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September 4, 1984

Flap Erupts Over
Mailing List Use

C-N
By Dan Martin

84-125

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--A controversy has erupted over the use of the mailing list of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina to send out a letter supporting the re-election of Republican U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms.

A letter, signed by four prominent Baptists, was mailed to 18,852 persons on the convention mailing list in August by the re-election committee of Helms, engaged in a bitter political struggle with Democratic nominee Gov. James B. Hunt.

The letter urged support of Helms, suggested allowing Helms' supporters to set up voter registration booths at churches and encouraged donations to the Helms re-election effort.

The list was obtained from the state convention and provided to the Helms committee by Coy Privette, executive director of the Christian Action League, an interdenominational temperance organization. The CAL is the only "outside group" allowed to use the mailing list.

James I. Murphy, chairman of the executive committee of the convention's general board, said such use of the mailing list was "ethically a breach of trust between the Christian Action League and the convention.... We do not want this thing to happen again and are taking steps to see that it does not happen again."

Murphy appointed a four-member committee to draft a written policy on use of the mailing list, to look into the incident and to meet with CAL trustees, headed by Thomas Freeman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dunn.

"Because of this incident and the questions and letters we have received, I think it is imperative that we have a report to present to the general board when it meets Sept. 25-26," Murphy told Baptist Press.

In the immediate wake of the Helms letter, the executive committee had a special telephone conference call meeting, in which it unanimously adopted a statement decrying the misuse of the list, suspending CAL privileges to obtain the Baptist mailing list and reaffirming convention neutrality in partisan politics.

The statement said the mailing list was provided "to the Christian Action League, in keeping with the practice of many years for their use only. Mr. Coy Privette, executive director of the Christian Action League, delivered the list to the political organization which was responsible for the partisan political mailing.

"We deeply regret that a breach of agreement occurred regarding the mailing list," the statement said, and further noted the convention has "a continuing stance of neutrality regarding partisan politics." The statement said the mailing list will no longer be provided to the Christian Action League "until such time as all questions and problems created by this unfortunate incident have been cleared up."

The letter, on the letterhead of B.J. Morris, pastor of Boger City Baptist Church in Lincolnton, current president of the North Carolina Baptist Pastors' Conference, was signed by Morris; Privette, who lives in Kannapolis; C. Mark Corts, pastor of First Baptist Church of Winston-Salem, and Henderson Belk, a layman from Charlotte.

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Both Corts and Privette are past presidents of the state convention and Belk has been both first and second vice-president of the state organization. The letter, however, did not include titles or organizational relationships.

"It is unfortunate this list got in the hands of a political organization," Murphy told Baptist Press. "We never intended that this should happen."

Bill Boatwright, director of the convention communications division, said the list is prepared annually from Uniform Church Letters sent by the churches. The list includes names and addresses of pastors and other church staffers, as well as of church program leaders such as Sunday school director, church training director, deacon chairman, librarian and others.

Privette requested the mailing list in early June, Boatwright said. The CAL was charged \$450, which Boatwright said was the "raw cost of computer time and materials necessary."

Murphy said the state convention "has an unwritten policy" against use of the mailing list by outside groups. "The matter has come before us (the general board) many times. Without exception, we have denied the sharing of this list with anyone."

Murphy added that since Privette is a former convention president, "he knows what our policy has been. He knew that it was ethically a breach of trust between the convention and the Christian Action League."

"We are very much concerned because the Christian Action League had done much good in the past. We provided the mailing list to the Christian Action League and we feel they (trustees of the CAL) owe us an explanation about what happened," he said.

According to convention officials, the CAL was included in the budget of the convention for many years. About three years ago, it was dropped from the Cooperative Program budget and included in the state mission offering, taken each fall in the 3,000-plus churches. This year, the league is scheduled to receive a contribution of \$25,000 from proceeds from the offering.

Murphy said withholding funds "is a definite possibility, particularly when our convention meets in November. If messengers are not satisfied with answers provided by the Christian Action League, a motion certainly could be made to withhold the funds."

Murphy said while Privette has "made an apology, both by telephone and in writing," there are "some unanswered questions. Coy (Privette) needs to feel some responsibility for this situation and there are some questions he must answer. We realize we have no control over the Christian Action League, or its executive director, but I think our convention will have some very strong suggestions to make to the (CAL) directors."

Privette told Baptist Press he "made an error in judgment" in using the convention mailing list. "I realize I made an error in judgment," Privette said. "I had about four options on getting a mailing list. I made a decision which I thought was the best decision at the time. I should have used one of the other options."

Privette said the letter was proposed during a discussion with a Helms re-election aide, Robert Touchton, and was an effort to "say a good word" about Helms. "I make no apology for that. He (Helms) is in a tight race...and when one of your friends is in a tight spot, you try to help him out."

The CAL executive said he wanted the letter to be from Baptists to Baptists, which was why he did not use the CAL mailing list, which includes some 20,000 names from 16 denominations. He added he could have put together a list of Baptists from the state convention annual and from the yearbooks of the associations.

Privette said he used the pre-printed labels because he did not want the Baptist mailing list to become a permanent part of the Helms organization's mailing list. His agreement, he said, was that the Helms organization could use the labels and could not copy the list.

Knowledgeable direct-mail experts maintain such a list would be worth from \$10,000 to \$40,000 to a direct mail organization.

Prestonwood Baptist Church
Launches Television Network

DALLAS (BP)—Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas will be the center of Discovery Broadcasting Network, a satellite network of Bible teaching programs and Christian concerts.

The network, scheduled to begin broadcasting Oct. 13, is designed to provide local churches live broadcasts, via satellite, leading Christian speakers and prominent Christian recording artists, according to Dan Sampson, executive director of the network.

Five programs will be telecast each week on Sunday and Wednesday. Once a month, "Saturday Nights in Dallas" will feature live concerts from the Prestonwood Worship Center.

Churches who participate in the network will need to purchase a satellite dish receiver and, ideally, should have a projector, large screen and video recorder to accommodate crowds, Sampson said. The annual affiliation fee will be \$495 plus a monthly subscription charge of \$100 to \$375 based on average Sunday morning worship attendance.

The network views its approach as complementary to two satellite networks launched by the Southern Baptist Convention at its annual meeting last June—The American Christian Television System (ACTS) in Fort Worth, Texas, and Baptist Telecommunication Network (BTN) in Nashville, Tenn., not in direct competition to them, though Sampson concedes some churches will have to choose one or the other.

"ACTS is targeted to homes, and BTN to preparation, teaching and instruction. Our objectives are outreach and growth—both in maturity and numbers," Sampson said.

The presidents of the Baptist Sunday School Board (which produces BTN) and the Southern Baptist Radio-Television Commission (which produced ACTS) downplayed any competition.

Lloyd Elder, BSSB president, said he was not familiar with the new network but emphasized, "It will not affect the efforts of BTN to provide the combined messages of denominational agencies directly to churches.

"We intend to make BTN the primary source for training church programs leaders and providing church members with missions information directly from the responsible agencies."

Jimmy R. Allen, RTVC president, noted, "If there is any competition it is more with BTN than with ACTS. It (Discovery) does not compete for the same money in church budgets—ACTS is 'media' money while Discovery would be 'education and inspiration' money.

Bill Weber, Prestonwood pastor, hosted a dedication service for the network Aug. 30 which featured performances by recording artists Cynthia Clawson and Dallas Holm. Speakers included Jimmy Draper, pastor, First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, and immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and four faculty members from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary: John Newport, Jack Terry, William Tolar and Lucien Coleman.

Approximately 200 people representing 69 churches in six states attended the dedication service. The guests included Mary Kay Ashe, head of Mary Kay Cosmetics; Evangelist Jack Taylor; Bailey Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., and John Walvoord, from Dallas Theological Seminary.

Weber said he believes "one reason God has allowed satellite technology to come into being is so that Christians—so that churches—can use it."

Sampson stressed the network is meant to be supplementary and complementary to local church ministries, and not to replace any pastoral or teaching ministry.

Though sponsored by Prestonwood Baptist Church, the network is underwritten by individual contributors and is not part of the church budget, Sampson said, but it should be self-supporting within 18 months or two years.

The only financial support from the church will be to underwrite the salary for Sampson, who also is associate pastor of the church.

Prestonwood Baptist Church first considered beginning a satellite network when they observed the way Word of Faith Outreach Center, a charismatic fellowship in Dallas, was able to touch congregations across the country through satellite transmissions.

"We were impressed with their vision, so we just looked at what they were doing," Sampson said. "While we did not agree with their particular method of expression in worship, we admired their vision, their aggressiveness, and their commitment."

The congregation sought God's will, according to Sampson, and voted unanimously to adopt Discovery Broadcasting Network as a ministry. The October launch date is not tied to a certain number of subscribers, but Sampson said most of the 69 churches represented at the dedication service indicated an interest in subscribing to the program and two signed up on the spot.

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SEBTS
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Resolution Betrays Women,
Biblical Revelation, Says Lolley

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—Christian women were affirmed "as ministers" at the convocation opening Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's 34th academic year.

W. Randall Lolley, on his 10th anniversary as the Wake Forest, N.C. seminary president, charged a recent Southern Baptist Convention resolution against the ordination of women betrays women and the "total sweep of the Biblical revelation."

Lolley confronted the seminary community and the convention with what he sees as the grave implications of the resolution, adopted at the SBC's June 1984 meeting in Kansas City, Mo., which cites the Genesis account of Eve succumbing to temptation and initiating man's fall as a primary reason women should not be entrusted "with roles entailing ordination."

The 53-year-old Alabama native told his listeners the danger of the non-binding resolution is it perpetuates a doctrine of women's fallen rather than redeemed nature—undermining the whole message of the Bible.

The real agenda behind the resolution was neither ministry nor ordination, Lolley said. "In the resolution, the most debated concept is in the tenth Whereas—that woman was last in creation and 'first in the Edenic fall.' Now that phrase makes plain the real issue for Southern Baptist churches today. It is not location. It is not ordination. It is Womanhood!"

In his stongest language Lolley said the resolution's authors compromise the integrity of the complete Biblical picture by "proof-texting" a negative view of women with a limited selection of Bible verses.

"There are 12 Biblical texts cited (in the resolution)," he said. "The most striking thing is the high degree of selectivity used in deciding these verses are to apply literally as 'an order of creation' for women today while other equally specific texts are overlooked."

He went on to note, "Every sect has established itself in this same way—whether the Moonies or the Mormans; whether Jim Jones in Guyana or Father Divine in New York. They select a few v rses, disregard their context, bend interpretation and make these verses normativ for faith in practice. That is obviously the 'heresy' in the Kansas City resolution."

He said the phrase, "last in creation; first in the fall," in the resolution "is a word from the law. The Bible has another word. It is a word of grace...at the heart of the redemption drama. Women were loosed from the bondage of th law (and of culture) and liberated into the power of the gospel—just like men."

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Lolley contended Paul's admonitions for women "to keep silent" and have no authority over men were addressed to specific church situations. He reminded his audience the same Paul who said "let the women keep silent" also commended Phoebe, "a deaconess of the church of Candreae" for her speaking in ministry to the church in Rome.

Noting Paul takes the matter of circumcision in different ways (see Galatians 5,6 and Acts 16:3), Lolley said, "Paul knew some things were not 'eternal orders' but timely situations which mattered for the communication of the gospel. He (Paul) sought to give the gospel wings in his time and place." Paul's concern, Lolley continued, "was always credibility, and never gender."

After citing numerous Biblical women and texts which offer a positive view of women, Lolley observed the Bible also records women were "last at the cross and first at the tomb,—the most faithful rather than the most untrustworthy."

Lolley noted the witness of Christ's women followers was even resisted after "the Easter truth first dawned on females." When Mary Magdalene and other women reported their encounter to the apostles, their "words seem to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them."

Lolley said although "the women had no clout...and their gospel went unbelieved...they had credibility...the living Lord Christ legitimized for all time their ministries."

For Lolley the witness of contemporary women to their own encounter with the risen Christ and their call into ministry cannot be dismissed by Southern Baptists like an 'idle tale.'

"So you are a woman?" he asked. "Congratulations! The issue is whether you are a Christian woman. If so, you are already a minister—inevitably, unavoidably...and no man's hands either placed on your head or withheld from your head can make one iota difference in your personhood or in your vocation. God in Christ has given you your credentials."

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Alabama Missionaries
Must Pay Back Taxes

By Bill Webb

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FMB-N

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—At least 40 Southern Baptist foreign missionary families from Alabama are paying back state income taxes they didn't realize they were obligated to pay.

Under extended terms of a statewide tax amnesty program in Alabama, missionaries were given until Aug. 31 to file returns and pay state taxes on income earned overseas during 1981, 1982 and 1983. Missionaries will be exempt from paying Alabama income tax on overseas earnings for 1984 and thereafter, thanks to legislation enacted by the Alabama Legislature this summer.

Carl Johnson, Foreign Mission Board vice-president for finance, said even more missionaries could be affected by the amnesty program. "Since most of our people are on the field and mail is not as quick overseas as it is here, it's very possible we have not heard from all of them yet," he said.

Johnson estimates as many as 400 of Southern Baptists' 3,400 overseas missionaries may claim Alabama as their domicile. "A number of our missionaries—and we don't know how many—already may have been filing their (state) returns and paying their tax all along," he added, which would explain why the board has heard from only 40.

Missionary compliance with the state tax laws has been strictly voluntary, Johnson said. The affected missionaries, some of whom have lived overseas 20 years or more, simply were not aware of their obligation since their salaries were not earned within the state.

He believes most are like Jane Ellen Gaines, missionary to Nigeria now on furlough in Talladega, Ala., who must pay the state more than \$3,000. "I wish I didn't have to pay it but I want to do the right thing," she told The Birmingham News.

Missionaries currently are exempt from paying federal income tax on sums up to \$80,000 earned outside the country, which far exceeds their support level, Johnson said.

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