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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 11, 1986

86-130

New Committee Named
To Nominate HMB Leader

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)—A new seven-member search committee has been appointed to nominate a president for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, replacing another committee asked to resign by a 40-36 vote of Home Mission Board directors in August before the committee had presented its first report.

New committee members were appointed unanimously by the five officers of the board, who had been asked by the directors to select a new committee "that will give fair representation and proper balance to all members of the board."

Six members of the original search committee resigned because of perceived lack of trust among board members and because they felt the board would not elect any nominee they recommended.

One of the seven committee members, M.A. Winchester, a medical doctor from Whitley City, Ky., declined to resign as requested by the board "for reasons of personal integrity" and will continue to serve on the search committee.

According to the bylaws of the mission agency, a new president must be nominated by a search committee of not more than seven members appointed by the officers (chairman, first and second vice chairmen, secretary and assistant secretary). The committee is not elected by the board, but appointed by all its officers.

In addition to Winchester, two other members of the original search committee who had resigned in August were asked to serve on the new, reconstituted committee.

Troy L. Morrison, director of church-minister relations for the Alabama Baptist State Convention in Montgomery and a member of the original committee, was appointed chairman of the new group.

Lula D. Walker, a lay leader at First Baptist Church, Beaverton, Ore., was also reappointed to the committee.

Four new members were named. They are:

--M.O. Owens Jr., of Gastonia, N.C., retired pastor of churches in North Carolina and Belgium;

--Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas;

--Brad Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church, Duncan, Oklahoma;

--Searcy S. Garrison, retired executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention and administrator of Georgia Baptist Homes in Atlanta.

In announcing appointment of the committee during a meeting of the Home Mission Board Executive Committee, HMB chairman Clark Hutchinson of Marietta, Ga., read a brief statement from the officers pointing out they were unanimous in the selection of the new search committee.

"It was our prayerful desire that the search committee be representative of the constituency of the Home Mission Board," the statement said.

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Asked by reporters after the meeting if he felt the new search committee was balanced in representation of theological points of view, Hutchinson said he "was not going to respond to that" and repeated the prepared statement.

Hutchinson also would not predict when the search committee might make a recommendation for the presidency. "We don't want to put any pressure on the new committee," he said. "Everyone wants a new president as soon as possible, but we have great confidence in the interim leadership being given by Bob Banks." Banks, executive vice president, has been performing the duties of president since William G. Tanner resigned June 15 to become executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

In announcing appointment of the new committee, the officers requested any Southern Baptist wishing to recommend a person for the presidency of the Home Mission Board should submit his or her suggestions to the new search committee chairman.

"It is necessary that any previous recommendations be resubmitted to the committee chairman, as well as any new recommendations," the officers said. "Recommendations may be addressed to the chairman as follows:

Dr. Troy L. Morrison, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36198-0001, Office Phone: (205) 288-2460, ext. 212 Home Phone: (205) 279-7108"

At the close of the board's executive committee meeting, Hutchinson read the brief statement from the officers, but added no additional comments or observations. There was no action taken by the executive committee on the appointment of the new committee.

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Late Check Keeps CP
7th On All-Time List

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Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A late check held Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program receipts for August at seventh on the all-time monthly list, almost \$1 million behind what it might have been.

August receipts for the convention's voluntary unified missions, education and ministries budget were \$10,256,116, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

Contributions from one state Baptist convention—\$915,403—were sent to the Executive Committee's former address, returned to the sender and failed to arrive at the Executive Committee by Aug. 31, said Tim Hedquist, the committee's vice president for business and finance. Hedquist declined to name the state convention.

If the check had arrived on time, the August total would have been \$11,171,519, making it the third-highest monthly Cooperative Program total and 2.38 percent ahead of the same period last year.

Instead, the montly total lagged 6.01 percent, or \$655,787, behind August of 1985.

Eleven months into the 1985-86 fiscal year, Cooperative Program receipts total \$113,870,863, an increase of 5.65 percent over the same period in 1984-85. The annual goal is \$130 million.

For August, several states' contributions were below their August 1985 contributions, Hedquist noted. "Obviously the oil economy continues to impact the Cooperative Program, and I'm sure the general economy is a factor," he explained.

"We're continuing to hope for a good month in September," Bennett said. The convention's fiscal year ends Sept. 30, and all Cooperative Program checks received by the Executive Committee by that date will be counted toward the current year.

Bennett and Hedquist noted several factors which could help the September total, particularly receipts from the fifth Sunday in August, which primarily arrived in September, and the \$915,000 August check which will be added to the September total.

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Parks Sees Mobile Force
As One Way To Reach World

By Bob Stanley

N-FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—A mobile evangelistic force made up of both career missionaries and up to 10,000 volunteers might be one way in which Southern Baptists could share the gospel with more of the world's people, R. Keith Parks believes.

Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, suggested the idea in a progress report at the board's September meeting. Since February he has been leading board trustees and staff toward a new level of world evangelization strategy planning.

By the October meeting, Parks said, he hopes to report "some progress" on any organizational changes that may be needed to share the gospel more effectively. Specific recommendations will be made in December.

Parks said a mobile career missionary evangelistic force would be capable of moving quickly to take advantage of opportune times when people in some areas are most open to the gospel message.

"Additionally," he asked, "why couldn't there be 10,000 volunteers who were trained in cross-cultural communication—maybe with at least one language—ready, willing annually to sacrifice themselves and their resources to be a part of a highly mobile force to move across this world in the name of Jesus Christ?"

Such a group, Parks said, "would be a force to be reckoned with in our world."

In seeking new ways to share the gospel with all people, Parks emphasized that the board will never abandon its basic thrust of appointing career missionaries who "incarnate" the gospel of Jesus Christ by learning the language and customs of the people and planting their lives for long periods of time in one country or area.

By the year 2000 Southern Baptists hope to have 5,000 such career missionaries in 125 countries. But these 125 countries, Parks noted, represent only slightly more than half the nations of the world. At least half of the other 115 to 118 countries, under present circumstances, would not allow missionaries to live there and preach the gospel, he noted.

To reach all the world's people, Parks said, the board must explore other means of witness, including a strategy for penetrating these places where normal missionary work is impossible. Only recently, he said, has he felt that he should pray for people in Mecca, the Muslims' holy city, where signs prohibit the entry of Christians and dogs.

"I do not believe God has yet said, 'Don't be concerned about the hard places,'" Parks said.

Southern Baptists also must escalate development of urban strategies, he pointed out, and seek ways to work with other evangelistic groups, "so that we can know what they're doing."

"We do not have the time or the luxury to continue thinking of the world as the private bailiwick of Southern Baptists," he warned. "God has never limited himself to one group. We must not simply duplicate what others are doing but work in connection with others if we are to reach this world in our day."

To provide leadership for worldwide strategy planning, the board hopes to free up some of its creative administrators from normal administrative routine. Parks said many decisions now referred to the home office or to the trustees might be handled effectively by the missionaries themselves through their field organizations.

The missions leader said Southern Baptists also must realize that "we cannot win the world without it having a personal impact on how we live and what happens to our own families."

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"Until we have a consuming passion to reach this world that causes us to budget differently, to live differently, to give differently, until we reach a point of being willing to sacrifice, we will not be the people that God is calling us to be," Parks declared.

Parks praised the trustees' plans for a prayer retreat preceding their October board meeting. He identified prayer as the vital "first step" toward any effort to reach the world for Christ and called on all Southern Baptist churches to set aside a special time of "compassionate intercession" at least monthly to pray "that Southern Baptists would be revived, renewed and recommitted to the task of reaching this world for Jesus Christ."

Chairman Robert E. Smith of Weslaco, Texas, announcing plans for the prayer retreat, stressed the importance of the board acting "in one accord" and said that "the only way you get to one accord is to pray to it."

In another action, the board gave notice of plans to change its bylaws to conform to Virginia corporate law, which no longer requires that salaried officers be elected each year. Under the old law, the board's chief executive, treasurer and assistant recording secretary have been elected each April when the trustee chairman and other officers were elected. If the board bylaw change is approved in October, this no longer will be necessary.

The change has nothing to do with convention politics, board officials said, because the bylaw change has been under consideration for some time.

The Sept. 8-10 meeting featured appointment of 21 new missionaries in a service at Bethany Place Baptist Church in Richmond, Va. Two former missionaries were reappointed.

Special guests for the meeting were 78 Woman's Missionary Union state executives and presidents, along with their national leaders, and members of the board's National Development Council. The council seeks to promote foreign missions awareness among those capable of giving over and above the contributions they would normally make through their churches.

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Home Mission Board Elects
New Staff, Missionaries

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ATLANTA (BP)—The executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board elected a new associate vice president, a new assistant director in the special mission ministries department and appointed 35 missionaries during its September meeting.

Margrette Stevenson, director of the board's personnel division for the past four years, was promoted to a new position as associate vice president in the board's services section, effective Oct. 1. The new position was created by board action in August.

Stevenson, a native of Texas, has been a member of the board staff 11 years. Prior to election as director of the personnel division in 1982, she was director of the board's business services division and director of payroll and employee benefits.

Previously she was on the staff of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board in Dallas and several churches in Texas and Oklahoma. She is a graduate of Southern Methodist University, Dallas; and has done additional study at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and Dallas Business College.

The executive committee also elected Valerie J. Hardy, currently minister to youth at St. John's Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., as assistant director of the agency's department of special mission ministries, effective Oct. 1.

Hardy will succeed Esther Burroughs, who has become a national consultant for the Home Mission Board on women in evangelism. Hardy, a native of Oklahoma, has been youth minister for churches in Wichita, Kan.; Arkadelphia, Ark., and Louisville, Ky. She also has been director of weekday activities for First Baptist Church, New Albany, Ind., and a psychiatric aide for a hospital in Louisville, Ky.

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In other actions, the executive committee elected Carl Savell, director of the board's interfaith witness department, to a new position as national consultant for interfaith witness. Savell, a former pastor in Jackson, Miss., will move from Atlanta to set up an office at his home in Jackson, effective October 1.

In other personnel matters, the board appointed 15 new missionaries, eight missionary associates, and 12 church planter apprentices; and approved financial aid to 79 mission pastors, language pastors, and other field personnel in cooperation with state Baptist conventions.

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Foreign Board Adds
St. Martin To List

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Baptist Press
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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has transferred a missionary couple to a new mission field, St. Martin. The action brings to 107 the number of countries and geographical entities where Southern Baptist missionaries work.

Missionaries Bill and Elba Womack have moved to the Caribbean island to start Baptist churches.

St. Martin, located about 150 miles east of Puerto Rico, has a population of 30,000 people. The southern half of the island is governed by the Netherlands Antilles; the northern half is a dependency of Guadeloupe, an overseas department of France. The Womacks will begin work among primarily English-speaking people in the southern area.

The Womacks, both of Fredericktown, Mo., formerly worked in Antigua and Barbados. He was president and a professor at Barbados Baptist College from 1973 until this year.

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(Map mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.)

Honeycutt Asks Seminar
To Be Committed To Truth

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—"There are few more dangerous individuals in society than cowardly persons who fear all the truth, lazy persons who are satisfied with half the truth and arrogant persons who believe they know all the truth," Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt told students at the Louisville, Ky., school Sept. 2.

Speaking during a convocation marking the start of the academic year, Honeycutt encouraged Southern Seminary students and faculty to enlarge their vision of God's purpose for their lives and work together with others in accomplishing that plan.

"It is no sign of weakness to say that we need one another," Honeycutt said. "Accomplishing God's purposes always involves partnership."

In a four-part challenge to the seminary community, Honeycutt called on his listeners to affirm the Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture, to live as Christians and affirm their Baptist heritage, to abandon stereotypes and rediscover one another as persons and to embrace the whole of God's truth.

While stressing the important of academic quality, Honeycutt insisted "there is nothing of greater priority for any of us than the Lordship of Jesus Christ. From that fountainhead flow all worthy commitments to which we give our energies."

Because of Southern Seminary's commitment to Scripture, he said, students will be called on "to study and treasure it with appreciation."

Honeycutt encouraged the seminary community to live as Christians both in personal morality and in relationships with others. He gave special emphasis to the need for Christian relationships between ministers.

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"Almost daily I am reminded that we ministers are more critical and harsher in our comments about one another than any other profession," he said, adding, "I cannot imagine a doctor, a dentist, an engineer going into public print to criticize one another in the way in which ministers have done in recent years."

He also encouraged the students and faculty to protect their heritage as Baptists, which he says is "more and more rapidly slipping away."

Asserting there is no conflict between spiritually and intellectual honesty, Honeycutt urged the seminary community to be open to all of God's truth. That includes rejecting the claims of those who believe they have acquired all truth, he added.

"Theological egotists believe that God has not only closed the canon (biblical books) but closed the commentaries, and they are the final arbiters of God's revelation," Honeycutt stressed. He reminded his audience, "None of us knows all the truth. No one knows it all except God."