



# BAPTIST PRESS

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86-112

## Trustees Express Disapproval Of Facts And Trends Article

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Citing the Southern Baptist Convention-adopted request of the Peace Committee to avoid stirring the fires of controversy, trustees of the Baptist Sunday School Board expressed disapproval of an article appearing in the July/August issue of a board publication.

The article, an excerpt of an address given on the board's Anniversary Day in May by James L. Sullivan, a former president of the board and the Southern Baptist Convention, outlined his personal perspective on current controversy in the denomination. The publication, "Facts and Trends", is a newsletter mailed monthly to approximately 57,000 church staff persons and state and SBC leaders.

A motion by Bill Anderson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Clearwater, Fla., also noted that the position taken in the article does not reflect the position of the trustees. It further requests that BSSB editorial personnel honor the Peace Committee's request for a moratorium on activities that could further fuel the current crisis in the denomination.

In speaking to his motion, Anderson emphasized that his motion was not intended to be a criticism of Sullivan or a blanket criticism of editorial personnel. "We should affirm and can justifiably affirm our editorial staff," he said.

After adoption of the Anderson motion, Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Houston, and a member of the SBC Peace Committee, praised the action as an "absolutely helpful thing."

"We do not need from any publication--independent, denominational or whatever--any more verbage that will inflame where we are as a denomination," said Young.

Anderson presented his motion as a substitute for one introduced the first day by Joe Knott of Raleigh, N.C., and tabled by a vote of 40 to 33.

The Knott motion would have instructed Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder to apologize in "Facts and Trends" for the publication of the Sullivan article and to prepare and submit for trustee approval guidelines for persons speaking at the board. The motion also would have required the board to send a book by James Hefley, "The Truth in Crisis," to every person on the newsletter's mailing list.

In other action, trustees adopted a 1986-87 budget of \$163.8 million and a recommendation allowing more time for trustee consideration of nominees for elected staff positions. Department directors, division directors, vice presidents and the president of the board are elected by the trustees.

The budget represents a six percent increase over 1985-86 projected income of \$154 million. In a report on the first nine months of 1985-86, ending June 30, E.V. King, vice president for business and finance, said income of \$109.9 million was \$6.1 million below budget but above last year by \$3.2 million.

The recommendation on personnel search and election presented by the plans and policies committee states that trustee input, suggestions or recommendations will be sought concerning the elected staff position to be filled.

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Also, when a candidate is to be considered at a trustee meeting, biographical information will be sent to the trustees 10 days before the meeting. At the meeting the candidate will be introduced with opportunity for questions by the trustees at the plenary session on the first day with the vote on the person coming on the second day.

The practice has been to provide biographical data, present the candidate and vote in the same session. Numerous trustees expressed frustration with the process, noting they felt pressure to vote in support of candidates they had just met and had only a brief time to question.

The recommendation from the plans and policies committee came after referral of a motion the previous day by Larry Holly, a physician from Beaumont, Texas.

Holly's motion would have required distribution of information about candidates being considered for the position of vice president for church programs and services being vacated Oct. 1 by the retirement of Morton Rose. The motion called for information to be distributed "once the candidate field has been reduced below ten and before the candidate screening process reduces the candidate pool below five."

Opposing referral of his motion to the plans and policies committee, Holly said the entire 85-member board should be willing to confront substantive issues where differing opinions were evident.

"If you disagree with me, stand up and say it," said Holly. If trustees become lax and don't face hard issues, they could wind up with "sodomites" on the board within 10 years, said Holly, who later apologized to the trustees for remarks he called "intemperate."

Supporting the motion to refer, Gene Henderson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Brandon, Miss., said, "I need a period of time to digest some of this without so much emotion."

In other action, trustees adopted increases in 1987 summer conference center rates and an average 4.5 percent increase in church literature prices, effective April 1987.

The conference center rate includes \$1 and \$2 increases in the children's and adult conference service fees and increases in housing and food.

Jerry Lee of Jackson, Miss., chairman of the finance committee, said a major factor in the need for the literature price increase is spiraling postal rates expected to increase approximately 20 percent next year.

Trustees also approved four quarterly Sunday school products on cassette tape for the blind while deleting free distribution of braille materials. Tapes will include Bible Book Study for Adults, Bible Book Study for Youth, Adult Bible Study, and Sunday School Adults.

J. C. Hatfield, associate pastor--administration, First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas, and chairman of the Bible teaching committee, said, "Our blind people are using braille less and less and are turning to the cassette tape."

Other new products approved included:

--Chinese editions of Bible Book Study for Adults and Bible Book Study for Adult Teachers, effective April 1988;

--American Indian edition of Adult Bible Study, effective October 1988;

--a new periodical, Special Education Leadership, effective October 1988;

--large-print edition of Adult Bible Teacher, effective October 1987.

At the conclusion of the meeting, B O Baker, pastor of Plymouth Park Baptist Church, Irving, Texas, said, "I'd like for us to end on a note of commending our people (employees of the board). We're very fortunate and grateful for the staff that we have."

Robertson, Bell Elected  
To Head BSSB Departments

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Directors of the music publishing and property management departments of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board were elected by trustees during their semi-annual meeting in Nashville, Tenn.

Festus G. Robertson, an employee of the board since 1967, was elected to head the newly created music publishing department which will begin operation Oct. 1. Richard Bell, who has owned a construction and development company in Houston will direct the property management department which oversees maintenance and construction projects in Nashville and at the 63 Baptist Book Stores and two conference centers.

Robertson, 52, has been supervisor of the youth/adult/general materials development section of the church music department since 1980. Earlier, he was music promotion specialist in the Broadman sales department and consultant in adult music in the church music department.

The music publishing department, authorized by the trustees in February 1986, will publish Christian music products for church, school and home use. Products will include printed music, vocal and instrumental audio and video items, musical instruments and other music related items.

Larry Holly, a physician from Beaumont, Texas, strongly reiterated concerns expressed at the previous meeting that the new department not publish so-called Christian rock music. Bill Tisdale, pastor of First Baptist Church, Henderson, Texas, said he has heard many expressions of support for the new publishing venture, especially by ministers of music.

Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder said publishing guidelines for the music publishing department would be presented for trustee consideration, probably at the February 1987 meeting.

Bell, 47, has owned the Sabel Company since 1984. Earlier, he was vice president of construction for Vantage Companies, a Houston real estate development and management company; Houston area facilities manager for Texas Instruments, Inc.; and corporate branch manager for Honeywell Inc., in Houston and Charlotte, N.C.

Bell told the trustees he had felt a call approximately one year ago to some kind of Christian vocational service. Several weeks later, he saw an advertisement in the Texas Baptist Standard for the property management position at the Sunday School Board and believed this might be an open door from God.

In his report to the trustees, President Lloyd Elder announced Executive Vice President James Clark has been named, effective Aug. 1, to serve as acting vice president for church programs and services due to the retirement Oct. 1 of Morton Rose.

He said that during the interim, "we will take a careful look at the position description and the organizational structure of church programs and services." The vice president for church programs and services presently oversees the work of the Bible teaching, Christian development, church and staff support and conference center divisions.

In a challenge to "reach forth in significant areas that relate to the standard of Christ in the midst of our people," Elder urged moving beyond the present conflict in the denomination.

He expressed support for the newly elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.

"He has my support for wisdom and grace as he gives servant leadership to all of us. It is my deepest longing that he will lead us to focus attention primarily on the missionary, evangelistic and educational programs of our great people," said Elder.

He said Southern Baptists must put aside divisive issues and focus on the central issue of Jesus Christ.

"When Baptists start with Christ—the Christological principle of interpretation—we stay united. 'Christ died for our sins. He was buried. The third day he arose.' It's time to reach toward Christ as the goal and consolidate our biblical position, not around parties or personalities, but around the Savior," said Elder.

He called for Baptists to reach toward denominational humility, to listen to the "evangelistic message we preach to the unsaved." He expressed strong support for the Cooperative Program of mission support and the convention approach to missions.

He noted three billion people in the world, including 170 million in the United States, do not know Christ as their Savior.

"Reach toward 2000 A.D. and see what God wants to do in our midst and with us in his kingdom," Elder exhorted. "It is time for us to reach forth into the things that are before us."

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

HMB Requests New Search  
Committee For President

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press  
8/7/86

ATLANTA (BP)—By a vote of 40-36, directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, meeting in executive session, requested the resignations of seven members of a search committee appointed in June to nominate a new president.

Directors also asked their officers to appoint a new search committee "that will give fair representation and proper balance to all members of the board."

In response to the action, six of the seven members resigned from the search committee, although not from the board. M.A. Winchester, a medical doctor from Whitley City, Ky., declined to resign "for reasons of personal integrity."

The motion was made by Johnny Jackson, pastor of Forest Highlands Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark. Jackson said he was making the motion "in light of the apparent imbalance of the present search committee in regard to theological issues facing our board."

Although the action was taken during executive session in which the media, staff and visitors were asked to leave, copies of Jackson's motion, including the vote count, were given to news media by Home Mission Board outgoing chairman Travis Wiginton of Norman, Okla.

Just before the meeting ended, Wiginton resigned as chairman of the board, saying he had accepted the pastorate of Kona Baptist Church in Hawaii, effective Sept. 7, and would no longer be eligible to be a board member from Oklahoma.

The board elected Clark Hutchinson, pastor of Eastside Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., as "interim" chairman until the regularly-scheduled election of officers in March 1987.

Hutchinson won the election over Marvin Prude, a retired refining company president from Birmingham and current first vice chairman of the board. The vote count was not announced.

In an interview after the meeting, Wiginton said the votes were a "clear indication" of the control of the board by what some have called "fundamental-conservatives" in the Southern Baptist Convention.

"The implication is the same old story we've had for several years—a lack of trust" between Baptists who disagree with each other in the political and theological controversy confronting the SBC, said Wiginton.

He said he was aware that board members who were unhappy with the selection of the search committee had caucused and decided to ask that the committee resign, even before they had presented their first report.

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Wiginton asked search committee chairman Eugene Cotey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tenn., to lead the opening devotional and to present the search committee report as the first item on the agenda.

After Cotey's devotional, but before his committee report, a motion was made by Ann Frazier of Roanoke Rapids, N.C., that the board go into executive session.

Wiginton ruled the motion out of order, saying he had already recognized Cotey for his report, but the board voted 38-31 not to sustain the chair and went into executive session.

Long-time board staff members said it was the first time the board had gone into executive session since 1973 when the board was dealing with a "sensitive personnel matter." The board has met in executive session only two or three times in the last 25 years, according to informed sources.

Behind closed doors, Jackson made his motion to ask the committee to resign, and Wiginton ruled the motion out of order. By a vote of 40 to 36, the board voted against sustaining the ruling of the chair, and voted by the same margin to approve Jackson's motion.

Wiginton explained later he felt any attempt to disband the committee before it did its work and before it presented its report would violate the board's bylaws.

Later, the board in more routine and open business actions voted to authorize a \$300,000 loan to the Colorado Baptist Convention, voted to purchase property adjacent to its building, promoted three staff members to new positions and employed three other new national staff, appointed 24 new missionaries, and heard a report from the board's acting president on progress made since the resignation of William G. Tanner as president on June 15.

While the board was taking action on scheduled business, the seven-member search committee met privately to pray and discuss their response to the request to resign. No announcement was made during the "open" business session of the actions taken during executive session.

After Wiginton resigned as chairman and Hutchinson was elected, the board went into a second executive session to hear the response of the search committee.

Wiginton said each of the committee members gave his or her testimony, and announced an individual decision to resign or continue. The committee decided they would not resign as a group, but would make individual statements to the board, he added.

All members of the committee except Winchester told the board they were resigning. They included Don Aderhold and Frank Wells of Atlanta, Lula Walker of Beaverton, Ore., Lawana McIver of Dallas, Troy Morrison of Montgomery, Ala., and Cotey.

Wiginton said he believed there is a possibility that some of the committee members who resigned may be asked to serve on the second committee to be appointed by the five officers.

Wiginton said he had received a great deal of criticism from board members because of a statement he made in the announcement of their appointment, saying that the committee was not chosen "on the basis of theology or politics in the denomination." Wiginton added in the announcement on June 19 that there was no attempt to "balance" political points of view on the committee.

"The reason those seven were selected," said Wiginton, "is because we wanted a team, we wanted harmony, we wanted experience--and brother, we had it on that (search) committee."

In the news conference after the meeting, Wiginton was asked if he felt the board actions had been a repudiation of his leadership.

"Yes," he said. "I've felt that for some time." He added that although he had been criticized for appointing a search committee dominated by "moderates," the decision was made by all five officers of the board in keeping with the bylaws which spell out the process for selection of a new president.

Hutchinson, the new chairman, said in an interview after the board meeting he did not know when the new committee would be appointed and announced.

"This was a tough day for all of us," he said, "but we've just got to trust God and his leadership and timing in all of this. God's timing is perfect; he never rushes; he is never late."

Hutchinson led the board members in a standing ovation in appreciation for Wiginton's leadership as chairman, and asked the board members to kneel in prayer asking God to "send a fresh sense of love" to Baptists for the board and for the denomination.

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Part Of Quote Omitted  
In SBC Story About Lark

Baptist Press  
8/7/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A news release from the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta unintentionally omitted part of a quotation from Marion D. Lark, chairman of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission.

Lark, pastor of First Baptist Church, Henderson, N.C., said during the commission's report: "Cooperative missions, not theological uniformity, is our heritage. Biblical authority, not biblical inerrancy, is the waymark that stands tall in Baptist history. Confessions of faith, not creedal statements, give voice to our affirmations."

After Lark concluded, messenger H.L. Pontenot, a Marshall, Texas, pastor, asked from a floor microphone: "How can you believe in the authority of the Bible if you do not believe in the inerrancy of the Bible?"

Lark's full reply, obtained from an official convention tape, was: "I believe that the Bible is truth without any mixture of error in terms of the spiritual truth provided. I would not say that it has scientific and historical facts where there is no diversity."

As Lark was completing his reply, a chorus of "nos" made it difficult for many in the convention hall including news reporters to hear Lark's closing words.

The convention news release said: "Lark replied that he believes the Bible is the truth without any mixture of errors. A chorus of 'nos' drowned him out when he tried to amplify the statement."

Bob Stanley, the newsroom staff reporter covering the session, said he had no intention of distorting the report and apologized for the omission.

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NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION