



BAPTIST PRESS

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September 19, 1986

86-136

**\$5,000 Taken In Robbery
Of Missionary Couple**

OWERRI, Nigeria (BP)—About \$5,000 was taken from Southern Baptist missionaries Urban and Loretta Green in a robbery reported earlier this month.

The loss is among additional details that John Mills, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board director for West Africa, has learned of the incident in which the veteran missionaries from Tulsa, Okla., were tied, beaten and robbed in their home in the rural Nigerian town of Owerri.

The missionaries lost \$1,000 in personal money, mostly in U.S. travelers checks. They were able to notify authorities in time to stop payment on the checks.

However, robbers took about \$4,000 in local currency that belonged to the local organization of missionaries and this probably will not be recovered, Mills said. He did not know if the robbers were armed. The Greens had only minor injuries and were not hospitalized. Local police reportedly were working on the case.

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CLC Trustees Reject Move
To Narrow Abortion Stance

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
9/19/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—By the margin of a single vote, trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission Sept. 17 rejected an attempt to tie the agency's literature on abortion to specific SBC resolutions.

Commission members meeting in annual session turned aside a recommendation which would have instructed the staff of the national ethics agency to produce materials allowing for the possibility of abortion only when the physical life of the mother is endangered.

After lengthy discussion, trustees voted 14-13, with two abstentions, to encourage the agency's staff to continue to produce materials "vigorously opposing abortion on demand." The vote was in support of an amendment which deleted language requiring the agency to produce materials more in line with resolutions on abortion passed by messengers to the 1980, 1982 and 1984 Southern Baptist Conventions.

The reference to the SBC resolutions had been added earlier to a staff recommendation outlining plans to produce special materials about what Southern Baptists are doing throughout the country to provide alternatives to abortion. The commission's program committee had voted 6-4 to add the wording after an appeal by Atlanta pastor James Wood that a pamphlet drafted by CLC Executive Director Foy Valentine does not adequately reflect the sentiments in the three convention resolutions.

While the amended version approved by the full commission omitted reference to the specific resolutions, it added materials should take "into serious account resolutions and actions made in recent Southern Baptist Conventions."

The vote on the abortion recommendation was one of three narrow votes reflecting the division between so-called moderate-conservatives and fundamental-conservatives within the SBC in the last eight years.

Commission members voted 16-13 in favor of a recommendation from its executive committee that the agency's Distinguished Service Award for 1987 be presented to Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC

It was the first time in the history of the award that a nominee has been chosen by a split vote. The award, begun in 1965, honors persons who have provided exceptional leadership in Christian ethics. The vote followed discussion in which two new trustees indicated they did not know who Weatherford was and other members questioned the criteria for her selection.

In the meeting's final action, Louisiana Baptist state paper Editor Lynn P. Clayton was elected chairman, defeating Coy Privette of Kannapolis, N.C., in a secret ballot vote, 15 to 13.

Privette, although nominated as vice chairman by the commission's nominating committee, was nominated as chairman from the floor by Fred Lackey, a pastor from Athens, Ala. Following the vote for chairman, Privette was elected vice chairman and Roy Rhodes of Tallahassee, Fla., was re-elected secretary, both without opposition.

In other actions, commission members:

--Adopted a record \$1,006,000 budget for 1986-87, including a 6 percent cost of living adjustment for the agency's staff. The staff did not receive a cost of living adjustment last year.

--Approved plans to broaden the agency's work in the areas of sanctity of human life and world hunger through new resource materials and special conferences. To help finance new initiatives related to the sanctity of human life, trustees voted to request a \$50,000 allocation from the convention through the SBC Executive Committee.

--Heard a report from the commission's search committee indicating that while "several excellent prospects" had been identified and some had been interviewed for the position of executive director, the committee was "not ready to make a recommendation at this time." Search committee Chairman Charles Wade of Arlington, Texas, said he hopes a special called meeting of the commission to consider a nominee can take place "as early as December."

Valentine, citing a health problem related to blockages in his heart, requested in April that a search committee be appointed to begin the process of finding his successor.

--Approved a recommendation committing the agency "to a course of action leading to the establishment of a substantially enlarged presence in Washington." To facilitate the request, the commission voted to ask the SBC Executive Committee to recommend to the convention a \$200,000 increase in the budget allocation for the agency "to make possible a permanent staff presence" in the nation's capital beginning with the 1987-88 budget year.

The action follows growing discussion in recent years calling for a Southern Baptist office in Washington to address social issues beyond the program assignment of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, which deals exclusively with issues related to religious liberty and separation of church and state.

--Approved plans for a CLC-sponsored task force of Baptist leaders to formulate strategies for education and action on AIDS and plans for development of resources dealing with ethical and pastoral issues associated with the dread disease.

--Heard a report about all-time high distribution of ethics resources to Southern Baptist churches, up more than 50 percent over last year.

In the meeting's closing session, the vote on the abortion recommendation culminated a running debate in which a group of commissioners pressed Valentine on his views on abortion and criticized the agency's literature on abortion as inadequate and ambiguous.

In the final debate, Wood argued "more restrictive" language providing instruction to the agency's staff was required because "without it we're not necessarily calling for any change in the material distributed by the commission."

In response, Valentine said he was willing to work with any commission members "who would like to improve" the agency's literature on abortion. One of the pamphlets in question, he pointed out, already has been revised several times.

Valentine said he believes he and the trustees "are more agreed than disagreed on the sanctity of human life" and urged the commission to focus on "those things we all can agree on."

Nashville, Tenn., pastor David George concurred, saying, "I hate to see us have a shootout when we are growing toward a moral consensus."

Harry Lane, pastor from Eutawville, S.C., voiced support for Wood's recommendation. "The perception in the convention which has caused these resolutions to surface year after year is that the commission has been unresponsive on this issue," he said.

In the earlier split vote on the Distinguished Service Award, Chairman Wade admitted he was caught off guard. After Wade presented the nomination, Curtis Caine, a layman from Jackson, Miss., said he did not "know who in the world" Weatherford was. Layman Gary Crum of Washington, D.C., requested resumes on future nominees be sent in advance to commission members. "I'm sure it's my fault," he said, "but I don't know her (Weatherford)."

Wade apologized for not sending information in advance, saying, "I'll confess, the thought that someone would not know Carolyn Weatherford just never entered my mind."

Alma Ruth Morgan of Bartlesville, Okla., said that while she was "certainly for the WMU," she questioned the timing of the award since Weatherford "has spoken out at the SBC Forum and other places" and has supported the idea of women in ministry. The (SBC) Forum, an event held prior to the Southern Baptist Convention, is commonly identified with moderate-conservatives as an alternative to the SBC Pastor's Conference.

The vote on Weatherford's nomination was taken by secret ballot over the objection of Rhodes, who said in all his years on the commission "I have never been asked to vote other than by looking across the table at the others voting."

When the vote was announced, Wade offered "the opportunity" for the trustees to approve Weatherford's nomination by acclamation, but no motion was offered.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Christian Life Commission.

Georgians Move To 50-50
On Cooperative Program

Baptist Press
9/19/86

ATLANTA (BP)—The Georgia Baptist Convention has become the third state body in the Southern Baptist Convention to divide its Cooperative Program receipts on a 50-50 basis with Southern Baptist causes.

The convention's executive committee has voted to recommend a 1987 Cooperative Program budget of \$26,946,000, an increase of 12.08 percent over the 1986 budget. The budget is subject to final approval by the Georgia convention, which meets in annual session in Marietta, Nov. 10-12.

The Cooperative Program is the SBC unified budget that finances missions, evangelism and education endeavors worldwide. Funds are sent from churches to state conventions, which retain a portion for use in their states and send the rest on to SBC causes. Florida and Oklahoma Baptists previously have gone to 50-50 Cooperative Program allocations.

Georgia's 1987 budget allocates 50 percent of its total, or \$13,473,000, to SBC causes. Georgia causes will get 42.11 percent. The remaining 7.89 percent will go to the support section of the budget, which includes administrative and promotional funds that jointly promote state and SBC ministries.

James N. Griffith, executive-treasurer of the Georgia executive committee, said: "Historically, Georgia Baptists have been unselfish in sharing with Southern Baptists. They are only the third state to move to a true 50-50 division with SBC causes.... I appreciate the faithfulness of Georgia Baptists. It is a time for rejoicing."

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In other executive committee action, members voted to recommend that Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon, Ga., be allowed to move from two-year junior college status to four-year senior college status.

Brewton-Parker President Lynn Holmes pointed out the junior college now has almost 1,300 students, doubling enrollment figures for 1978.

The four-year status for Brewton-Parker must be approved by the convention in November and by the accreditation committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. That group is expected to sanction the Brewton-Parker change in December.

The Georgia executive committee also voted to sell Watkins Memorial Hospital and Gilmer Nursing Home in Ellijay, Ga., to the locally owned Habersham Group. Georgia Baptist Medical Center in Atlanta bought the Ellijay medical facilities in 1982 but has been losing money there every year. Losses and debts now total almost \$3 million dollars. Purchase price for the Ellijay facilities is \$3 million. Any profit will be returned to the Habersham Group.

The Georgia executive committee also voted to accept title to historic property in Penfield, Ga., from Mercer University. Mercer was started at Penfield in 1833 and moved to Macon in 1971.

The Georgia executive committee also voted to create a new Historical Commission for the state convention, to include 15 members. It voted to enlarge its Education Commission from seven to nine members. And it voted to make a feasibility study of starting more homes for the elderly in Georgia. The Georgia convention already operates three homes for the elderly in metropolitan Atlanta and one in Waycross.

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OBU Athlete Loses
Leg To Cancer

By Leanne Lewis

Baptist Press
9/19/86

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)—Courage, inner strength and faith in God have helped Lynda Ward keep a positive outlook on life despite losing her left leg to cancer.

During the summer, Oklahoma Baptist University's freshman basketball recruit from Pryor, Okla., was bothered by a constant pain and swelling in her left leg. Doctors thought it was a torn cartilage or a stress fracture.

When the leg did not heal, Ward had it checked again on Sept. 2. This time doctors diagnosed bone cancer and told her the leg must be amputated.

Surgery was scheduled immediately, but during pre-operative testing a mass of nodules was detected in Ward's lungs. Doctors feared the cancer already had spread to other parts of her body, so they performed a lung biopsy.

Results of the biopsy showed the mass was benign, and surgery to amputate her leg was rescheduled for Sept. 16 at Oklahoma Children's Memorial Medical Center. She is recovering from the surgery now and will begin chemotherapy treatments in about a month.

Throughout the sudden life-changing situation, Ward has maintained a cheery disposition and a trust in God for what lies ahead.

"At first I screamed and said, 'Why me?' I asked, 'What can I do? What happens now? Will I die?' But I think God has great plans for me and everything will go great," she says.

"Being a Christian has helped me tremendously to face the fact that the good will turn out. I see everything positively. If I get down on myself, I read the Bible and it explains things to me. I have so much faith (in God). I trust him and know he'll help me. I always think of that saying that 'Things are impossible for man but possible through Christ.'"

She cited Philippians 4:13 as her favorite verse of Scripture and added, "That's my whole life. That's why he gives us faith, because it strengthens us."

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Ward had aspirations of playing basketball professionally and dreamed of playing in the Olympics. She received invitations to the Olympic Sports Festival trials in Jacksonville, Fla., and an all-star camp in Indiana last summer. Only the best basketball players in the nation are invited to these events, said Oklahoma Baptist women's basketball coach Journey Beard.

Ward's ultimate goal now is to coach basketball, she says, adding, "I'm not handicapped and I never will be."

Ward's scoring average of 16.9 points per game during her senior year at Pryor High School made her a highly recruited player, but the 6-2 post player chose Oklahoma Baptist because of the friendliness of the people, especially the women's basketball coaches, she notes.

"The Lord guided me here because he knew something was going to happen. He put me in a place to give me strength for this obstacle," she insists.

She says she plans to complete her degree at Oklahoma Baptist, which will continue to provide her with scholarship assistance.

In the few weeks she has been at school, she already has made many friends, evidenced by the dozens of flowers, cards and stuffed animals in her hospital room.

"I'm outgoing," she says. "I love to talk and laugh. I love to be happy. I go up to people on campus and say, 'Hey, haven't we met?' Even if we haven't, we are all a part of a family. We are so much alike."

Although she has applied for government medical assistance, she has no insurance to cover medical costs because her father is disabled and her mother is unemployed.

Ward's mother, Cheryl, said First National Bank in Pryor has set up a trust fund, and friends and former co-workers have sent money to help with expenses.

Ward's story is being publicized around the state. Producers at KTVY Channel 4's "PM Magazine" in Oklahoma City learned of her bout with cancer and taped a segment which is to air Sept. 22 at 6:30 p.m. The Oklahoma University football team autographed a football and sent it to her, and friends at Oklahoma Baptist got together and bought her a large stuffed bison, the school's mascot.

"The support is one of a kind," she says. "So many special family and friends have helped. It's just neat. Their prayers are going to be answered. Their thoughts have lifted my spirits."

Just as people have been an encouragement to her, Ward has supported others in the hospital by befriending and visiting patients on her wing. She encourages those who are facing major obstacles to keep their faith and trust in Christ and remain positive.

"There's no negative to it," she insists. "Sure, your moods will change, but if you trust in (God) your spirits will be lifted. Never give in. The Lord' always beside you."

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(BP) photos available upon request from Oklahoma Baptist University Public Relations Office. Leanne Lewis is a newswriter in the public relations office at OBU.



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