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RTVC Trustees Adopt Policies To Relate To ACTS Affiliates

By Greg Warner

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Policies outlining basic agreements between the American Christian Television System (ACTS) and the TV stations and cable channels which will carry ACTS programming have been adopted by trustees of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

The policies, approved by the board during its September meeting, restate the guidelines for the formation of local ACTS boards, set the amount of programming that will come from both local and network sources and prescribe the use of announcements on the air.

The policy action was one of several steps taken at the meeting to ready ACTS for its scheduled startup next May. The RTVC has been working since 1980 developing the network, which will offer American viewers 16 hours of alternative television programming each day.

The adopted policies will serve as the model for the network's relationship to its outlets (or affiliates), such as cable TV systems, low-power TV stations and educational TV stations. Since the affiliates will not be owned and operated by ACTS, the policy statement is necessary to ensure quality programming.

The policies specify a board of directors will be formed in the area of each affiliate station or cable system. This local ACTS board, which will oversee local programming, will be composed of Southern Baptists in each area. Any church in the affiliate area that pays 10 cents per resident member and contributes to the Cooperative Program is entitled to place one person on the board. An advisory board representing other religious and community groups also will give input.

Each cable affiliate of ACTS must agree to carry the full 16-hour-per-day network schedule. In return, the local board will have a minimum of three hours per day, Monday through Saturday, and five hours each Sunday for local programming.

Each TV station affiliating with the network must carry ACTS' six-hour-per-day basic program schedule, which will air from 4-10 p.m. (CST). The rest of the airtime can be filled with the remainder of the 16 hours of ACTS programming or local origination programming, provided all programs conform to ACTS content standards.

Although the ACTS network will be non-commercial and not sell advertising, it will carry commercial recognitions, similar to announcements used in public broadcasting, during program breaks. In addition, local ACTS boards will have time available each hour for their own commercial recognitions or promotional announcements. This will amount to four minutes per hour on cable affiliates. The time available to local boards on broadcast stations will depend on the amount of network programming each station carries.

Another policy adopted set content standards for commercial recognitions that appear on the network and its affiliates. The policy prohibits advertising of R- and X-rated movies, alcoholic beverages, contraceptives and feminine hygiene products, as well as any favorable references to the occult, gambling, tobacco products, drugs, sexual promiscuity or other behavior judged morally offensive by RTVC management. The same restrictions would apply to program content.

As a foundation for the new policies, the RTVC trustees adopted a list of seven "basic commitments" to which ACTS will adhere in all its dealings. Topping the list is "a spirit of loyalty to Southern Baptist strategies for missions, evangelism, nurture and ministry" through Bold Mission Thrust.

The other commitments were to the local church, pioneer missions, clear communication with churches, minimal costs to churches, maximum TV access to American homes and the neighborhood concept of TV service.

In addition, the policy statement said, all actions of the RTVC and ACTS must be consistent with the agency's program statement as assigned by the Southern Baptist Convention. That assignment is "to support the Southern Baptist Convention in its task of bringing men to God through Christ by preaching the gospel over radio and television, and by assisting the churches and their pastors, other general Baptist bodies and the agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention in the proper use of their radio and television opportunities."

In his report to the trustees, RTVC President Jimmy R. Allen announced plans to formally inaugurate the network at the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, Mo., in June. Initial broadcasting will begin in May as scheduled, however.

Allen also reported the cost of leasing time on the Spacenet I satellite will be reduced to \$150,000 per month, down \$25,000 per month from the original agreement. A decreased demand for satellite space has forced the market value down, Allen said.

The board gave final approval to the RTVC's 1983-84 budget of \$10.8 million, which includes \$4.8 million from the Cooperative Program and \$4.5 million in network-generated income.

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More Churches Needed To
Reach America: Anderson

By Linda Lawson

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RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)--"Southern Baptists have deliberately chosen to be disobedient to the Great Commission" by failing to start enough churches and missions to reach the United States for Jesus Christ, Andy Anderson says.

Anderson, growth specialist in the Sunday school department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, spoke at a rally in the Calvary-Arrowhead Southern Baptist Association, launching an effort to start 40 missions on Easter Sunday 1984.

The association, which now includes 103 churches and missions, is beginning the second year of a three-year effort to double the number of churches and missions.

Earl Crawford, director of missions, says the goal grew out of his conviction that "God is challenging us to take seriously the call to reach our mission field for Jesus Christ."

Anderson said he believes at least 100,000 more Southern Baptist churches and missions are needed nationwide. However, he noted, the Southern Baptist Convention is showing a net gain of only about 200 churches per year.

He said the traditional method of starting a mission by buying land, constructing a building and hiring a pastor is still the best. "However, we'll never start 100,000 with this method," he said.

Anderson outlined a plan developed jointly by the Home Mission Board and the Sunday School Board for starting new missions designed to be largely self-supporting from the beginning.

Sponsoring churches begin weekday fellowship Bible classes and backyard Bible clubs in the area designated for a mission. Participants then become the nucleus of prospects for the new work.

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Before beginning the fellowship Bible classes, the sponsoring church must analyze records to determine how many people will be needed for the mission to be self-supporting. Classes are then started to reach that goal.

John Schively, associational director of religious education, said starting self-supporting missions is a key of the plan. "We have the needs and we have the places for 40 new missions. Our problem is the financing to begin the new work."

Anderson, who will direct the campaign to begin the missions, said, "We can start as many churches as you want to start if you'll do it with faith and a little elbow grease."

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Seminary Professor Sees
Answer To Biblical Debate

By Richard McCartney

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--J.W. MacGorman believes there is an answer to the current debate on biblical inerrancy among Southern Baptists: "If all of us would listen attentively to the Father and be attentive enough to his leadership, that is the ultimate answer."

MacGorman, professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, was a Bible study leader at Glorieta Baptist Encampment this summer. In an interview, he said, "Nothing grieves God more than to see the breaches of fellowship in his family of grace. I believe the Father would seek to have his children loving each other."

Although he believes there is no way at present for people on both sides to meet and resolve the problem, "We're simply going to have to live with that--trusting God to overrule whenever his servants are out of line." Declining to use the term inerrant because of its emotional connotation, MacGorman expressed concern about the diversion from the gospel endeavor caused by debate on the subject.

"It would be helpful if we rallied around the New Testament confession of faith, 'Jesus is Lord,'" he said. "Both sides of this issue are together there." Such an affirmation would not be a discussion of the nature of biblical revelation, but, "the fact of the Lordship of Christ," MacGorman believes.

The Southwestern Seminary professor believes the present disagreements must not be allowed to fester, because "It can have disastrous consequences." He says the only thing many people know about Southern Baptists is the debate on inerrancy and very little about the witness given to the Lordship of Christ.

"I believe in an infallible and inerrant God who reveals himself in a thoroughly reliable Bible," MacGorman said. "But I insist that the Bible would instruct us to make a distinction between God, the revealer, and the various media through which he chooses to make himself known. If I give to the medium of revelation the attributes that rightly belong only to God, then, whether I realize it or not, I am an idolator."

Concerning the issue of academic freedom, MacGorman declared, "I have had all the freedom I need to seek God's truth and share it in the classroom." He warned, however, that academic freedom does not mean a professor can come to any conclusion about the Christian faith or the nature of biblical revelation and remain on the faculty of a Southern Baptist institution. "Academic doesn't mean I have the freedom to espouse positions that are radical departures from historic Baptist belief."

MacGorman declared he hopes Southern Baptists are unified at the heart enough to allow some range of difference "at significant points of faith without questioning the integrity of one another."

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"One Of God's Coincidences"
Changes Guatemalan Girl's Life

By Carol Sisson

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Three people peered gingerly across the doctor's shoulder, captivated by the delicate eye surgery underway less than six inches before them.

"You're surrounded by a heavenly host cheering you on," Southern Baptist missionary Kay Owen quipped to the doctor. The observation was lighthearted, but the symbolism of her statement was vivid.

A young Guatemalan girl lay on that operating table in Birmingham, Ala., because she and her missionary friends had prayed in faith and because, half a world away, the Lord had moved through a group of Baptist businessmen and individuals to supply the answer.

Twenty-two-year-old Emeliana Choc, the household helper of missionaries Mike and Kay Owen, was undergoing surgery that would allow her for the first time to look into a mirror without being reminded she was "different."

The K'ekchi' Indian woman's eyes had been crossed since birth, a condition which impaired her personality as well as her vision. A strong Christian, Emeliana's prayer was for better sight and a more normal appearance.

In May, while Alabama native Mike Owens was on a 30-minute flight from Birmingham to Mobile, Ala., he met and struck up a conversation with Doyce Williams, director of Alabama's Lion's Club Eye Bank, located in Birmingham.

Their meeting was "one of God's coincidences," Mrs. Owen explained. The two men were more than strangers passing time on an airplane. Both were dedicated Christians.

Owen shared Emeliana's story, and Williams suggested he take pictures of the girl and have a doctor in Guatemala prepare a report of her condition.

Williams, a member of Huffman Baptist Church in Birmingham, felt also this was no chance meeting, and determined to do what he could to bring Emeliana to Birmingham for eye surgery.

He started sharing her story with some Christian friends, what he called "a broad cross section of people." Many made contributions.

Soon, a local Baptist surgeon had volunteered his services at no cost and a Baptist businessman agreed to seek the financial support of his Lion's Club.

"We were hoping Mike's ministry could be enhanced," Williams said, through helping this Guatemalan girl.

Harvey Coker, who performed the operation free at the Eye Foundation Hospital, is medical director for the Alabama Lion's Eye Bank. Coker, a member of Crosscreek Baptist Church, downplayed his part in Emeliana's story, saying no more than "Doyce told me the situation and I agreed to do the surgery."

When the anesthesiologist then donated his services, operating costs which would have totaled approximately \$1,500 were covered. However, travel expenses for Emeliana and Kay, who was to serve as interpreter, still had to be paid.

While much of this money had been donated through individuals and the Birmingham Baptist Association, a gap large enough to keep Emeliana in Guatemala still remained.

When Birmingham accountant and Clearview Baptist Church music director Danny Garrett learned of the need, he felt the Downtown Lions Club might be able to help.

Because sight is the major project of Lions Clubs internationally, needs such as this are of special concern to the local clubs. But requests for aid in bringing someone to Birmingham's Eye Foundation Hospital are too numerous to meet in every instance.

Garrett felt this request, however, was special, and presented it to his less than 100-member club as such. Their response was a donation of more than \$500, enough to complete transportation costs.

While these plans were being made in Alabama, Owen returned to Guatemala and told Emeliana about the opportunity.

The idea of going to the United States and actually having the operation was frightening at first, Emeliana said. "That night I prayed and asked the Lord to help me to know what to do." She then fell asleep and dreamed an angel passed by her and put his hand over her eyes, saying not to worry, everything would be all right.

To Emeliana, this was the Lord's way of giving her the confidence and peace she needed.

The day before the operation, her faith never wavered. "I know the Lord will see everything through," she said as she put her sight into the hands of a total stranger, a man who couldn't even explain the operation to her in her own language.

Emeliana was released from the hospital the following morning. That day she and Kay were special guests at the Downtown Lion's Club meeting. Those men could not see Emeliana's corrected eyes, still sensitive and covered by protective glasses. Their satisfaction came instead when Kay gave them Emeliana's simple message:

"I cannot pay you back, but I know the Lord will bless you."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Woman's Missionary Union

Professions Total 2,285
In Missouri-Taiwan Crusades

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TAIPEI, Taiwan (BP)--Some 2,285 persons--one for every five Taiwanese Baptists--made professions of faith in a two-week evangelistic blitz in Taiwan.

Taiwanese Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries were joined by 106 Missouri Baptists in the campaigns that ended a three-year partnership.

The Missouri team concentrated its efforts in the north and east parts of Taiwan in citywide crusades and local churches Sept. 7-11, then moved to the south and central parts of the island Sept. 14-18.

Church revivals accounted for 1,513 conversions while 546 came in eight citywide crusades and another 226 from visits in homes, on the street, in parks and in prisons.

Missionary press representative Martha Cohen called the results of the campaign "better than anybody anticipated." Total Taiwanese Baptist membership is just above 11,000.

A concerted media blitz helped prepare the island for the campaigns. Evangelistic testimonies began airing over radio and television stations in mid-August. Missionary Burton Cook said 250,000 tracts and testimony booklets were distributed prior to and during the crusade.

Newspaper ads and testimonies of well-known Chinese Christians in magazines such as the Asian edition of Reader's Digest prompted many readers to request materials from the Bold Mission Taiwan office in Taipei.

Missouri team member Renabelle Jerrell, whose husband, Roy, is pastor of First Baptist Church, Camdenton, Mo., suffered an aneurysm of the brain and was hospitalized Sept. 9 at Taiwan Military Hospital. She was unconscious the first four days, but Cook described her condition Sept. 19 as a "cloudy consciousness." Mrs. Cohen said tentative plans call for her to be flown back to the United States Sept. 25, if she is able.