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September 26, 1986

86-141

Committee Named
To Study BJCPA

By Dan Martin

N-CO

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A seven-member "special fact-finding committee" to study the relationship of the Southern Baptist Convention to the nation's oldest religious liberty watchdog group was elected during the September meeting of the SBC Executive Committee.

The committee was named to study a motion made during the 1986 annual meeting of the SBC in Atlanta, which called for immediately severing the SBC's 50-year relationship with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a group of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada which has as its primary task representing the Baptist position on First Amendment issues.

The Southern Baptist Convention relates to the Baptist Joint Committee through the SBC Public Affairs Committee, whose 15 members also serve on the 42-member BJCPA board.

The 1986 motion, made by Dan Daniels of Mobile, Ala., called for discontinuing the SBC's financial contribution to the Baptist Joint Committee "at the first fiscal opportunity." It also called for allocating "an equal amount" to "establish an exclusive Southern Baptist presence in Washington for the purpose of more truly reflecting our views."

Messengers voted 12,001 (55.6 percent) to 9,556 (44.3 percent) to refer the matter to the Executive Committee. Convention procedures specify that matters referred to the Executive Committee or other convention entities must be reported back at the subsequent annual meeting.

In the action approved during the Executive Committee meeting, the seven-member committee was instructed to make an interim report to the February 1987 meeting of the committee and a final report at a pre-SBC meeting, June 15, 1987. The action will be reported at the annual meeting, June 16-18 in St. Louis.

The committee is chaired by Gary Young, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Phoenix, Ariz. Vice chairman is James Yates, pastor of First Baptist Church, Yazoo City, Miss., and secretary is Carolyn Miller, a homemaker from Huntsville, Ala. Other members are Frank Ingraham, an attorney from Nashville, Tenn.; Frank Lady, an attorney from Jonesboro, Ark.; Paul Pressler, a judge from Houston, and Darrell Robinson, pastor of Dauphine Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.

Also on the committee as ex officio members are David Maddox, a real estate developer from Fullerton, Calif., chairman of the Executive Committee, and James Jones, pastor of Campbellsville (Ky.) Baptist Church, chairman of the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee.

In addition to creating the study committee, the Executive Committee also instructed the seven-member body to study the "size and/or constituency" of the Public Affairs Committee. The motion was referred to the Executive Committee by the 1986 Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees, which did not explain its reason for requesting the study.

The PAC is composed of the current SBC president, nine executives of SBC agencies and five at-large members. In addition to the president, seven agency leaders serve by virtue of office: the chief executives of the Executive Committee, Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, Baptist Sunday School Board, Christian Life Commission, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood Commission. Two other agency executives also are elected to the 15-member body.

This is the fourth consecutive year criticism of the BJCPA has come before the Executive Committee. In 1983, the the committee encouraged BJCPA "to be sensitive to the concerns of Southern Baptists"; in 1984, it declined to defund the group; in 1985, it found the establishment of an exclusive Southern Baptist office in Washington "does not appear practicable."

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In addition, the BJCPA survived a 1984 effort by an Executive Committee member—Ed Drake of Dallas—to defund it. During the 1984 annual meeting, messengers voted 5,854 (51.6 percent) to 5,480 (48.3 percent) to continue to fund the BJCPA through the Public Affairs Committee.

Although Daniels' motion called for severing SBC ties, Young, chairman of the seven-member committee, thinks the options are not limited to considering ways of breaking the relationship and of establishing a Southern Baptist presence in the nation's capital.

"I see us as having a scope ranging from abandonment of the Baptist Joint Committee to learning more and enhancing our work with the committee," Young said.

Following adjournment of the Executive Committee, seven of the members met for a brief organizational meeting. Pressler and Robinson did not attend because of prior commitments. The committee discussed possible ways of going about their assignment and decided to meet again Oct. 3-4 in Dallas.

Young told the committee he hopes they will be able to adopt a work plan and time schedule at the end of the Dallas meeting, make assignments for members to gather specific information and come up with a time schedule for the work. He added the committee may have another meeting in Washington prior to its preliminary report in order to meet with BJCPA directors and staff and to talk with other religious groups, legislators and government officials about the work of the Baptist Joint Committee.

Young also noted the study committee will need to look at the "scope of the work" of the Baptist Joint Committee and commented there "appears to be a lot of misunderstanding" about the program assignment of the Washington-based group. It was noted much of the criticism of the BJCPA during the annual meeting debate centered on abortion, an issue with which the committee does not deal.

Young also asked that any comments or information from Southern Baptists concerning the work of the study committee be directed either to him at 3100 W. Camelback, Phoenix, AZ 85017 or to Yates at P.O. Box 12, Yazoo City, MS 39194.

Although there was no discussion when the Executive Committee adopted the recommendation, it was fully reviewed by the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee. Discussion favored creation of the special committee, but most of the talk concerned the membership of the fact-finding body and whether it would be "fair and balanced."

During its morning session, the subcommittee gave preliminary approval to creating the committee, but delayed final action until the afternoon session where Maddox made public the names of those he had selected for membership on the committee.

When the recommendation came to the plenary session, it said Maddox "nominated" the committee members, who were "confirmed" by the subcommittee and recommended to the entire Executive Committee.

Young said "because of the sensitivity" of the issue and the committee assignment, he would not have served without action by the entire Executive Committee, even though appointments generally are made by the chairman and do not require ratification by the entire body.

The issue of a Southern Baptist presence in Washington also came up when Foy Valentine, executive director-treasurer of the SBC Christian Life Commission, requested an additional \$200,000 in funding "to make possible a permanent Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission office and staff presence in Washington."

Valentine told Baptist Press Christian Life Commission directors adopted a motion requesting the additional funding for a Washington office when they met for their annual meeting Sept. 17.

The Executive Committee heard budget requests from all national entities during its September meeting. The Program and Budget Subcommittee will meet in January for further hearings and to plan a national Cooperative Program Allocation Budget. The Executive Committee will take up the matter of a budget--and with it the CLC's request for funds to establish a Washington office--when it convenes again Feb. 16-18, 1987.

Rogers Cites Scripture
As 'The Issue' For SBC

By Marv Knox

N-CO

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Scripture remains "the issue" facing Southern Baptists, Adrian Rogers told denominational newspaper editors during a dinner/news conference in Nashville, Tenn.

Rogers, president of the 14.5-million-member Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., met with editors of the convention's state papers during the September meeting of the SBC Executive Committee.

Scripture "is without error historically, philosophically, theologically and scientifically," he affirmed, promising to use his appointment powers to install only Baptists who see the Bible as he sees it.

Asked about issues facing the convention, Rogers said: "The issue with me is almost one issue: What is Scripture? There are a lot of side issues, but frankly I believe that if we can settle that one issue, that's the log causing the logjam."

The "logjam" is a seven-year-old theological/political SBC controversy which surfaced in the denomination when Rogers first was elected president in 1979. Rogers was the first of four SBC presidents elected with the support of people who wish to turn the convention in a more conservative direction. He served the 1979-80 term and then was elected to a one-year term this summer.

The presidency has been at the center of the controversy because of its powers. The president appoints the Committee on Committees, which nominates the Committee on Boards, which nominates trustees for all national SBC agencies and institutions. Rogers also is a member of the 15-month-old SBC Peace Committee, appointed to seek solutions to the denominational controversy.

He presented a history lesson concerning a key phrase in the SBC's statement of faith as he explained to the editors why he feels understanding of Scripture is central to the conflict. He focused on Article I of "The Baptist Faith and Message" which deals with Scriptures and notes the Bible has "...truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter."

Rogers said the phrase originated "before the higher critical method of biblical study was even known" and consequently before the inerrancy of Scripture was called into question. He added the phrase was picked up by Southern Baptists in both the 1925 and 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message" statements. He further noted Herschel Hobbs, who chaired the 1963 statement committee, has at least twice since "said this statement means all Scripture...not that the Scripture contains the Word of God, but that it is the Word of God."

He added messengers to the SBC annual meeting in Dallas in 1985 "uproariously affirmed" such an interpretation of the statement. "We don't have to guess about it," he said. "There's a history. That's what the statement means in the hearts and minds of most Southern Baptists. I know that I know that's true."

"I think that is the issue. I think those who teach in our seminaries and those who serve us in our agencies, they ought to believe and teach what the rank and file of us believe who pay the bills. I think it's only fair. That is not using that statement as a creed, because we're not telling them what they have to believe. They can believe anything they want to. We're just telling them what they have to believe if they work for us."

Rogers stressed his commitment to his belief: "Because I believe so much in the priesthood of the believer and our accountability to God alone, I would never, I hope till I die, compromise conviction on the altar of cooperation. This is not to say I do not believe in cooperation, but there are certain things in my life that are non-negotiable.... One day I have to report in to our Lord, and so I'm not going to compromise convictions that I hold deeper than life. And one of those convictions is with the Word of God, and the other is the God of that Word. It's hard for me to separate the two."

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When an editor noted the Peace Committee had determined the controversy is political as well as theological, Rogers said: "I can tell you, from my perspective it is not political. I think from most responsible conservatives I know it is not political. The Peace Committee...said the issue is theological, and the political is a spin-off."

Rogers vowed to leave politics out of his appointments this year. "I do not intend to make appointments that are overtly political," he said. "I'm going to try to make appointments from those that I consider to be the best Southern Baptists."

"The Baptist Faith and Message" statement, especially its section on the Scriptures, will be central for Rogers' appointments. "If he doesn't believe that, I wouldn't appoint him," the president said. "I would make appointments from people who hold that kind of theological perspective, and so obviously, that would exclude some people, but it would not exclude people on a political basis. It would exclude them on a theological basis, and theology is only one issue. I want to appoint people who would be the best Baptists, not only theologically, but cooperatively and intellectually and spiritually."

Rogers also said he would not appoint persons to the Committee on Committees who, although believing as he does, would appoint to the Committee on Boards people who believe differently. "I don't see that as political," he said. "I see that as consistent."

The night before he met with the editors, Rogers addressed the Executive Committee and several hundred state and national denominational workers. He noted several "good things" can be said about the convention. There is increased prayer; Southern Baptists are evaluating themselves; they are restating their belief in the Bible; some churches are ready to increase their gifts to denominational causes; and "we have people talking and meeting together who have not met and talked before."

He also said Southern Baptists have three common characteristics which bind them: "We have a common experience; we've all been born again. We have a common faith; we believe certain things. And we have a common task, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ."

But he preached on "what Southern Baptists need now...love," drawing from the passage in the Gospel of John which describes Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. He explained Jesus embodied selfless, steadfast, serving, sanctifying love, adding Southern Baptists, too, need to embody that kind of love.

The "hidden lesson" of the story, Rogers said, is "spiritually renewing, spiritually refreshing,...forgiving."

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Baptist-Jewish Group
Urges End To Terrorism

By Jim Newton

N-HMB
Baptist Press
9/26/86

ATLANTA (BP)—Southern Baptists and Jews attending a Baptist-Jewish conference on family problems lamented terrorist attacks on a Pan Am airliner in Pakistan and a synagogue in Turkey, and called for "quick and sure justice" for the terrorists.

"These terrible acts are expressions of impersonal hate brought to a focus in the latter case (the synagogue in Istanbul) upon the Jews," said George C. Sheridan, northeast regional director for the interfaith witness department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Sheridan's statement was approved by about 25 Jewish and Southern Baptist participants in the conference, although no official action was taken. The two-day conference was sponsored by the interfaith witness department of the SBC Home Mission Board and the Synagogue Council of America, a national coordinating agency for Conservative, Orthodox and Reform rabbinic and congregational organizations.

Although most of the conference at Emory University was devoted to scholarly papers and discussion of problems facing Baptist and Jewish families in America, Sheridan drew the most enthusiastic response from participants with his closing statement condemning the recent terrorist acts in Istanbul and Karachi.

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"Religion must not be used as a ruse for acts of terrorism," the statement said. "It is not love of God nor of humanity that impells terrorists to strike. It is hatred and evil, and from a religious standpoint, unrighteousness."

Insisting that these acts of terrorism must stop, the Baptists and Jews present agreed "the terrorists must be brought to quick and clear justice. The value of the rule of law and the intolerability of chaos must be communicated strongly," they said.

Sheridan said that since the terrorist attacks, many Baptists in their worship services and in private devotions had prayed for comfort for the grieving families of the victims of both terrorist attacks, for the healing of those injured, and for "a change of heart of all those who consider such unjust and violent acts acceptable."

During the opening session of the conference, Balfour Bricker, rabbi for the Stephen S. Wise Free Synagogue on the west side of Manhattan, New York City, said there is serious and severe crisis in the American family that is as crucial as are the issues of abortion, prayer in public schools, alcoholism, capital punishment and terrorism.

Bricker, co-chairman of the Synagogue Council of America interreligious affairs committee, criticized addresses by a Baptist pastor and a Jewish sociologist, saying he did not feel their overview presentations addressed the issues strongly enough. "From your presentations, I don't think that Jewish and Baptist religion is relevant to the problems in society," he said.

Chaim Waxman, sociology professor at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., said research indicates Jewish families are not experiencing nearly as high a divorce rate as the national average. "Compared to other family groups, Jewish families are much stronger than those of other religious groups in America." Waxman and Bricker agreed family life is central to the Jewish religion and heritage. "The family has held together the bricks of our being as Jews from the beginning of time," said Bricker.

Charles Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, said Baptists have not had the emphasis on family identity that compares to the Jewish family identity described by Waxman and Bricker. Wade said Baptist family life often reflects trends in the culture, but Baptist family life also sometimes helps to shape the culture in areas where Baptists are dominant.

John C. Howell, professor of Christian ethics at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., offered five possible future trends in American family life, saying he has hope current trends toward the breakdown of the family will be reversed.

Howell said he agrees with futurists who are convinced Americans view the family "as the most significant and lasting reality in their lives," and therefore believe the family can be revitalized.

Diana S. Richmond Garland, social work professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Carver School of Social Work in Louisville, Ky., urged Baptist family ministries to be concerned with the social issues that create the stresses and strains which result in the "headaches" of family troubles. She said family ministries should underscore the significance of family life education as a critical factor in addressing the issues of social action and advocacy in behalf of families. "Families can become agents of social justice and units of ministry that expand the ministry of the individuals," she said.

Walter Wurzbarger, rabbi of Congregation Sharrei Tefilah in Lawrence, N.Y., brought the closing message, emphasizing the significance of the conference. Although there have been previous jointly-sponsored Baptist and Jewish dialogues and conferences, this conference included the broadest possible representation of Jews in America, said Wurzbarger, chairman of the Synagogue Council of America interreligious affairs committee.

"We hope this exchange of views and experiences on the family will develop ties and deeper understanding between Jewish and Baptist religious leaders through reinforcing our attention on mutual concerns," said Wurzbarger. "The church and the synagogue must re-assert their central position in guiding family life, especially in providing guidelines to practical problems that face us every day," he said.

Executive Committee Proposes
\$140 Million CP Goal For 1987-88

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee approved a proposed 1987-88 SBC Cooperative Program budget goal of \$140 million during its September meeting in Nashville, Tenn.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' combined budget that finances missions, educational and evangelistic endeavors worldwide. Funds are given by members to their churches and then channeled through state Baptist conventions to national and international Baptist causes.

The proposed 1987-88 Cooperative Program goal will be voted upon by messengers to the SBC annual meeting next summer in St. Louis.

The \$140 million goal is 2.94 percent larger than the \$136 million goal for the 1986-87 fiscal year which begins Oct. 1. The overall goal is broken down into three parts:

-- A basic operating budget of \$132 million, which will provide operating funds for 20 entities that receive Cooperative Program funds. This figure represents a 4.25 percent increase over the 1986-87 basic operating budget of \$126,630,000.

The beneficiary entities that receive Cooperative Program funds have asked for almost \$140.1 million for their 1987-88 operating budgets. The Executive Committee's program and budget subcommittee will meet in January to reconcile the requests with the overall goal and will recommend specific institutional allocations at the committee's February meeting.

-- A capital needs budget of \$6,450,000, which already has been approved as part of the convention's 1985-90 capital needs budget.

-- Phase II of the basic operating budget, \$1,550,000, which will be allocated to the 20 recipient entities if the other two portions of the budget are completed.

Books will close on the 1985-86 Cooperative Program budget Sept. 30. That budget's goal is \$130 million.

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Committee Revises Bylaw,
Declines Other Changes

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
9/26/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention has voted to recommend a revision of the convention bylaw concerning nomination of trustees to the national agencies, but declined to recommend other changes which would have instructed the committee to seek information on the potential candidates' stance on biblical inerrancy.

During its September meeting, the Executive Committee took four actions on the Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees. All of the recommendations must be reported to messengers at the annual meeting, and revisions must be adopted during the 1987 SBC.

The first action was a recommendation to change the name of the Committee on Boards to the Nominating Committee.

The second was to pass a revision of Bylaw 16, which regulates the work of the 54-member body which nominates persons to serve on the boards of trust of the 20 national agencies of the SBC, including the six seminaries. The revision does not change the way in which the committee functions, but primarily deals with the name change, which more accurately reflects the purpose of the committee.

In the third action, the committee declined to act on a recommendation from the 1985-86 Committee on Boards, which recommended that the Executive Committee "advise the next Committee on Boards to secure information regarding the position on the matter of inerrancy of the Scripture on all persons being nominated to serve on the various boards and committees of the Convention."

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In its plenary session, the Executive Committee voted only to "suggest to the committee that it has the privilege to request any information it desires."

John Sullivan of Shreveport, La., chairman of the bylaws workgroup, who presented the recommendation, said the workgroup decided it did not want to be involved in instructing the nominating committee about how to go about its work of selecting persons to be nominated as trustees of the various entities.

Although some observers saw the action as giving the green light to the nominating committee to question potential trustees about their stance on biblical inerrancy, others, including Sullivan, saw the action as merely declining to put the Executive Committee in the position of "telling the Committee on Boards what it should ask."

"Anyway," Sullivan said, "they already have the privilege of asking for whatever information they want."

The fourth action concerning the Committee on Boards was a refusal to add a second meeting for the group, as had been requested by the 1985-86 committee, which was chaired by Lee Roberts, a Marietta, Ga., businessman. The Executive Committee, instead, suggested that "because of the cost of the request for an additional meeting" the committee be requested "to extend its one meeting, if necessary, instead of having a second meeting."

The Committee on Boards usually meets in early March for a two-day meeting, during which it deals with some 250 nominations, including about 125 re-nominations, to the boards of trust. A smaller group traditionally meets just prior to the annual meeting to make adjustments on the report and to nominate replacements for persons who have died, moved or declined to serve.

Material provided to the Executive Committee indicated the one meeting of the 1985-86 Committee on Boards cost the convention \$28,781.31. The 1984-85 committee meeting totaled \$26,305.07.

The Executive Committee also referred to a special study committee on messenger participation a motion which would have required that messengers to the annual meeting be at least 13 years of age.

Initially, the recommendation had been that the Executive Committee decline to recommend changing the Constitution. Sullivan said the bylaws workgroup felt the question of the age of messengers "is a local church matter."

Ed Drake, an attorney from Dallas, said he believes other provisions for messenger qualifications already are set forth in the Constitution and moved that the Executive Committee "recommend that messengers be 16 years of age, not 13."

During the discussion, Sullivan said the bylaws workgroup and convention arrangements and administration subcommittee were uncomfortable with the change "feeling this is strictly a matter for the local church to decide." He added that if the Convention begins to set the requirements "then it could decide half the messengers should be male and half female, or that half have to be clergy and half laypersons. To me, it is strictly a matter of polity."

Robert Goode of Greensboro, N.C., told the group: "I feel uncomfortable with anyone telling the local church what to do."

The matter finally was referred to a special study committee by a large majority.

The committee also declined to recommend several changes in the constitution which would have limited the powers and rights of the SBC president. All of the suggested changes were included in motions presented at the 1985 annual meeting of the SBC, and were referred to the Executive Committee for study.

The first would have prohibited a previous president from being elected to the post in subsequent years. The second would have specified that no one could be an officer of the convention whose church does not give at least 10 percent of its total offerings as undesignated offerings to the Cooperative Program.

Still another would have required persons to submit potential nominations at least 30 days in advance of the convention.

A fourth was proposed by Russell Bennett of Louisville, Ky., who came to the Executive Committee to plead his case. Bennett's proposal would have required the president to make his nominations to the Committee on Committees from a pool of four persons suggested by state convention presidents.

In response to a motion referred to it for study, the Executive Committee declined to recommend that a special world hunger offering be established as part of the regular order of business at the annual meetings.

The action, however, encouraged "churches to participate in the convention emphasis of World Hunger Day" and further noted "any special offerings be discouraged during annual meetings."

Another motion, which instructed the convention to provide adequate child care, the committee noted "that due to the limitation of space in some of the convention centers in which the annual meeting is held, it is not always possible to provide adequate space for all child care requirements."

The committee was told child care was provided for 250 children at the 1985 annual meeting, and for 240 children at the 1986 annual meeting. Seventy-five children could not be accommodated in 1985 and about 125 last year.

The Executive Committee said it will encourage local arrangements committees to "continue to provide the maximum amount of child care possible," and requested that the Baptist state newspapers publish information concerning child care "as early as practical so that messengers can make adequate arrangements."

In another matter, Harold C. Bennett, president of the Executive Committee, briefed the committee on his efforts to find a replacement for Wilmer C. Fields, vice president for public relations and director of Baptist Press.

Under Executive Committee bylaws, senior staff members of the Executive Committee are elected by the entire committee, upon the recommendation of the president.

Bennett noted he has started a file of the names of persons who have been suggested to succeed Fields, who will retire March 3, 1987. "It is my urgent desire to follow God's leadership, and I am praying that one of these (persons) will rise to the surface."

He said he is working with the six officers of the Executive Committee in the selection process and encouraged committee members to send their suggestions to him.

"It is my sincere prayer that in February of 1987, I will have a recommendation to present to you to fill this position," he said.

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Texas Governor Tacitly
Approves Gambling Bill

By Ken Camp

N-Texas

Baptist Press
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DALLAS (BP)—Texas Governor Mark White has allowed to pass into law without his signature a bill that legalizes pari-mutuel gambling in Texas, pending a statewide referendum in November 1987.

The bill, which opens the door to betting on horse races throughout Texas and on greyhound races in three Gulf Coast counties, was passed by the Texas House and Senate in their first special session of the summer. White had until midnight, Sept. 24, either to veto the bill, sign it or allow it to pass into law without his signature.

White's approval of the pari-mutuel bill means the issue now is scheduled to appear on a statewide ballot in November 1987. If gambling wins on the general ballot, pari-mutuel betting then must gain voter approval on a local-option basis to be legal in individual counties.

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However, gambling opponents have pointed out the law could come into effect without the referendum if courts rule the referendum illegal. Some legal authorities maintain the referendum is an unconstitutional intrusion on the Legislature's authority to make laws in Texas.

A special statement issued by the Texas Christian Life Commission expressed disappointment in the governor's tacit approval of the gambling bill. The commission is the moral concerns and social action agency of the Baptist General Convention of Texas that speaks to, but not for, Southern Baptists in Texas.

"The Christian Life Commission is deeply disappointed Gov. White has approved the pari-mutuel gambling bill," said Phil Strickland, director of the commission, who issued the statement. "Although the governor has stated many times that gambling is not in the call of the special session, today he has regretfully made it clear that gambling is indeed part of the special session agenda."

According to White's original statement, the special session of the Legislature was called primarily to consider a temporary sales tax increase to help bridge the state's anticipated \$3.5 billion deficit.

The Christian Life Commission statement noted, "It is disturbing that Gov. White has let a bill become law that is as odious as this one. With no guarantee of a statewide referendum, with inadequate protections against organized crime and with no revenue to help the state's budget crisis, this pari-mutuel bill is a sham through and through."

White had maintained he would not approve any pari-mutuel gambling bill unless it included a statewide referendum, local-option elections and strong safeguards against organized crime.

"By his action," the statement added, "the governor has allowed gambling to hijack the special sessions of 1986. We had hoped the governor would veto this bill rather than allow his name to be associated with pari-mutuel gambling."

"It is unfortunate that Gov. White has allowed this bill to become law. His action will certainly rest with regret on the hearts and minds of thousands of Texans who oppose the state being in the gambling business."

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Nursing Center Congregation Helps
Aged, Handicapped Find Meaning

By Ken Camp

F-Texas

Baptist Press
9/26/86

TEXARKANA, Texas (BP)—A satellite congregation in a Texarkana, Texas, nursing center has a baptism rate surpassing many Baptist churches more than twice its size.

In its first year, Christian Living Bible Fellowship—which averages about 25 in worship attendance—recorded 11 professions of faith, nine baptisms and three additions by letter. Of 11 people baptized by the end of July, nearly half were aged 65 or older.

Christian Living is one of five satellites and three missions sponsored by Rose Hill Baptist Church in Texarkana.

The Christian Living indigenous satellite was the product of a meeting in March of 1985 that included representatives of Independent Living Center and Rose Hill Church. Originally known as Oak Manor Nursing Home, the home had changed ownership, as well as its name and clientele, a short time before that meeting.

Faith Dennis, manager of the center and a member of Rose Hill, believed a complete program of activities at the home should include opportunities for worship and Bible study. She met with Oscar Salazar, minister of missions at Rose Hill Church, and Cassie Hughes, Mission Service Corps volunteer serving as outreach secretary at Rose Hill, to discuss that possibility.

Hughes started Bible study with two residents in May of 1985. Five months later, she was joined by H.E. Snow, a bivocational lay preacher who now leads a Sunday worship service at the center. Both Snow and Hughes also are involved in leading Faithview Bible Fellowship, an indigenous satellite at a Texarkana mobile home park.

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Although it originally was intended to be a retirement center, Independent Living Center changed its direction when a nursing home in Tyler, Texas, closed and many of its young, handicapped residents moved to the center. Today, about half of the center's residents are mentally retarded or physically disabled, and they include Anglos, Blacks and Hispanics.

"It's a unique group," says Snow, noting the residents range in age from their late teens to 102. Ministering to such a diverse group presents special challenges, but about 80 percent of the residents now are involved in either Bible study or worship services.

"I didn't ever think it could be done," he admits. "This is a special work. There are two distinct groups here, but the people fit together unusually well."

One factor contributing to the success of the satellite is Hughes' background. As a 67-year-old retiree, she has a special rapport with the older residents. And as a former occupational therapist, she knows how to deal with the handicapped.

"Thanks to my therapy background, I understand how to cope with the retarded and those with disabilities," she explains. "I really believe that everything I've done up to this point has helped to prepare me for this."

Unlike traditional nursing home ministries, Christian Living Bible Fellowship relies heavily upon the input of its resident members for leadership. Members are being trained to begin teaching the men's and women's Sunday school classes at the center.

"Christian Living is more like a separate entity, not just an extension of Rose Hill," says Salazar. "It is like a mission but with no view in sight of being self-supporting."

Salazar noted an offering is taken weekly at Christian Living, and its members help to support the indigenous satellite. Additionally, Texas Baptists help to support the work through giving to their Cooperative Program unified budget and the Mary Hill Davis Centennial Offering for State Missions.

Both Snow and Hughes agree one of the most satisfying aspects of working with Christian Living Bible Fellowship is seeing growth in Christian maturity among members.

"People who work there say Christian Living Bible Fellowship has changed the attitude at the center. It has been helpful in solving some of the problems between residents," Hughes notes.

"The people are beginning to be involved in self-ministry," adds Snow. "There are problems that come up daily, and Cassie and I can't be around all the time. One lady has taken the responsibility of being kind of a counselor to others."

"There is a scripture in Esther that we refer to a lot at the center. It says, 'Who knows if you have entered the kingdom for such a time as this,'" says Snow. "There is a purpose for the people at the home being there. We want to help them find that purpose."

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Southern Baptist Chaplains
Chosen For Air Force Book

N - HMB

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ATLANTA (BP)—Three Southern Baptist chaplains, including the only Southern Baptist female Air Force chaplain, were featured in a compilation of 28 U.S. Air Force sermons.

David M. Park, from Houston, stationed at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.; Fannalou Guggisberg, from Texas, stationed at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.; and Robert H. Crosby, from Rome, Ga., stationed at Fort Meade AFB, Md., were included in [USO] Best Air Force Sermons, 1985[USO].

The sermons, which were chosen from more than 120 submissions, were preached at Air Force chapels in the United States or overseas locations.

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