



BAPTIST PRESS

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85-150

RTVC Reorganizes;
Edwards Promoted

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—A reorganization plan has been adopted by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, under which current financial vice-president James Edwards will be promoted to senior vice-president and chief operating officer.

RTVC President Jimmy R. Allen will remain as the chief executive officer under the plan, which was adopted during a two-day retreat at Lake Texoma, Okla., attended by administrators of the agency as well as representatives of the administrative sub-committee of the trustees.

"The reorganization has been in the works for several months," said Fred Roach, of Dallas, a RTVC trustee. "It was brought to a head by our efforts to restructure our finances. Allen said: "The reorganization now approved by the trustees will complement the process authorized by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention."

During its September meeting, the SBC Executive Committee approved a recommendation to allow the RTVC to restructure debts incurred in the startup of the American Christian Television System (ACTS) network. Under the plan, the RTVC will be allowed to borrow up to \$10 million with a 10-year payout and conduct a five-year \$10 million fund raising campaign.

The plan included "very stringent" requirements "designed to help them develop a definite plan to retire their indebtedness without having to add additional indebtedness," according to Executive Committee member Harmon Born of Atlanta.

Roach said the restructuring of the organizational structure of the board grew out of the overall effort to make the fledgling television network viable. "This organization gets it down to the bare bones," he said. "It doesn't cut into the sinew, but it puts us in a fighting position. We will still have to struggle and work hard to make it work."

In addition to restructuring the top of the organization, the plan eliminates 13 more employees, leaving the commission with a total of 97 personnel, including 90 full time and seven part-time workers. The 97 employee total is down from a peak of 176 in May of 1984, when ACTS was launched. It first was cut to 146 and then to the current figure of 110.

"The total reorganization has cut more than a million dollars out of the budget," Roach said. "In some early projections, we figured the minimum number of employees was 80. I think it is more realistic at 90. You simply cannot run a network without at least 90 people." He added the cuts were necessary because "we couldn't afford all of the people we had."

Under the reorganization, Edwards, as chief operating officer, "will have responsibility for the day to day control," Roach said. "The bank made a specific recommendation about the importance of having a day-to-day operations officer on site all of the time. I think it is smart (to appoint a chief operating officer) because Jimmy (Allen) will be away 80 per cent of the time raising money. It is hard for him to sign every policy memo and every personnel action."

Roach, however, specified Allen continues "as the chief policy maker; Jim Edwards' job is to see they get done." Under the plan, Edwards will assume some of the responsibilities of Luke Williams, executive vice-president, who has announced his early retirement Sept. 30, 1986.

Williams told Baptist Press his proposed retirement "has been discussed for some time but has just now been announced." In the meantime, he said, he will be turning many of his day-to-day duties over to Edwards in preparation for his retirement.

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He also will devote more time to the commission's \$10 million fund raising effort.

In addition to promoting Edwards, the reorganization plan creates an executive management group formed of Allen, Edwards, Williams and two current vice-presidents who will be promoted to senior vice-presidents.

The new senior vice-presidents are William Nichols, who was promoted from director of broadcast services to senior vice-president of affiliate relations, and Robert Taylor, vice-president of programming services, who was named senior vice-president of programming services.

The other vice-presidents will remain in their current roles. Charles Roden is vice-president of support services and R. Edward Gilstrap is vice-president of counseling services. A third vice-president, Ron Dixon, recently resigned his media services post to return to an advertising agency in San Antonio.

Nichols currently is assigned to the ACTS regional office in New York. He will be responsible for the growth and function of the network in its relationships with stations, cable companies, church relations, counseling and network promotion. He will return to Fort Worth and other personnel will be assigned to the New York office.

Taylor, who is responsible for both the Commission's radio production and programming and for production and programming for the ACTS network, also will oversee a new syndication unit which Bob Thornton, director of TV production, will direct.

"Some of the programs created for the ACTS network--including 'Cope,' 'The Sunshine Factory,' and 'Country Crossroads,' as well as new programming, will be syndicated and offered to stations across the country," Taylor said. "In addition, programming also will be produced for syndication which can be utilized on the ACTS network." Among others who will be assigned to the new syndication unit will be Claude Cox, Jerry Pillow and Bonita Sparrow.

The commission's marketing department, which Cox directed, will be moved under the radio department, directed by Edwin Malone. The promotion department, for which Sparrow was responsible, will become network promotion under Nichols, and the audience response department, which Pillow headed, will remain under the direction of Roden.

The plan also calls for opening Jan. 1 in Los Angeles a fourth ACTS regional office. Ken Hunsberger of Memphis, who had been working on a contract basis with the ACTS network, will be director of that office. The other regional offices are in Atlanta, Fort Worth and New York. Dennis Parrish and Bruce Grinstead, two television producers who have been working on a contract basis with the network, also have been added to the permanent staff.

According to Roach, the reorganization is part of a four-pronged effort to make ACTS viable. The other parts are negotiation of a 10-year payout loan which would reduce cash flow, and the success of the fund-raising campaign and the new syndication effort.

Roach said commission representatives are continuing meetings with a Dallas bank in order to convert a three-year, \$6 million line of credit to a \$10 million, 10-year payout for the loan. "The bank is working with the commission to try to solve" the financial problems, he added.

Allen called the \$1,020,787 pledged to the RIFC in October as a result of a series of ACTS TeleMissions dinners and follow-up fund-raising activities, "an affirmation from God of the SBC-approved \$10 million fund-raising campaign for the network," noting, "I had asked God to affirm that five-year campaign by letting us have a tithe of the \$10 million during one month."

"I believe this will answer the questions about whether ACTS is going to flourish or not. We have looked at that very clearly ourselves. We believe that more than \$1 million in pledges is an affirmation ACTS is going to flourish.

"We're encouraged with the spirit of our people as we rededicate ourselves to forward momentum for the ACTS network," Allen said. "We believe now we are tailored for the task and we're counting on Southern Baptists to undergird us as we seek to access the homes of this nation with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

O'Brien, Bird, Chute Named
For Overseas News System

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has selected initial personnel for a new communications plan which will feature firsthand reporting of missions through a system of four professionally trained missionary correspondents assigned to areas around the world.

Robert O'Brien, the board's overseas news coordinator, will direct development and professional operation of the system from Richmond, according to Bob Stanley, news and information services director and chief of the Richmond (foreign) bureau of Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Michael Chute, 35, former managing editor of the Missouri Baptist newsjournal, Word and Way, and Craig Bird, 36, Baptist Press feature editor at the home office in Nashville, Tenn., are expected to work with O'Brien as the first two overseas correspondents. Correspondents selected for the overseas system must meet both the professional qualifications set by the board's office of communications and public relations and all normal qualifications for missionary appointment.

The board's human resources subcommittee approved Bird and his wife, Melissa, Nov. 19 to be recommended for missionary appointment next April, pending completion of seminary study required of missionaries. Bird will leave Baptist Press Dec. 31 to enroll at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Chute, who accepted the new post in October, will begin partial duties immediately. He and his wife, Kathie, will return to the United States next August for furlough from Brazil, where they have been assigned as missionaries since September 1982. He has been news and information coordinator for the South Brazil Mission in Rio de Janeiro.

The Chutes and the Birds will have several months of orientation at the board in Richmond before moving fully into their areawide assignments. Chute will report on missions in Latin America, working out of Brasilia, Brazil; Bird will report on missions in Africa, from a home base in Nairobi, Kenya.

The overseas correspondents' main function will be to tell the story of missions through a variety of channels to U.S. audiences. They also will work directly with field missionaries to help them improve efforts to communicate the impact of missions.

In addition, they will cooperate with traveling teams of Foreign Mission Board staff communicators who will continue to participate in the effort to increase the flow of information from 106 mission fields around the world.

O'Brien, former Baptist Press news editor in Nashville, joined the Foreign Mission Board staff in 1980 to field test the system. After two years of preparation in Richmond, Robert and Shirley Bradley O'Brien and their sons, Eric and Paul, moved to Nairobi for two years to conduct a pilot study of the overseas system. He traveled widely in Africa, covering missions and training and consulting with missionaries in communications, and she was administrative and editorial assistant.

A year-long evaluation after the O'Briens returned to Richmond revealed that intensified, firsthand coverage of missions improved efforts to communicate foreign missions to Southern Baptists and to increase awareness of their Bold Mission Thrust goal of reaching the entire world with the message of Jesus Christ by the year 2000.

O'Brien, a South Carolinian, earned a B.A. degree in journalism and history from Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Va., and masters in journalism and religious education from Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Before joining Baptist Press in 1973, O'Brien spent eight years in Baptist journalism and seven in secular journalism. He was press director for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and an associate magazine editor for the Baptist Brotherhood Commission. Earlier he worked as a reporter and editor on newspapers in Virginia. He has been a visiting professor twice at Southern seminary.

Chute, born in Illinois and reared in Missouri, has a B.A. degree in journalism from Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee. He has a masters in communications from Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield, and attended Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

Besides being Word and Way managing editor, Chute has been information specialist at the Baptist Sunday School Board, director of public relations at Southwest Baptist University, and public relations consultant at Midwestern seminary.

Bird was born in Arkansas and reared in Texas. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin. He also did 36 semester hours of graduate study at Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas, and Tennessee State University, Nashville.

Before joining Baptist Press in 1982, Bird was director of news and information at Hardin-Simmons University, director of communications and houseparent at the South Texas Children's Home, and reporter and editor on newspapers in Oklahoma and Texas.

Besides church and home responsibilities as missionaries, Katherine Bengé Chute and Melissa Jackson Bird expect to assist their husbands in their professional responsibilities.

Mrs. Chute, a Mississippian, is a graduate of William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Miss., and earned a masters in communications from Southwest Missouri State University. A former editorial assistant for Baptist Press, she also has been an advertising copy writer, communications director and public relations consultant.

Mrs. Bird, a Texan, is a graduate of San Jacinto College, Pasadena, Texas, and has been a teacher, houseparent, secretary, press room assistant and printing firm sales representative.

The Chutes have two children, Ryan Douglas and Kristen Leigh-Anne, and the Birds have two children, Coby Alan and Brant Michael.

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Roy McClain, Former
Atlanta Pastor, Dies

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ORANGEBURG, S.C. (BP)—Roy O. McClain, former pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta during a crisis over integration in the 1960s, died of a heart attack at his farm Nov. 21.

McClain, listed by Newsweek magazine in 1955 as "one of the ten greatest preachers in America," had been pastor of First Baptist Church, Orangeburg, for the past nine years.

McClain, 69, had been in excellent health, according to his wife, Betty Bryant McClain. He had attended a senior citizens luncheon the day of his death, and suffered the fatal heart attack after taking a nap.

McClain was pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta for 17 years—from 1953-1970—and had taken a strong stand in favor of orderly racial integration.

After three blacks attempting to attend worship services in 1963 were led by ushers to an "auxiliary auditorium," the church was picketed by a civil rights group demanding whites and blacks be seated together. Later that year, the church voted by mail ballots "by a decisive margin" to fully integrate the church.

Saying he was exhausted and needed rest, McClain resigned in 1970 as pastor of the Atlanta church and for six years described himself as "a minister at large" without a congregation. He wrote books, filled interim pastors, and raised horses and Shetland ponies at his farm in Orangeburg. In 1976, McClain returned to the pastorate of the Orangeburg church, where he had been pastor before going to Atlanta.

The South Carolina native was a chaplain in the Pacific during World War II, and was one of three chaplains to conduct the funeral of famed war correspondent Ernie Pyle. McClain was about 500 yards away when Pyle was killed by machine gun fire on Okinawa in 1945.

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McClain was a graduate of Furman University, Greenville, S.C., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He was survived by his wife, three brothers, a sister, three sons, and two grandchildren.

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Wyoming Baptists
Elect Hinze President

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11/27/85

CASPER, Wyo. (BP)--Buddy Hinze, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Casper, Wyo., was elected president of the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention during the convention's annual meeting, Nov. 13-14.

Larry York, pastor of Big Horn Baptist Church in Buffalo, was elected first vice-president and Art Grout, a layman from Sunnyside Baptist Church in Cheyenne, was elected second vice-president.

Messengers at the meeting, hosted by Boyd Avenue Baptist Church, Casper, adopted a budget of \$796,000 for the coming year. Contributions from local churches affiliated with the convention are expected to provide \$299,000 with most of the remainder coming from the Home Mission Board and the Baptist Sunday School Board. The percentage of income from local churches which will go to Southern Baptist causes outside the state was increased from 22 percent to 23 percent.

Messengers also adopted a campaign called Vision/Mission Wyoming, an effort to increase the number of churches from the present 62 to 100 by the year 1995 and to grow from the current membership of 12,000 to 25,000 by 1995.

The 1986 meeting will be at Monroe Avenue Baptist Church in Green River, Nov. 12-13.

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Baptist Men From Four States
Aid Hurricane Kate Victims

By Greg Warner

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (BP)--While residents of Florida's Panhandle endured their fourth hurricane evacuation of the season, Baptists in the area responded to needs for shelter, food and spiritual strength.

Hurricane Kate circled the state before making landfall on Nov. 21 near Panama City. Heaviest damage was reported along the coast, particularly in Apalachicola, but further inland fallen trees were being blamed for extensive loss of electric power in many cities. As late as Monday, Nov. 25, ten percent of Tallahassee was still without power.

The storm, which packed 100-mile-per-hour winds, forced the evacuation of an estimated 90,000 people from six coastal counties. Many residents fled inland, often to makeshift shelters in schools and churches. At least three Baptist churches in the area set up emergency shelters for displaced residents--First Baptist Church and Northside Baptist Church, both in Panama City, and First Baptist Church, Parker.

Disaster response units from Baptist Men organizations in four states were dispatched to the Panhandle. The units, from Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and Florida, were to provide meals to residents in Port St. Joe, Apalachicola, Eastpoint and Tallahassee.

Early reports suggested no Baptist church had suffered major damage from the hurricane. First Baptist Church, Port St. Joe, had some damage to its roof but no structural damage, according to James Spears, disaster relief chairman for the Northwest Coast Baptist Association.

Much of the hurricane's damage resulted from the tornadoes it spawned. One tornado hit the town of Marianna and scraped the Blue Springs Baptist Assembly there, though only tree damage was reported to the camp.

Kate was the eleventh hurricane of the year and the first November hurricane to hit the U.S. mainland in 50 years.

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