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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 13, 1984

84-131

Conflict Threatening SEC's
 Cooperative Destiny, Says Ray

By Bill Webb and
 Robert O'Brien

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Southern Baptists' cooperative method of ministry and giving is at the heart of what Cecil Ray calls the denomination's "greatest time of conflict" and its "greatest era of vision."

Southern Baptists are moving toward an hour of destiny when they will decide whether their dream will move them to a new greatness or conflict will destroy them and prevent their ability to achieve such a dream, said Ray, director of the Planned Growth in Giving program.

Ray and James L. Sullivan were the primary speakers at a first-ever Furloughing Missionary Cooperative Program Conference, which drew 270 overseas missionaries, 50 state convention representatives and 100 Foreign Mission Board staff members. Sullivan is retired president of the Baptist Sunday School Board and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The denomination's Cooperative Program, a plan of voluntary, unified giving started in 1925, is the envy of other denominations, Ray said, but Southern Baptists' "lifestyle of cooperation" has been and continues to be sustained only through continuous struggle.

"Direct appeals just keep on having attraction for Baptists," he explained. "Designated giving, a method so frustrating in our work, continues to hold attraction for us."

He said direct appeals and designated giving are throwbacks to the society approach of sponsoring ministries. Societies were single-cause organizations—such as mission, children's home or hospital societies—which appealed directly to each church for funds.

One drawback, as Sullivan sees it, was a person concentrated on perhaps just one aspect of Christian responsibility "rather than the totality of it."

"There was no communication between societies, no way for them to interrelate," he explained. "They were after the same dollars and were thrown into constant competition."

Societies were not accountable to the churches and their boards of trustees were self-perpetuating, he added. "Even the institutions which began under the society system in America --almost all of them--have at some point in history stood on their hind legs, spit in the eyes of their founders and started in a direction opposite from the way their founders intended."

Instead of having a centripetal force which pulled Baptists toward unity, the society system had a centrifugal force which flung them apart, he maintained.

In that context, Ray, Sullivan and Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks warned against following those who would have the FMB abandon the Cooperative Program and cast its lot with direct appeals. Southern Baptists rejected the society approach, Ray maintained, "because it didn't work ...it failed to provide a financial base of support. It didn't work then—and hear me, friends—it won't work now."

What has worked effectively and economically for nearly 60 years has been a system of cooperation which allows Southern Baptists to fulfill their guiding purpose—missions, Ray said.

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Cooperation is a struggle for the denomination today because of the ethnic and cultural diversity of Baptists in all 50 states and because of a heritage which originally brought Baptists of a variety of theological, doctrinal and traditional stripes together for the purpose of missions, Ray and Sullivan explained.

"Baptists had a love of missions long before we had a system of cooperation," Ray said. "We have our first 80 years (as a denomination) to testify that without cooperation we fought. Those years are testimonies to frustration and inability to make a love affair with missions happen apart from a workable, viable system and spirit of cooperation."

Baptists from either the right or the left who think they can work only with those who look, think and act like them have a problem which could derail the SBC's world missions thrust, Ray and Sullivan explained. The denomination must be governed by its middle majority, which keeps straight ahead with help from the corrective pull from both the right and the left.

The problems Southern Baptists are fighting today under the title of "inerrancy" have cropped up throughout Southern Baptist history under a variety of titles, Sullivan and Ray noted. Sullivan can recall eight such times since 1926.

Such controversies, they said, revolve around repeated reemergence of the society idea of denominational operation, the tendency to narrow qualification of people for service to their theological positions, and the historical J.R. Graves Landmark emphases (Graves held anything done outside the society system and the local church was unbiblical and invalid and that local churches should do missions directly, rather than through cooperation).

Not all Baptists in the past could cooperate nor can all of them in the present, Ray added. "There is something about cooperation that requires some special qualities that unfortunately not all possess."

Cooperation is voluntary. It is dominated by one purpose--missions. And it can only be engaged in by people who have trust, Ray and Sullivan agreed. "And finally, it must be at the price of some forfeiture of individualism," Ray said. "I can't have it exactly my way always, and if I insist that I must, I can't cooperate."

"We can't substitute doctrinal purity and expect to stay together. We can't substitute social reform and expect to stay together," he said. "It has been missions that gave us our unity and it has been our willingness to support it that has kept us alive."

Ray and Sullivan see the Cooperative Program as the channel through which Southern Baptists can match their commitment to giving with the vision of Bold Mission Thrust, the plan to share the gospel with everyone on the earth by the year 2000.

Ray outlined the new denominational "Planned Growth in Giving" approach which he envisions could cause churches to grow seven-fold, state conventions 10-fold, the national convention 12-fold and the Home and Foreign Mission Boards 15-fold by the year 2000. "We're trying to say to Baptists, 'God's given us a vision. Now let's match it with a response.' Bold Mission Thrust is a dream beyond our grasp at our present level of commitment," he said.

The Bold Mission dream focuses the historical aspirations Baptists had even before they put together a cooperative system which could make it possible, but it won't happen in a spirit of discord, Ray and Sullivan warned.

Ray traced how British Baptists and Northern Baptists in the United States passed onto an historical sidetrack after disruptive fights over biblical inerrancy and evolution.

"I guess it's this knowledge of how we fight the same battles over and over that makes me so intensely frightened by what we're doing today," Ray said. "We're at the time of our greatest ability. We've never been so equipped with people and resources and a position in the world to do what God has called us to do."

"And, all of a sudden, we're stopping now to engage in the very kind of controversies that have destroyed the major effectiveness of the two largest Baptist bodies that have preceded us. It has to be a matter of grave concern and we need to learn our lessons."

Lee Retires
At Averett

By Tom Miller

DANVILLE, Va. (BP)—Howard W. Lee, president at Averett College since Jan. 1, 1980, has announced his retirement.

Lee, 68, went to Averett as assistant to then President Conwell A. Anderson in 1971 and became acting president in July 1979, when Anderson retired because of a heart ailment. A few months later the trustees elected Lee president.

Prior to joining Averett, Lee was pastor of West Main Church, Danville, Va., for 27 years. He is a graduate of William Jewell (Baptist) College in Liberty, Mo., and received the Master of Theology and Doctor of Philosophy degrees at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

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Hunger Gifts Help
HMB Meet Domestic Needs

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
9/13/84

ATLANTA (BP)—Southern Baptists' increased gifts to domestic hunger relief enabled the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to keep pace with requests for hunger funds during the first eight months of 1984.

The Home Mission Board allocated more than \$300,000 during the first eight months of the year, a record distribution, according to Paul Adkins, director of the board's Christian social ministries department which distributes the funds. As of Aug. 31, the board had received only \$259,235 but was able to use funds which came in too late for 1983 allocation to meet this year's needs, he explained.

Requests for funds have been heavy during the first months of 1984. Requests ranged from needs related to natural disasters to food relief for the poor.

Missouri, struck by flooding earlier this year, and North and South Carolina, ravaged by tornadoes this past spring, were among a handful of states which received hunger funds to feed homeless or displaced persons who were victims of this year's inclimate weather.

Domestic hunger funds aided families hardest hit by crumbling economics in several states. New Mexico Baptists were allocated \$1,000 for hunger relief among American Indians and church-based feeding programs in Kansas City, St. Louis and Green County, Mo., received funds. SEC home missionaries in Wyoming used hunger funds to purchase food for unemployed persons.

Calvary Baptist Church in Hibbing, Minn., where residents of the northern mining community continue to stagger under 80 percent and higher unemployment, received more funds for food distribution. Other funds aided food relief efforts among Haitian refugees in South Florida and a refugee center in Miami.

Atlanta area Baptists received domestic hunger funds to purchase food for a women's crisis center and for several church-sponsored community kitchens run during the last week of the month to help food stamp recipients whose benefits ran out before the end of the month.

Baptist centers and other Home Mission Board-sponsored projects also received domestic hunger funding. Denominational hunger gifts enabled Iowa Southern Baptists to purchase food for a halfway house for runaway teenage girls. Nebraska Baptists helped secure food for distribution through an Omaha Baptist center with domestic hunger funds.

Southern Baptists' increased awareness of hunger needs and generous gifts for hunger relief indicate grass-roots Southern Baptists are taking the initiative in responding to hunger needs, said Nathan Porter, national domestic hunger consultant for the HMB.

"Southern Baptists in churches and associations and other local level organizations like Woman's Missionary Union and Baptist Student Union (BSU) groups are showing an interest in meeting hunger needs," he explained.

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Baptist groups are conducting hunger surveys in their communities and making contacts with community social service organizations with increased regularity, he added. As Baptists become more aware of needs, they've used local mission groups to respond.

In Florida, noted Porter, every Baptist association in the state has set a goal to conduct a hunger survey of their community.

Porter said more student groups are including community hunger concerns in their world hunger focus, putting an emphasis on domestic hunger in addition to the traditional focus on overseas hunger needs.

Porter noted 83 Jerusalem Projects list various domestic hunger needs in 18 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The Jerusalem Projects (where students focus on needs in their immediate area) enabled BSU groups and local churches to begin sponsoring "bite-sized hunger projects in the United States," Porter said. In the first eight months of 1984, Baptists have sponsored 10 Jerusalem Projects, a significant response, said Porter.

"When Southern Baptists think of world hunger, they now include the United States," he explained. "Our own community ought to be part of mission concern for the world community."

Porter expressed alarm the hungry in the United States are the target of discrimination. "On a national level, the overall prevailing attitude seems to be anti-poor," he said. Economic, business and government reports state conditions are improving, but "this is not true," he charged. "It's a lot worse for those who are poor. In 1983, 900,000 persons were added to the poverty rolls; since 1980, the rolls have increased by more than six million."

Today, added Porter, the United States experiences the highest percentage of persons living below the poverty level "since 1964 when (President) Lyndon Johnson started the war on poverty." Porter noted 15.2 percent, or 35 million-plus Americans now earn incomes below the government's declared poverty line of \$10,175 for a family of four in an urban setting.

"By government standards there are more poor people today than ever," he said. Current data indicate the gulf is widening between the rich and the poor, he added.

Porter said he was "alarmed" at statements which blame the poor for their situation. He labeled remarks that "anyone who wants to can make it in America" or that "poor people just want a handout" as prejudicial and bigoted and called on Southern Baptists to shy away from judgments and instead return to the biblical imperative to care for the poor.

"One of the greatest needs of Southern Baptists is for a strong voice and strong leadership which would direct us to the mission of Jesus, which is to preach the good news to the poor," said Porter. "Of course there is no good news when you are in a hopeless and despairing situation.

"The good news has to be far more than words no matter how saving those words are. The good news has to be seen in true and genuine actions which touch the whole person."

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Dakota Baptists
Firm Fellowship

Baptist Press
9/13/84

MOBRIDGE, S.D. (BP)—The Dakota Fellowship of Southern Baptist Churches has been organized with the objective of eventually becoming the Dakota Baptist Convention.

Presently there are 61 Southern Baptist churches and 10 missions with 7,380 members in North and South Dakota. They are presently affiliated with the Northern Plains Baptist Convention which includes Montana as well as the Dakotas. Wyoming was a part of Northern Plains for many years before growing strong enough to form a separate convention this year.

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One hundred and seventy-five people gathered at Mbridge Southern Baptist Church, Mbridge, S.D., for the organizational meeting. Glenn Field, NPBC missions director, has been facilitator working with an appointed committee of moderators and vice-moderators.

The fellowship adopted a purpose, goals, objectives and a constitution and by-laws. Bob Graham, pastor of North Hills Baptist Church, Minot, N.D. was elected president and Bill Agee, pastor of the host church for the meeting was elected vice-president.

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HMB Hires Gresham; Approves
80 For Mission Service

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
9/13/84

ATLANTA (BP)--Directors for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board voted to hire Roy D. Gresham, retired state executive secretary for the Baptist Convention of Maryland, as an independent contractor for a 15-month period beginning Oct. 1, 1984.

Board of directors for the Atlanta-based national missions agency also named Joe A. Hernandez of Atlanta director of the ethnic resource correlation department in the board's language missions division, effective Sept. 15, 1984.

Also, Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner announced 1984 gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions totaled just under \$24 million as of Sept. 11.

The figure, which represented 82.5 percent of the 1984 goal of \$29 million, is running slightly more than nine percent ahead of last year's offering, said Tanner. Southern Baptists' gifts to the annual offering show church members believe in home missions and are willing to support it, he added.

Gresham, who for 25 years led the Maryland Southern Baptist Convention until his retirement in 1982, will be responsible for appraising church programs and physical facilities, sites for new churches and plans for churches seeking loan/bond assistance, especially in the northeastern United States.

Gresham, 68, was interim executive director of the Baptist Convention of New York for a year after leaving the Maryland convention. Prior to assuming the Maryland post, he was pastor of Middle River Baptist Church in Baltimore. He is a graduate of Furman University and was awarded an honorary doctorate from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

Hernandez, is associate to the director of the board's language missions division. His new position, left vacant when Ramon Martinez assumed a language missions post with the Florida Baptist Convention in 1983, was changed to include development and administration of the board's ethnic leadership development, talent bank and ethnic youth. Hernandez will research needs, lead conferences and act as consultant to Southern Baptist Convention agencies in those areas. He also will be a consultant to SEC agencies in work related to Hispanics.

Hernandez, 33, has been associate to the director of the language missions division since 1981. He was a consultant in student work in Mexico under Foreign Mission Board appointment and was on staff of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, working in both the missions section and the division of student work.

He has been an associate pastor in Texas and a graduate teaching fellow at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He is a graduate of Pan American University and Southwestern seminary.

In other actions, board members appointed three missionaries and five missionary associates and promoted two missionary associates to missionary status. Directors also appointed eight church planter apprentices.

Directors also approved two state convention staffers, 16 persons for church or language pastoral assistance and approved financial aid for 46 field personnel.

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Board Adds Pakistan, Finland;
Names Liaison To Canadians

By Bob Stanley

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Extending Southern Baptists' worldwide work to 104 countries, the Foreign Mission Board assigned couples in September to work in Pakistan and Finland and named a veteran missionary as a liaison to Canadian Baptists.

Pakistan and Finland will be added to the board's country list, but Canada will not because of the distinctive pattern in which four major Southern Baptist boards and agencies are responding to appeals for help in evangelizing that nation.

James Teel, a missionary to the Dominican Republic who formerly worked in Ecuador and Argentina, will be the board's liaison to help facilitate assistance to Canadian Baptists. About 4,000 such Baptists in 83 congregations are related to Southern Baptists.

Teel and his wife, Georgie, are Texans. Between missionary stints, he was assistant director of Cooperative Program promotion for the SBC Stewardship Commission from 1976-79 and assistant vice-president for development at Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas, 1979-82.

In June the Southern Baptist Convention affirmed a report from a 21-member study committee which recommended the SBC Constitution not be changed to permit seating of messengers from Canada, as a 1983 convention motion had asked. But the report outlined a definite process by which the convention will provide more help to Canadian Baptists.

The Foreign Mission Board's assistance will be supervised by the area director for Middle America and the Caribbean, Don Kammerdiener. He and President R. Keith Parks will represent the board on a joint committee headed by the Home Mission Board to coordinate Southern Baptist ministries in Canada. This group held its first meeting Sept. 12 in Atlanta.

Assignment of Hubert and Bettie Addleton of Georgia to Pakistan and Jim and Mary Tiefel of Florida and Oklahoma to Finland came as the board approved 42 new missionaries and reappointed seven. These bring the total missionary force to 3,403.

Although two countries were added, the board's country count went up only one because Okinawa was dropped from the list. Okinawa is a part of Japan, and missionaries serving there will be counted as part of the Japan mission.

Addleton, pastor of Southside Baptist Church, Cochran, Ga., will start churches among the Sindhi-speaking community in Karachi, Pakistan's largest city. Tiefel, responding to a request from Finland Baptists to help strengthen churches, leaves a job as associate pastor of South Side Baptist Church, Fort Smith, Ark., to become associate pastor of a church in Tampere, Finland, after language study.

SBC President Charles Stanley, who attended most of the board meeting, told its members in a concluding message that he "kept wanting to clap" as he heard reports on advances in worldwide evangelism and starting churches. He said he wished every Southern Baptist, "or just the pastors," could have been in on the board sessions.

In an interview, he urged Southern Baptists to put aside angry rhetoric with references to jugular veins and holy wars and talk like adults about the issues which divide them.

Nin of the 10 new members elected at the 1984 convention attended orientation sessions during the September meeting, and Parks urged these and others on the 84-member board to share missions information with Southern Baptists. Such information, he said, can challenge Southern Baptists to a higher level of trust and support for Bible-based worldwide evangelization.

Parks is convinced once Southern Baptists really know what is happening in missions there will be a resurgence that will "pull us above and beyond the distractions that would try to blunt the call of God and the purpose for which we are organized."

The board also named Dale Thorne to succeed Finlay Graham as associate to the director for the Middle East, effective Jan. 1, 1985. Graham, who has held the associate position since 1976, will become special assistant to Thorne until Graham retires early in 1986.

The change will allow Graham time to translate his lectures and notes into Arabic for use at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut, Lebanon, and to teach and train church leaders in several Middle East countries.

Both the Thornes and Grahams will live in Nicosia, Cyprus, where Thorne will be liaison between the Foreign Mission Board and missionaries in Egypt, Gaza, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Yemen. Thorne and his wife, Anita, both from Oklahoma, have been representatives to Israel since 1965. He has been administrator of the Baptist Convention in Israel (organization of Southern Baptist representatives) since 1977.

In other action the board created an ongoing Development Council composed of board members and chairmen of regional councils. The council will advise the board's development office and serve as "ambassadors for the Foreign Mission Board in local communities and in their respective professions or businesses," according to a board statement.

In 1982 the board named a vice-president for development to work with persons wanting to make "over and above" gifts that would help the board respond to the "tremendous evangelistic opportunities" around the world, according to Bill O'Brien, executive vice-president. This approach also has been used to provide financing for the new Missionary Learning Center near Rockville, Va.

"The Foreign Mission Board is approaching this dimension of our work as sensitively as possible," O'Brien said. "We don't want to do anything that distracts from the lifeline of all that undergirds Southern Baptist work, the Cooperative Program." He said the council is an effort to "identify those persons sympathetic to the global missions task whose advice and influence can enhance the mission effort from within the context of the Baptist family."

Carl Johnson, vice-president for finance, reported receipts from the Cooperative Program continue to lag. Based on figures for the first 11 months of the convention's fiscal year, he estimated the board will have a shortfall of \$2.5 million in income from the SBC basic operating budget.

While "we rejoice that giving through the Cooperative Program is surpassing the rate of inflation," said Johnson, the shortfall means the board has a \$4.5 million overall shortfall, largest in recent Foreign Mission Board history. The 1983 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering reached a record \$58 million but fell \$2 million short of the goal.

Commenting on the report, Board Chairman Harrell R. Cushing of Alabama said he believes God's resources are being bottled up at three places: first in failure of individual givers to commit themselves to giving a tithe or beyond; second in churches, which he said need to be encouraged to increase the percentage of their Cooperative Program gifts; and third in state conventions, which he said need to follow the example of those states that are seeking to channel half of their receipts on to the Southern Baptist Convention for missions and other conventionwide causes.

Cushing said Alabama has taken steps to move its percentage to the 50 percent level. For all the state conventions, the average percentage forwarded to SBC causes is 37.54 percent.

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RTVC Approves \$13 Million Budget
To Expand ACTS, Help Pay Debt

Baptist Press
9/13/84

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—A \$13-million budget, approved by Radio and Television Commission trustees for fiscal year 1984-85, will provide approximately \$4 million for new programming and expansion of the three-month-old American Christian Television System and begin repayment of the \$4.3 million loan used to finance the network's first year.

The commission will have to raise \$2.6 million through its development program during 1984-85 to support the network, according to the budget.

Commission President Jimmy R. Allen told trustees: "We can't do long-range planning. No one has ever done this before. Our experience base is so small."

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He added: "The \$4.3 million loan will let us go through this year while we get our development program in gear. We have been in a tremendous frenzy to launch the ACTS network, and now we need an intermediate plan for the next 24 months."

Allen reported ACTS is adding an average of 100,000 cable TV subscribers per week. The network has signed on 107 cable systems totalling 1.6 million subscribers, which represent more than four million potential viewers. "We already have daily access to more people than Southern Baptists have in Sunday school on any given Sunday," he said.

"We can make the network work, and we have set up a monthly budget review to make sure we stay on track," he said. He also assured the 26-member board the budget will allow ACTS to grow without jeopardizing the commission's overall work.

John E. Hughes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Independence, Mo., and former trustee chairman, said the new budget was handled "as thoroughly and practically as we could have, while realizing we have to raise \$2.6 million."

The \$13-million budget is a \$2.7-million increase over the revised budget for 1983-84. Even though the commission is expected to come in \$1.3 million below budgeted revenues for 1983-84, it will likely post a small surplus.

James W. Edwards, vice-president of financial affairs for the commission, said the new budget will emphasize those activities that strengthen the revenue base for the commission, such as development and marketing.

Other functions will be postponed until later in the year. A backlog of produced and acquired programming will help sustain the network, Allen said.

The 1984-85 budget includes a \$4.9 million allocation from the SBC Cooperative Program budget, adopted during the 1984 annual meeting of the SBC in Kansas City.

Trustees voted to request \$5,690,000 from the 1985-86 Cooperative Program, a 15 percent increase. The request will be made at the September meeting of the SBC Executive Committee.

Earlier, Allen told trustees the ACTS network can help the Cooperative Program by generating increased support for the unified giving plan and for missions offerings by "dramatizing the missions venture." Already 200 Southern Baptist missionaries have appeared on ACTS programs, he said.

To borrow the \$4.3 million, the commission issued notes totalling that amount Aug. 10 through the A.B. Culbertson Co. for an underwriting cost of \$236,500. All bonds were sold in advance of the issue, Edwards said, and no commission assets were pledged as security.

"This is a very common thing for launching a major venture like this," Edwards explained. The major reason most new businesses fail, he said, is failure to acquire up-front capital.

The money is being used to start up the network and sustain it for the first year. Since the entire \$4.3 million is available to the commission now, that which is not needed immediately can be invested in certificates of deposit to reduce the overall impact of the loan, Edwards said. The notes are to be paid back over three years.

To help repay them, the commission will use the \$2.1 million pledged April 12 during 45 ACTS satellite launch dinners.

As follow-up to the April 12 effort, Allen reported the commission will host informational luncheons in 31 cities beginning in October. He said the meetings are in keeping with Southern Baptist development guidelines.

The trustees approved minor changes in the articles of incorporation of ACTS Satellite Network Inc., the commission's subsidiary corporation that operates the network. The subsidiary adopted the Southern Baptist Convention's Business and Financial Plan to govern its dealings and conditioned any changes in its articles of incorporation on approval of the SBC Executive Committee.

ACTS Satellite Network was also authorized to file for low-power television licenses, a role that had been performed by an independent board of non-trustees, the American Christian Television System Inc.

As part of an effort to "redirect our energies to ACTS," Allen said two departments of the commission will change their roles---broadcast engineering and TimeRite.

Broadcast engineering is phasing out its staff in acoustic consultation for auditoriums, while most other functions will be absorbed into other departments. TimeRite will continue to offer research services to churches, but will no longer serve as a time-buying agent for placing ads on radio and TV stations.

Permanent staff members from both departments will be reassigned, Allen said.

Allen reported the commission now has the ability to start a satellite-delivered radio network using the same ACTS transponder. Although it could be in place in two years, he said, for now the commission will concentrate on "one network at a time."

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Sunday School Department
To Pray For Enrollment

By Frank W. White

Baptist Press
9/13/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)---When churches throughout the Southern Baptist Convention begin Enrollment Commitment Sunday Oct. 7, they will be backed up by 29 hours of prayer by the 150 employees of the Sunday school department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school department, has written pastors of the more than 36,000 Southern Baptist churches throughout the nation asking that they participate in Enrollment Commitment Sunday on Oct. 7.

He also has asked pastors to sign a personal commitment card that challenges them to attempt to enroll at least five people in Sunday school during the 1984-85 church year.

Employees of Piland's department have signed a volunteer prayer chart to begin praying 24 hours prior to the 9:30 a.m. services in the Eastern time zone and ending 29 hours later at the time that 9:30 services would be beginning in Hawaii and Alaska. State convention Sunday school directors also are being asked to participate.

The 29 hours of prayer is a demonstration of commitment from the Sunday school department for reaching the goal of a 500,000 net increase in Sunday school enrollment during 1984-85, Piland explained. "As I talked to groups at the conference centers this summer, I began to ask myself, 'Have we done all we can do for 8.5 by '85?'" he said.

Piland said he concluded personal requests for commitment were needed as a climax to efforts to reach the SBC goal of 8.5 million Sunday school members by Sept. 30, 1985, because "We've made all the plans we can. Now all we can do is try harder to communicate the plans to church workers to get them committed to it."

The letter to pastors is an effort to get a personal commitment to work for Sunday school enrollment, he said. "I'm not asking them to send the cards in. Signing the card is a commitment between them and God," he said.

"If you will sign your card as the people sign theirs, it will surely be an encouragement," Piland told the pastors in his letter. "If the approximately one million Sunday school workers in the convention would enroll at least five new Sunday school members, we would have no problem reaching and passing the 500,000 goal."

Piland has signed a commitment card, along with his pastor, Richard Whit, First Baptist Church, Franklin, Tenn., and the church's minister of education, Bob Pierce. When Piland asked Pierce to sign the card, Pierce said "I won't agree to enroll five. I'll enroll a hundred."

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The Reach Five in '85 emphasis is a plan for churches, Sunday school departments or classes and individual Sunday school members to set and work toward their own goals. The goal may be five new members for a Sunday school class or 50 for a church. The emphasis is to get each member involved in enrolling new members.

Another aspect of the enrollment emphasis is for churches to establish Sunday school enrollment goals and report those goals to the Sunday School Board.

Other projects to place additional emphasis on 8.5 by '85 are scheduled throughout the year but the commitment Sunday is a kickoff for the year, said James Lackey, growth consultant, Sunday school department.

Several sections of the Sunday school department have selected hour-long time slots when personnel will pray together for the commitment Sunday.

Th workers will not be meeting together for the prayer time, but will pray during the allotted time wherever they are.

Lackey, a department director at First Baptist Church, Goodlettsville, Tenn., has signed up with his section to begin the prayer vigil from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. CDT Saturday, Oct. 6.

Piland and his wife Pat have volunteered to pray from 2:30 to 3:30 a.m., Oct. 7. Piland will be preaching an enrollment Commitment Day service later that morning at Bluegrass Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tenn.

Lackey said employees and state directors have expressed interest and excitement about the project. "Many have said, 'This is just what we need,'" said Lackey.

Piland asked pastors and Sunday school leaders also join in the time of prayer. He also suggests churches that might not be able to have Enrollment Commitment Sunday on Oct. 7 to schedule it at another time early in the church year.

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(BP) photo mailed to Baptist state newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press

Negotiations To Sell
Dallas Building Okayed

Baptist Press
9/13/84

DALLAS (BP)—The sale of the Baptist Building in downtown Dallas has been approved by the Texas Baptist Executive Board and trustees of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board.

Sale of the building, shared by the Texas Baptist Executive Board staff and the Annuity Board staff, is contingent on successful negotiation of a \$12 million contract with a Dallas-based developer, CSI, Inc.

The Texas Baptist executive board approval Sept. 11 followed action taken in July by Annuity Board trustees in approving a recommendation to proceed with the negotiations to sale the Baptist building and surrounding properties.

The proposed agreement would allow the BGCT and Annuity Board staffs to remain in the building up to five years on a lease basis.

"Although several companies have approached us with interest in purchasing the downtown property, this is the first time we have opened formal negotiations," said Darold H. Morgan, Annuity Board president. He noted the proposed contract for the 39,000-square-foot land area would sell for over \$300 per square-foot, at what some developers believe to be the highest price off red for a piece of property in downtown Dallas.

Morgan said the Annuity Board officials and BGCT representatives believe the value of the property has reached its economic peak. The "rapid growth and development of Dallas has been phenomenal. We have two major high rise office buildings being built around us, which have significantly contributed to the increase of our property," said Morgan.

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The 15-story building has been occupied by the Annuity Board for 25 years. Three years ago the BGCT sold its downtown office building and signed a lease-purchase agreement entitling the convention to 59 percent of the land and 43 percent of the 511 North Akard building.

"At that time we projected both our needs and the convention's expansion needs for five years. We anticipated by that time we would have outgrown our space allotments, and would need to make necessary adjustments," Morgan said. He noted if the sale is completed, the Annuity Board would probably remain in downtown Dallas.

The Annuity Board's share of the proceeds is estimated to be \$7 million which will be invested to benefit members participating in Southern Baptist retirement programs.

Texas Baptists would use their proceeds from the sale, \$5 million, to provide space for the executives board staffs, said BGCT executive director William M. Pinson Jr.

Pinson said earnings from the corpus of the proposal also will help finance "the many new churches needed in Texas." Texas Baptists have a goal through their emphasis "Mission Texas" to build 2,000 churches by 1990. Pinson said current facilities do not provide for parking or storage needs, and accessibility is difficult.

"The partnership with the BGCT has been excellent. They came into the building when substantial office space was available," said Morgan. "We have all benefited."

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Associate Editor
Mizelle Resigns

Baptist Press
9/13/84

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)—Melvyn Mizelle, associate editor/manager of the Florida Baptist Witness, has resigned effective Sept. 30, 1984, to become marketing manager for Jim Tatum's Master Fashions, Jacksonville, Fla.

Mizelle, a native of Tallahassee, has been on the staff of the Witness for 30 years. She has worked with every editor of the paper since it has been owned by the Florida Baptist Convention.

Mizelle joined the staff of the Florida Baptist Convention as a secretary in the Sunday school department in 1946. She moved to the witness staff two years later after attending Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain, Miss., and worked with editor Edward Solomon until his retirement in August 1949.

Following Solomon's retirement, Guy Stracener was elected editor, and served until 1971.

On two occasions, Mizelle's career took second place to family commitments. Mizelle is the mother of two children, a daughter, Cathy (Mrs. Terry Logsdon), lives in Jacksonville. A son, Charles, lives in Reno, Nev.

In 1969, she returned to Florida Baptist Convention staff and in the missions division. She rejoined the staff for the Witness in 1971 when Edgar Cooper became editor.

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V-I Names
Acting President

Baptist Press
9/13/84

BRISTOL, Va. (BP)—Gary M. Poulton has been named acting president at Virginia-Intermont College for the 1984-85 school year.

Poulton, 36, replaces James E. Martin Jr., who resigned his post recently after having been at the college less than a year.

Since 1980, Poulton has been director of college relations in charge of development. Last year his title was changed to associate vice-president for external affairs.

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