

National Men's Fellowship
Proposed By Advisory Group

By Al Shackelford

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) -- A national Fellowship of Baptist Men, rejected by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission last year, will be proposed in modified form at the commission's April 22-24 meeting.

The new proposal was hammered out during a meeting of a special advisory committee, authorized last fall during the commission meeting which rejected the previous proposal.

The committee, composed of commission trustees and staff members, state Brotherhood directors and concerned laymen, will recommend objectives and a method of implementation.

The proposed objectives are "promoting witnessing and mission involvement among Southern Baptist men; helping churches involve more men in witnessing and missions; working with Southern Baptist Convention agencies and state organizations in involving more men in witnessing and missions, and encouraging greater financial support in witnessing and missions by men through the Cooperative Program and other Southern Baptist channels."

The recommendation also proposes a 15-member committee to work with commission trustees, staff and state staff members to establish the fellowship. The committee will be made up exclusively of laypersons, none of whom will be a trustee, staffer or state staff member.

The proposed fellowship grew out of a January 1979 meeting of concerned laymen in Florida. The next month, C.E. Price of Pittsburgh, Pa., appeared before the SBC Executive Committee to tell of his concern for involving laymen more directly in Bold Mission Thrust.

Favorable response by the Executive Committee and the Brotherhood Commission led to a consultation in the fall of 1980, in which the fellowship was proposed. Another consultation in January 1981 framed a charter for a fellowship which would be affiliated with the commission. However, in its Fall 1981 meeting, the commission declined to approve the charter, reportedly because it assumed the creation of state fellowships which would parallel the current commission structure.

The actions were included in a report presented at the February 1982 meeting of the Executive Committee. After a long discussion, the Executive Committee approved a recommendation calling on the Brotherhood Commission to "continue to search for appropriate ways to increase lay involvement in Bold Mission Thrust and report a plan of action to the Executive Committee" at its next meeting in June in New Orleans.

Don Gent, a hospital administrator from Evansville, Ind., and the member of the Executive Committee who made the motion calling for the report, participated in the Memphis meeting, and said the commission "is under a mandate and if there is not a plan of action we will ask the Executive Committee to do something else."

Others, including James H. Smith, executive director of the commission, say the action is not a "mandate" since the Executive Committee does not have authority to issue instructions to other SBC agencies. Smith said the commission is "under no mandate" to report to the Executive Committee, but it "welcomes the opportunity" to present it in New Orleans.



-- FEATURES

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82-42

Agency Head Series No. 11
For All Seasons, Occasions
WMU Exec Flashes Smile, Shoes

CO
By Catherine Allen

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Which Southern Baptist Convention executive has walked 380 miles during the last 10 months; carries neon yellow running shoes in her briefcase; and wears a pink silk dress with her yellow running shoes?

There's only one possible answer, because there's only one dress-wearing chief among Southern Baptist Convention executives. She's Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union.

The curious thing about Weatherford's walking record is this: when does she get her walking feet on the ground? Consider the fact that she made 200 speeches, wrote 1,800 letters, and flew away from her Birmingham office 174 days last year.

Picture this: Weatherford is in the Atlanta airport, as usual. Out of the briefcase comes the yellow Nikes. Just blink and ignore the clash with her proper business suit. She dumps her carry-on luggage in a corner and moves into high gear. She logs a mile before plane time.

And this view: It's nighttime in Richmond, after a long day conferring at the Foreign Mission Board. But Weatherford has a mile to walk before she sleeps. She dashes down historic Monument Avenue in high-heeled sandals. The sandals protest after a half-mile. So she kicks off her shoes and finishes the hike stocking-footed in 30-degree weather.

"Don't worry about my feet," she advises. "They're Florida feet. I always used to walk barefoot, especially in the sand."

Although born at her ancestral seat in House, Miss., Weatherford grew up in Frostproof, Fla. Frostproof is where she got a sunny smile and disposition that no amount of work can dim.

But the Baptist meet-and-eat circuit takes a toll, and she is in constant combat with excess pounds. That's why the diet and mandatory walking, as prescribed by aerobics expert Kenneth Cooper. So far she's lost a dozen pounds a dozen times. "My mother told me about the starving children of China," she explains, "so I've always cleaned my plate."

Weatherford grew up as the middle child of three. Her father was a citrus grower. Her mother, age 84, still lives in Frostproof. Hers was a life of family, oranges, fish, and 18 cats at hom , and worldwide vision at church.

Church was the First (and only) Baptist Church of Frostproof. "It was a small church, but we did everything any church was asked to do," Weatherford recalls. As an eleventh-grader, Weatherford directed the adult choir and was elected an associational leader in Church Training.

She thought she would become a missionary and committed herself to do whatever the Lord wanted. She had a difficult time learning what it was he wanted, though, and at Florida State University she changed majors every quarter until she settled on library science. During five years as a high school librarian, she steadily served the local church. But she realized she was not fulfilling her commitment to Christian service.

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That realization took her to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, with a renewed assumption that she would become a foreign missionary. Convinced it was God's will, she reluctantly accepted a job offer from WMU in Alabama, but went ahead with application for appointment by the SBC Foreign Mission Board to serve in Nigeria or Brazil. She flunked the medical exam when hypertension was discovered.

While battling blood pressure, Weatherford delved more deeply into professional WMU work. She shuttled between promotions in Florida and Alabama WMU. When the hypertension finally took her off the missionary appointment list, Carolyn Weatherford had lost her heart to the support side of missions.

As a recognized leader among women, she was executive director of Florida WMU 1967 to 1974. Then she was sought as the fifth chief of staff of Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention, taking office in 1974.

"I never chose between WMU and a husband," Weatherford quips, "and I enjoy the marriage proposals I sometimes get by mail." Not married "yet," and seldom at home, she is nonetheless a committed family person. Two nephews, four nieces, and three great-nephews she claims as her "life's joy." Nor does Weatherford require a bloodline or legal certificate before she gets heart-to-heart with a person.

In her wide circle of friends, she gives attention and help. She demands neither in return. Though surrounded by staff and fans, she carries her own bags, makes her own bed, irons her own clothes, writes her own speeches, and makes her own posters.

The national president of WMU, Dorothy Sample, says her colleague's greatest strength is her ability to like and get along with all people--rich or poor, average or brilliant, involved in WMU or not. Weatherford's staff agrees. In good times and bad, they can count on the boss to be cheerful, prepared, encouraging, and pleasant.

Weatherford says people invigorate her. "I enjoy watching other people succeed," she says. She doesn't begrudge the loss of personal time and privacy that comes with the job of heading what may be the world's largest women's organization. She doesn't cringe when strangers recognize her, even in yellow running shoes, even when she's sleepy or working.

Weatherford's potential tenure as WMU's executive leader is one-third over. So far, she's reorganized and enlarged the staff, kept operations financially secure, opened a network of friendly communication criss-crossing Baptist life. She's appeared officially in 54 countries abroad. She's helped reverse the decline in WMU enrollment. She's hired more married women in professional staff positions. She's insisted that the church organization adapt to working mothers. She's nurtured the launch of a daring enlargement campaign designed to make personal contact with every Southern Baptist church that does not have organized missions education.

Expecting rapid growth, she's leading WMU's national office to build a new facility equipped for all the technological and communications dreams of the next 50 years.

"WMU's best years are ahead," she says. "WMU is primarily a way of missioning. We will keep on finding needs, innovating solutions, and showing others how to take over the work. We can be innovative because we're not going to be bureaucratic. We're going to missionary, personal, and woman-led."

Weatherford is sensitive to the "deep hurt" felt by many women and girls in today's churches. She wants more women appointed as missionaries, and she wants more emphasis on women at home and abroad as a mission strategy.

Carolyn Weatherford is not a complex woman. What you see--stamina, enthusiasm, total commitment to missions, and WMU's importance to missions--is all there is. Except for an occasional romantic novel. And the neon yellow running shoes.

Southern Seminary Endowment
Launches Center For Preaching

CO

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary will be headquarters for a new National Center for Christian Preaching, a comprehensive focus on the pulpit ministry launched March 8 with the announcement of a new endowment gift.

Sam and Carolyn McMahon of Charlotte, N.C., have committed \$400,000 to endow the Carl Bates Professorship of Christian Preaching, in honor of their former pastor, who is now senior professor of pastoral ministries at Southern. Bates is former president of the Southern Baptist Convention and also was president of state Baptist conventions in North Carolina and Texas.

The McMahons are members of First Baptist Church in Charlotte. He is a business executive, active in real estate, investments and mortgage interests.

The Bates professorship will support the education of preachers by providing for the addition of a series of visiting professors of preaching drawn from the ranks of experienced pastors in Southern Baptist churches across the country.

The new professorship, which will be in effect next fall, joins the Victor and Louise Lester Professorship of Christian Preaching, also endowed and currently held by James W. Cox.

The professorships are vital elements in the new National Center for Christian Preaching, an institute unique to Southern Seminary, noted Roy L. Honeycutt, seminary president.

The seminary is seeking another \$2 million to complete the initial funding of the center. In addition to the two endowed professorships and other preaching faculty, Southern intends to fund a program to encourage young people to consider careers in preaching, providing up to 30 annual stipends of \$1,000 each to promising preachers entering the seminary.

Plans for the center also call for construction and permanent endowment of two "preaching chapels," designed to train students of preaching in realistic settings. The center additionally will include a diagnostic clinic for preaching and speech, with video and audio recording equipment and support personnel skilled in speech training and clinical techniques.

The center will continue the annual Student Pastor's Conference, begun this spring. The conference is conducted to encourage enthusiasm for preaching among college students nearing a career decision and considering the need for seminary training.

Southern also plans to underwrite the distribution of important new information on preaching, including the development of library resources and audiovisual archives, new material produced for video-cassette and videodisc, monographs and reports. Southern intends to add another fully endowed permanent faculty member in preaching.

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Southern Encourages
Industrial Chaplaincy

CO

Baptist Press
3/16/82

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Gifts from a group of North Carolina and Georgia business leaders have established a new endowment at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to encourage the training of industrial chaplains.

The Claude Furr Industrial Chaplaincy Endowment, funded initially at \$100,000, will provide annual scholarships, work grants and incentive awards for students interested in ministering in business circles, on the assembly line, in the hotel industry and in other work places.

The program honors the late Claude Furr, a native of Albermarle, N.C. A barber by trade, he ultimately became the president of a Charlotte, N.C., investment firm with holdings in real estate, hotels and mortgage interests.

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Tanzanian Chief's Funeral
Marks End of Colorful Period

By Evelyn Knapp

RB

Baptist Press
3/16/82

KYELA, Tanzania (BP)--Hundreds watched while the last of the powerful Nyakyusa chiefs of the Ntebela Plain on the shores of Lake Nyasa was buried in a Christian funeral.

Chief Mwamasangula's death marked the end of an era. With the coming of Tanzanian independence in 1961, the tribal chiefs were stripped of their power, but some, like Mwamasangula, maintained considerable influence over their own people. His son, Marshall Mwakalukwa, will assume the mantle of chiefhood, but as a magistrate judge, Mwakalukwa is dedicated to building the modern nation of Tanzania instead of maintaining the Nyakyusa tribe.

The chief's funeral, an unusual combination of African traditional religions and Christianity lasted four hours. His decision to accept Christ in 1981 was a major victory for Christianity in the heavily populated plains area. One of his last acts was granting Baptists land to build a church near his home.

Southern Baptist missionary Douglas Knapp and several Tanzanian pastors preached. Christians sang hymns while other men brandished their spears in the traditional mock warfare. In the past, battles often erupted during a funeral of a chief as young warriors from competing chiefdoms gathered and the local people vented their grief.

The pagans occasionally fired shotguns and pistols as the procession made its way to the grave. Every few minutes drumbeats were heard telling people in surrounding villages of their chief's death.

Part of Chief Mwamasangula's influence came from the sheer number in his family. He had 24 wives, 33 children and 67 grandchildren. All but one child received an education and several were teachers and clerks. Some held political posts. The homes of chief Mwamasangula, his wives, his children and grandchildren comprise a large village, a mile long, which has a school and two churches.

As the oldest son, Mwakalukwa, stood by the graveside and watched the shovels of rich brown dirt cover his famous father's body, tears flowed down his face. More than anyone else among those hundreds of mourners present, he knew that not only had he lost a father, but also that a colorful, distinctive period of his country's history had come to an end.

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RB

Angry Bees Swarm Into Van,
Send Missionaries to Hospital

Baptist Press
3/16/82

OUAGADOUGOU, Upper Volta (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary Jim Foster was stung more than 200 times when a swarm of angry bees invaded the van in which two missionary families rode.

Foster and his wife, Dorothy, who was stung severely on the arms, face and neck, were rushed to a nearby dispensary and then to a hospital in Ouagadougou for treatment of a violent reaction to the stings. Both Texans have been released.

Another missionary couple, Larry and Cheryl Cox of Mississippi and Tennessee, and the couples' five children escaped with fewer stings. A bulldozer had uprooted a large Baobab tree near the road they were traveling, disturbing the bees' hive.

Another missionary family, Doug and Evelyn Knapp, and several Tanzanian Baptists suffered a similar attack last year in Tanzania. One of the women with the Knapps was hospitalized.

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CORRECTION: In BP story mailed March 11 entitled "Cooper to Lead 50,000 in Rio 'Run of the Century' please change second sentence in graph four to read: Another 3,500 Texans have been requested this year for 87 projects pointing toward the centennial observation Oct. 15. (As printed, it says Texas centennial.) Thanks, Baptist Press