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September 12, 1985

85-110

HMB Committee Named
To Study Ordination

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)—A nine-member study committee has been appointed to develop guidelines concerning ordination of missionaries for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, members of the board's executive committee were told.

Travis Wiginton, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Norman, Okla., and the board's chairman, announced appointment of the committee. Last month, the full board voted to ask its chairman to appoint the committee, but membership of the group was not announced at that time.

Wiginton asked for board members, and all Southern Baptists, to pray for the committee as it begins its study and meets for the first time Oct. 8.

Wiginton said in appointing the committee he sought to maintain balance both in geographical representation and "in other ways."

Appointed to the committee were: Johnny Jackson, pastor of Forest Highlands Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark.; Robert Latham, pastor of Northside Baptist Church, Indianapolis, Ind.; Lawanna McIver, a television personality and homemaker from Dallas;

T.L. McSwain, pastor of Hurstborne Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.; Marvin Prude, retired president of Sunnyland Refining Co., Birmingham, Ala; M.O. Owens Jr., pastor of an English-speaking Baptist church in Belgium and former pastor from Gastonia, N.C.;

Austin Tucker, pastor of Shreve City Baptist Church, Shreveport, La.; Lula D. Walker, housewife and local church Woman's Missionary Union director from Beaverton, Ore., and Wiginton, chairman.

In major business, the board's executive committee authorized filing an amended prospectus with state and federal securities offices in preparation for offering securities for investment by the general public, probably in November.

The committee also took legal steps related to changing the name of the Baptist Rescue Mission in New Orleans to the "Clovis A. Brantley Center" in memory of a long-time Christian social ministries staff member and missionary.

Directors of the board also approved a \$35,000 allocation to the Colorado Baptist General Convention to assist the state convention with financial difficulties. The allocation implemented an earlier decision to change the ratio of cooperative work from 78 to 88 percent funding by the Home Mission Board, and to 12 percent funding by the Colorado convention.

In his report to board members, HMB President William G. Tanner said receipts from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions had reached \$25.9 million by Sept. 10, an increase of 8.38 percent compared to receipts for the same period last year. Tanner cited projections indicating the board will probably receive about \$27 million through the offering this year, about \$3 million short of the \$30 million goal.

In other actions, the HMB executive committee appointed 16 persons as new missionaries, 13 as missionary associates, 13 as church planters, 13 as missionaries' apprentices, and approved financial assistance to 67 mission pastors.

RTVC Fills New
Controller Post

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Jerry Stamps, a certified public accountant and five-year employee of a national accounting firm, has been named to the newly created position of controller for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

Stamps, 27, came to the commission Sept. 1 from the Fort Worth office of Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Co. where he was responsible for planning, supervising and reviewing audits.

His new duties for the Radio and Television Commission include managing all accounting and financial reporting functions, internal control and cost analysis, budgeting and long-range planning.

In addition to his professional CPA certification, Stamps received a bachelor of business administration degree (BBA) in accounting from Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas, in 1980.

Stamps and his wife, Debbie, are natives of Knox City, Texas. They have two children and are members of North Richland Hills Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

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Senate Easily Deflects
Helms School Prayer Bill

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
9/12/85

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Senate has decisively rejected so-called "court-stripping" legislation which would have forbidden federal courts--including the U.S. Supreme Court--from reviewing state laws authorizing prayer in public schools.

Following a brief debate Sept. 10, the Senate voted 62-36 to table a bill introduced by Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., designed to overturn Supreme Court decisions banning state-sponsored prayer and Bible reading in the nation's schools.

During the debate, Helms argued the nation's Founders wrote the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion") only "to prohibit the establishment of a national church" and sought "to leave the remaining issues of church-state relations strictly with the States."

Helms, a Southern Baptist, also declared: "Religious liberty is too important to leave exclusively in the hands of judicial elites more concerned about imposing their own political views on the Nation than in objectively interpreting the words of the Constitution."

Opposition to Helms' bill came from senators all along the ideological spectrum, and included veteran conservative Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., who told Helms during the debate he was "surprised" the North Carolinian would write the measure. "If I wrote it," Goldwater declared, "I would have been ashamed of it."

The measure also drew opposition from Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, a panel that is considering a Hatch-authored constitutional amendment to guarantee moments of silent prayer and meditation in the classroom.

More liberal senators also spoke against the bill, including Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., who labeled it "an attack on our basic freedoms," "an insult to the Supreme Court" and "an affront to the Constitution." He said further: "What is at stake is the preservation of the rule of law, the foundation on which all our other liberties rest."

But Helms' proposal drew support from numerous fellow conservatives, particularly from Republican senators facing reelection fights next year.

Among these was Sen. Jeremiah Denton, R-Ala., who said the legislation was needed "to curb a wayward judicial branch" and to "restore vitality to the notion that the elected representatives of the people, not judicial appointees, have the right and responsibility to interpret the Constitution in a reasonable and just manner."

In seeking passage of his measure, Helms repeatedly invoked language in Article III, Section 2 of the Constitution, that the Supreme Court "shall have appellate jurisdiction...with such exceptions, and under such regulations as the Congress shall make."

Insisting the language vests in Congress power to limit the subject matter the Supreme Court and other federal courts may review, Helms has sought enactment of separate laws stripping federal courts of their power to review state laws on school prayer, abortion and school busing.

Reacting to the vote to kill Helms' bill, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs Executive Director James M. Dunn praised the Senate "for resisting once more a frontal assault on the constitutional doctrine of separation of powers among the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government."

Dunn also pointed to a 1983 Baptist Joint Committee position statement pledging opposition to "any and all such court-stripping efforts," and warning further: "We cannot and will not sit idly by while individual liberties are stripped away by politicians with eyes on the latest public opinion polls."

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Senate Committees
Consider Famine Aid

Baptist Press
9/12/85

WASHINGTON, (BP)--Two recommendations now before the Senate will help determine the extent of U.S. aid to famine-stricken Africa during fiscal year 1986.

Proposals aimed at both emergency relief and long-term assistance are in the hands of two subcommittees of the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

The Subcommittee on Agriculture will consider this month a recommendation to provide \$900 million in emergency food and transportation aid next year for Africa.

The aid would be channeled through private voluntary hunger organizations already working with famine victims.

Seven Southern senators may hold the key votes on the subcommittees: Dale Bumpers, D-Ark.; Lawton Chiles, D-Fla.; Thad Cochran, R-Miss., and chairman of the subcommittee on agriculture; Bennett Johnston, D-La.; Mack Mattingly, R-Ga.; Jim Sasser, D-Tenn., and John Stennis, D-Miss.

Meanwhile, the Appropriations' Subcommittee on Foreign Operations will take up a proposal to provide \$50 million for long-term agricultural development targeted for small-scale farmers to help them return to self-sufficiency.

The loans, to be channeled through the International Fund for Agricultural Development, are part of IFAD's strategy of "handups" rather than handouts.

Supporters of the development aid point out that it costs \$400 to send a ton of emergency food to Africa, while \$200 through IFAD can enable an African farmer to grow a ton of food every year for the rest of his or her life. Also, IFAD loans, which would vary from \$10 to \$100, have experienced a high rate of repayment.

Most of the farms in Africa are five to 15 acres in size. Women do 80 percent of the farm labor.

House committees already have approved the \$50 million for IFAD and \$650 million of the \$900 million recommended for emergency food aid for Africa.

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Prayer Ignites Korean
Christian Explosion

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
9/12/85

JI JONG, South Korea (BP)--A million or more South Koreans make their way every morning through the darkness to attend pre-dawn prayer meetings at churches throughout the country.

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Many observers believe their fervent devotion to prayer is the secret behind Korean Christians' explosive growth. Christians now number some 10 million, nearly one of every four South Koreans.

In rural Ji Jong village a bell clangs long and clear at 4 a.m. It is the morning call to prayer from Ji Jong Baptist Church. Most of the villagers stir, roll over and go back to sleep, but some of the faithful rouse themselves and trudge to church. Mostly women, they sit on thin pillows scattered across the floor and unite their voices in a kind of rhythmic drone as their bodies sway back and forth.

Similar scenes abound in South Korea's cities. However, in the larger, more sophisticated churches the meetings are attended by urban professionals and factory workers. Korean Christians have become known worldwide for their morning prayer meetings. Korea, long known as the "land of morning calm," has become the land of morning prayer.

But morning isn't the only time Koreans pray. They hold all-night prayer meetings and prayer retreats. They gather in homes to pray. They go to "prayer mountains" to commune with God in solitude. They build structures reserved for prayer alone. Kang Nam Central Baptist Church in Seoul, for example, has a basement lined with tiny one-person prayer closets.

For Korean Baptists, the prayer meeting is central to worship and all else the church does. "The average Korean church member is a strong believer in the power of answered specific prayer," says Southern Baptist missionary Paul Rhoads. Koreans, he explains, simply accept "that God answers prayer. Prayer is not viewed as a personal spiritual exercise in self-discipline, but as actually affecting things."

Forces behind the Korean prayer movement include the major Protestant revival that began in 1905. Among other things, that revival ingrained prayer and Bible study into the lives of committed believers. So did the persecution Korean Christians suffered under the old Korean royalty, the Japanese and the communists of the north.

The nature of the Korean family also influenced the morning prayer meeting, according to missionary Norma Nichols. "In the early days, when the families, which are so closely knit, had only one member who was a Christian, that one person could not pray (at home)," she says.

"Many of these people were women, and they had full days, so if they were going to have any time to pray, they had to do it before the day began. So they began to go to church early in the morning. There they could pray aloud. This is the Oriental kind of thing; if you pray to Buddha, you pray aloud. So when the early missionaries said 'You ought to pray,' they didn't know any other way except to pray aloud. And now it's become an institution."

Anything that becomes an institution can turn into a tedious repetition, a ritual devoid of meaning. But at its best, Korean prayer is an attitude toward life, eloquently expressed in the doorways of the basement prayer closets at Kang Nam Baptist Church.

Carpenters originally built the prayer closet doorways at Kang Nam high enough to allow easy entrance to anyone of average height. But the pastor ordered the doorways cut to half-size. He believes one should enter into prayer--and the presence of God--kneeling.

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

Biblical Authority Key
To Morality, Says Honeycutt

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
9/12/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In a world of crumbling moral values, Christians must turn to God and Holy Scripture for guidance and authority in moral decision making, a Southern Baptist seminary president said.

Roy L. Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., delivered the keynote address at the two-day annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

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"The authority of the Bible is foundational for our moral imperative," Honeycutt said. "Holy Scripture gives us an objective point of reference without which we would be awash in a sea of subjectivity."

Honeycutt urged Southern Baptists to affirm the authority of Scripture "not as a legal code" for moral behavior but as "a dynamic living experience with God." That experience, he added, "is a relationship that focuses on wholeness."

The Bible, he pointed out, is "the inspired witness to the authority of God. The Bible is not an end in itself but points beyond itself to God. Ultimately, our moral imperative is grounded in the authority of God whose revelation is recorded in the Bible."

Honeycutt noted some persons believe the Bible is the product of the church. "Both the church and the Bible are products of the gospel of Jesus Christ," he declared. "The gospel was preached, persons were won to Christ and First Century churches were begun before we ever had a New Testament."

"We read and understand the Bible but we are transformed only by the gospel of the risen Lord."

"Read the gospel, teach the gospel, live the gospel," he urged, "and in the process you will create foundations for your personal moral imperative."

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2,780 Decisions In Venezuela
Include Four By Domino Players

Baptist Press
9/12/85

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—What began as a game of dominoes ended as a time for decision. Four Venezuelans stopped their game to hear what several American visitors had to say about Jesus Christ.

The four adults prayed for salvation, as did more than 2,700 other Venezuelans during a partnership evangelism campaign in late August.

"Before the campaign, I felt that I was making a sacrifice of time and money," said Zane Brown of Moncks Corner, S.C., one of 132 Southern Baptist participants from several states. "Now I feel that I sacrificed nothing."

The three largest groups of pastors and lay persons included 46 from the Santee Baptist Association in the Sumter, S.C., area, 45 from the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, and 29 channeled through the Angus Acres Baptist Church, Sand Spring, Okla.

They divided into teams and worked in 33 churches, participating with Venezuelan Baptists in Sunday-through-Sunday evangelistic services and home visitation.

It was the third Foreign Mission Board-sponsored campaign in Venezuela in a year. In August last year, 85 Southern Baptists witnessed 1,815 professions of faith during a partnership evangelism campaign. In February of this year, a group of 72 saw 1,278 professions of faith.

Billy Peacock, FMB consultant for partnership evangelism, pointed to the work of the National Baptist Convention of Venezuela, the Zulia Baptist Association in the Maracaibo area and missionaries in the country as vital to the successful campaign in late August. "The churches were ready for us," he said.

Among those making professions of faith were a fire department official, a recent widow whose daughter had committed suicide two weeks before, a man who had been involved in witchcraft but recently had had a vision that God would give him a chance to purify his life, a man whose wife had prayed 19 years for his salvation and an elderly man facing serious surgery.

In one open-air service, a Catholic church in the village supplied electricity for the public address system and organ. Among those professing faith were a senior citizen, his daughter and her teen-aged child.

A man who had been drinking disrupted the outset of one evangelistic service but was among those who later responded to the invitation.

One pastor fluent in Chinese, Donald Gardner of Overland Park, Kan., shared his faith with a Cantonese who had moved to Venezuela from Hong Kong last year. "He immediately knew his need and accepted Christ as Savior and Lord," the preacher recounted. "All this man needed was someone who could communicate the gospel in his language."

A woman who stayed in the hotel one day with a sick co-volunteer led four maids in making professions of faith.

Four youths prayed for salvation in one home visit, as did their mother who was listening in from another room. A father, his son and two of his son's friends made professions of faith in another visit, and the father offered his home for a weekly Bible study.

Volunteer Harold Finch of Overland Park, Kan., told of a man who said, "God is dead, but he said it with sadness." The man's view of Christ only involved the crucifixion, until he learned he could pray to "the living God," Finch added.

"As we visited each home, God would literally bring us more and more people to witness to," Lucinda Swatzell of Great Bend, Kan., reported. "One person would run to get his brother or sister. Friends would drop by. A neighbor would come to see what was going on. Soon there would be a crowd and four or five people would accept Christ.

"One grandmother had run to get her grandson. He gladly accepted Christ as his Savior. He thanked us with joy on his face and exclaimed, 'I've been going to church all of my life, but no one has ever told me about this!'"

Said Roger Steenrod of Junction City, Kan., "I have never seen new Christians so excited about sharing Christ, nor have I seen people who do not know Christ so responsive to the gospel message."

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Christian Life Commission
Adopts Plans For 1985-86

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
9/12/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission in its annual meeting adopted a \$950,000 budget and approved a series of conferences dealing with issues such as world hunger, peace with justice and gambling.

During the Sept. 11-12 meeting, commission members also joined the agency's staff in a special dedication service for the agency's offices in the new Southern Baptist Convention Building. The staff moved into its new quarters in January.

In addition to back-to-back conferences on peace with justice and world hunger scheduled for Jan. 20-22 in Charlotte, N.C., the commission also approved plans for regional and associational conferences to assist Christian Life Committees in local Baptist churches and associations.

The conferences are part of an intensive educational effort during 1985-86 aimed at helping Southern Baptist families and individuals cope with moral issues. Plans include expansion of the agency's printed and videotape resources on abortion, hunger, economics, family violence and television morality.

The 1985-86 budget reflects an increase of \$51,000 over the previous year. With an anticipated increase of only 1.8 percent in Cooperative Program funds, the budget does not include a cost of living increase for employees. The commission, however, asked its executive committee to examine the budget at a later date and to authorize a cost of living increase of up to four percent if funds allow.

In other actions, the commission:

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--Authorized the staff to lead in the establishment of a national anti-gambling organization to spearhead grassroots opposition to the expansion of gambling throughout the country.

--Commended the national Project SMART (Stop Marketing Alcohol on Radio and Television) campaign and expressed specific support for the Fairness in Alcohol Advertising Act. The legislation, introduced in the House, would require TV and radio stations which broadcast alcohol ads to provide equivalent time for public service announcements and programming regarding alcohol abuse.

--Approved plans for support materials for the new Sanctity of Human Life Sunday adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in June.

--Affirmed the agency's growing involvement in the nation's capital in support of moral values.

--Reelected Charles Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, chairman, and David George, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., vice-chairman, and elected Roy Rhodes, an attorney from Tallahassee, Fla., secretary.

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Crowder Hopes Lawsuit
Will Not Be Necessary

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
9/12/85

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Robert S. Crowder hopes it will not be necessary to file a lawsuit against the Southern Baptist Convention to correct what he says are "violations of the bylaws" of the denomination, but is prepared to do whatever is necessary for redress.

Crowder and his wife, of Birmingham, issued a statement to Baptist Press following the announcement that their attorney, Emmet J. Bondurant of Atlanta, had notified the SBC Executive Committee of intent to file suit if the Executive Committee does not "take prompt and effective action...to remedy the violations."

The Crowders' complaint stems from action during the 1985 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas, when SBC President Charles F. Stanley ruled out-of-order an attempt to amend the report of the SBC Committee on Committees. The Committee on Committees nominates the SBC Committee on Boards, which in turn nominates persons to serve as trustees of the 20 national agencies of the SBC.

The Crowders claim Stanley's ruling "violated the provisions of the bylaws" of the SBC, and thus their rights as messengers.

In the statement issued Sept. 11, the Crowders note they are "disappointed" that a press release was issued by Baptist Press (the news service of the SBC) on Sept. 6, and added they "had hoped that the infractions of the SBC bylaws...could be resolved quietly by the Executive Committee on its own initiative without public debate and without embarrassment to any of the parties involved."

It adds the Crowders "and other Southern Baptists with whom they are acting hope that this going public will not make it too difficult for the Executive Committee to discharge its responsibilities to take prompt and effective corrective action."

The statement amplifies the Crowders' claim the Executive Committee—which meets Sept. 16-18 in Nashville, Tenn.—can set aside the action taken in Dallas concerning the report of the Committee on Committees and subsequent election of the 1986 Committee on Boards. They cite a section in the SBC bylaws "which 'authorize, instruct and commission' the Executive Committee to act for the convention between sessions."

While the Crowders had requested a meeting with officers of the SBC Executive Committee, they will make a presentation to the entire 69-member committee Monday night, Sept. 16, an action Crowder said he hopes "does not portend that the Executive Committee has already made up its mind to sweep the matter under the rug."

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Later, in an interview with Baptist Press following release of the statement, Crowder said: "We should never have to go to court. I am very hopeful the Executive Committee will do what it should do. I hope (they) will take action. I believe these men and women will vote for the good of the denomination."

Despite the expression of hope, Crowder in his statement said "the need to challenge these violations of the priceless safeguards built into the SBC bylaws against the tyranny of a 'chair' acting contrary to the will of the body as expressed by ballot vote in Dallas prompts (us) to press on whatever the cost."

He said he does not wish to have his case "tried in the press ...because it is so complicated that a complete presentation cannot be made in the limited space available in the media...."

The statement continues: "We go to Nashville in a spirit of hopeful and prayerful cooperation with the SBC Executive Committee. We love the Convention, respect its historic traditions of freedom, support its missionary, educational, benevolent and other undertakings with prayer and purse, and are determined to see these freedoms and safeguards maintained.

"We know that freedom is never cheap in the drain on financial and emotional resources of those who challenge abuses of that freedom. All of our freedoms are only as secure as we can make them on the occasion of any violation of these freedoms.

"We challenge the violations of the 1985 SBC Convention in the spirit of Martin Luther, of the patriots of 1776, and of John Leland and other Baptist preachers who insisted in 1787 that the religious freedom clause be part of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution."

In the interview with Baptist Press, Crowder added he "had to think a long time before I would go this far, even to threaten to take my church into court."

He declined to identify by name the "other Southern Baptists" with whom he is working, but said, "If we go to court--and that is if with a capital I and a capital F--it will be a class action. Under class action procedures the loser pays it all."

He added who will be sued if the suit is filed "will be the lawyer's determination. He would have to be sure we didn't miss anybody, but that will be up to him."

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Business Plan Approved
By RTVC Trustee Board

Baptist Press
9/12/85

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission trustees this week approved a three-year business plan including goals for significant development activities, radio and television programming and households to be reached by the ACTS television network.

The trustees also approved a 1985-86 budget including details of the development program designed to bring in \$3,300,000, praised the agency's on-going radio ministry and were led by trustee Laverne Butler of Louisville, Ky., in a standing ovation to the staff for their commitment and hard work.

Fred Roach of Dallas presented the three-year plan on behalf of the trustee Finance Committee.

"The plan is practical and realistic, but it needs a total team effort to make it achievable," said Roach. "The team includes us as trustees, the Commission management and staff, the SBC Executive Committee, our many constituents and supporters and our financing institutions. We all still have much to do to support the Bold Mission goals of our local churches and convention but I'm optimistic we can do it together," Roach concluded.

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In a report to trustees, RTVC President Jimmy R. Allen said the ACTS Task Force goal of three and a half million households by the end of the current fiscal year can be achieved by October 1 when systems representing nearly 300,000 subscribers are scheduled to come on line. These systems include Nashville and Brentwood, Tenn. and St. Petersburg, Fla.

With the addition of these systems, ACTS is confirmed via cable and low power television for accessing more than 3,500,000 households in 31 states. ACTS will be viewable in most of those households before the end of October, following equipment deliveries and installations, Allen reported.

He added, according to Arbitron estimates of 2.7 persons per household, this should bring the potential ACTS viewership to 9,450,000. Pennsylvania is the newest state being added to the growing list of mission or "Frost Belt" states that are represented by ACTS affiliates.

The approved 1985-86 budget calls for cash operating revenues of more than \$10,000,000 with funds expected to come primarily from the SBC Cooperative Program, RTVC development efforts, church satellite service fees, advertising messages on the ACTS network and the syndication of some ACTS programs.

Planned priorities for budgeted cash expenditures include reduced operating expenses, restructured debt service costs and increased production costs for the religious and family programming of the Commission.

Whereas a net cash operating deficit of over \$900,000 is projected for the current fiscal year, a net cash income of \$1,800,000 is planned for 1985-86. Commission trustees and management officials said such results are common for organizations starting up new television efforts such as the ACTS network.

Development plans call for capital campaigns to be held in Atlanta, Baton Rouge, La., and in Birmingham and Mobile, Ala. In addition, a series of TeleMissions Launch dinners are scheduled to be held in about 50 locations in October.

"We will tell the story of the ACTS missions impact at the TeleMissions dinners," said Allen. "One of the most cost efficient dollars that Southern Baptists can spend for missions, right now, is by putting ACTS into action in new state areas where Baptists can not ordinarily get the time of day."

Allen said the ACTS network is in much the same situation as the Jews in Nehemiah's time. They had rebuilt Jerusalem's wall but complained of being tired and wondered, even before they hung the gates, if the task could be completed.

"Every dream comes to those critical moments when the dreamers get weary, when the folks ask, 'Can it be done?'" Allen said. "ACTS is at that point and it is crucial that we tool the network so our local churches, who have always looked at television with a 'Can we afford it?'" approach, can now face the beautiful challenge of accessing thousands of homes in this country 24-hours-a-day."

"We are at a point where we will either seize the passing opportunity afforded us by cable and television or we will let it go," he said. "We are accountable to God to give Southern Baptists the right to make that decision. If we seize the opportunity, we will see ACTS grow. I look forward to seeing the blessings from God that will come, and to seeing the problems we will cope with in the future, as opposed to the ones we are coping with now."

RTVC Chairman T.W. Terral of Lanier Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, La., observed, "History repeats itself. In the early stages of the Radio and Television Commission, just 35 to 40 years ago, the radio ministry faced similar problems of misunderstanding that ACTS does now."

He was referring to the report that RTVC radio programs receive more than 6,225 exposures weekly on 3,949 stations. The Commission began its radio ministry in 1941 with only one program -- "The Baptist Hour" -- and, in addition, now distributes such programs as "Country Crossroads," on 1,363 stations, "Powerline," on 1,325 stations, and "Master Control" on 798 stations weekly.

"They probably thought the problem was money then, also," said Terral. "We could solve the ACTS financial problem easily if every resident Southern Baptist would send us one dollar. That would be more than \$13 million."

"We learned today that 9,717 people have written to the Commission after watching an ACTS program this past year and that does not count the people who have responded by telephone to programs like 'Invitation to Life,'" Terral said. "Nor does that include hundreds more who have responded to the network's call-in shows. Now that's exciting."

Trustee Jack B. Johnson, executive director of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, agreed. "ACTS faces difficulties, and the greatest ones are rumors," Johnson said. "I cannot believe Southern Baptists would be so short-sighted that we would allow the opportunity that is ACTS to slip through our hands. The network will continue."

Two trustees, J. Clark Hensley of Jackson, Miss., and Len B. Turner, pastor of First Baptist Church, Merritt Island, Fla., likened the current financial pressures to those of any new business starting up with limited capital.

"Our commitment not to appeal for money on the air may have handicapped us in getting the message of the significance of the ACTS network in missions and evangelism to our constituents," said Hensley. He looks toward the network's development program "to provide the freedom for ACTS to tell its story and work more quickly toward an even more accelerated effort to get out the gospel on television."

Turner went on record with his "wholehearted support and participation in the network," calling the business of ACTS "the most important business of all because it's the King's business of getting the gospel to the world. I, personally, am very excited to be in on the founding stages of the network. All systems are go and ACTS is going forward."

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Fire Sweeps Mathari Valley;
Baptists Give Food, Blankets

Baptist Press
9/12/85

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)—A Kenyan Baptist church used Southern Baptist relief funds to aid 400 people left homeless by a fire that swept the Mathari Valley slum area of Nairobi in late August.

Members of Mathari Valley Baptist Church gave a blanket and four bags of corn, the staple food in Kenya, to each victim, said Laura Lee Stewart, missionary press representative for Kenya. Tom Jones, Southern Baptist missionary, assisted Pastor Patrick Kimani and church members.

One man died when fire swept the crowded valley where many of Nairobi's poor have built cardboard shanties to shield themselves from the weather.

This is the third time Southern Baptists have worked with the Mathari Valley church to help slum residents in the wake of a fire. Southern Baptists provided \$5,000 to buy blankets for about 1,500 fire victims after a 1984 fire and \$5,000 to provide food and blankets after a fire in 1983.

Earlier this year, Southern Baptists provided \$13,000 to buy corn meal, beans and vegetables for about 250 families there suffering from malnutrition because of the African drought.

The Mathari Valley church grew out of worship services at a clinic built 15 years ago by Southern Baptist missionaries using wood from their packing crates. But because the area is so crowded the church was long unable to secure land for a building, said Stewart.

Impressed by the clinic and Baptist relief efforts, local Christians lent their support to the church's request to the government for a building plot and 3.5 acres recently was allotted for the church building. "This is the answer to 15 years worth of prayers," said Jones, whose wife, Nancy, is a nurse at the clinic.

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