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87-20

FMB Retains Name, Elects 9 In Strategy Reorganization

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted Feb. 11 to retain its present name for stateside use but to register a second name, International Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, for operational purposes abroad.

The decision, recommended by a special transition committee, enables the board to maintain the name with which Southern Baptists have strongly identified through the board's 142-year history. But it also provides flexibility that may be needed to operate most effectively overseas, board officials said.

The new name had been recommended in December as part of a major reorganization to prepare for full-scale efforts toward global evangelization.

Moving ahead with all other aspects of the new plan, the board elected seven staff members to top-level positions. They will be members of a new global strategy group that will study ways Southern Baptists can more effectively do their part in taking the gospel to all people of the world.

The board also created a ninth geographic area, dividing Europe and the Middle East, and redrew the lines for the three areas formerly known as Latin America under a new overall region called the Americas.

Elected vice presidents were Isam Ballenger, Europe, Middle East and North Africa; Don Kammerdiener, the Americas; Davis Saunders, Africa; William Wakefield, Asia and the Pacific; and Lewis I. Myers Jr., Cooperative Services International. Cooperative Services was created in April 1985, as the channel through which Southern Baptists can respond to requests and opportunities in countries not open to a traditional missionary approach.

Harlan Spurgeon was elected vice president for Mission Management and Personnel, an expanded administrative role which brings together many of the units formerly under separate overseas and stateside support offices.

Clark Scanlon will be director of Research and Planning, coordinating the fact-gathering and interpretation necessary to shape the denomination's worldwide evangelistic strategy.

President R. Keith Parks will be chairman of the new global strategy group and Executive Vice President William R. O'Brien will be vice chairman.

The board also elected two associate vice presidents who will work under Spurgeon--Thurmon Bryant as associate vice president for missions management and Tim Brendle as associate vice president for personnel.

Parks noted in a report to the board that one of the strengths of the new organization will be the "fusing of functions to emphasize the unity of the entire Richmond staff in support of the total foreign missions effort. There is no real separation of overseas and stateside functions and the new organization will seek to convey that fact more clearly."

Trustees also reorganized their own committee structure to conform to the new regional structure, with new regional committees holding their first meetings in the final hour of the time normally reserved for the board's business session.

The major item discussed at the four meetings related to geographic regions was selection of replacements for the area directors elected to new posts. The new regional vice presidents are writing missionaries in the areas for their suggestions, and Parks said he hopes many of these positions can be filled at the April and May meetings. Under the new plan the area directors will live in one of the countries of their area, moving more decision-making closer to the fields they supervise.

In redrawing the areas of the world to match the scope of its work, the board adopted the term, the Americas, because Canada is now included in the grouping formerly called Latin America. But Parks emphasized that the United States, where the Home Mission Board works, is not part of this area.

Three new areas will constitute the Americas region: Middle America and Canada, Spanish South America (adding Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay to the area presently known as Western South America), and Brazil and the Caribbean.

The other major area of change involves Asia and the Pacific region. East Asia will remain the same, but the other area will be known as Southern Asia and the Pacific, embracing work formerly in South and Southeast Asia. The new title recognizes expansion of work underway in the Pacific islands.

Interpreting the changes, Parks told the board the impact of all the board is doing to reorganize and develop better strategy will ultimately depend upon the prayers of Southern Baptists.

"Praying frees God's power to move the entire effort toward its goal," he said.

He said he is praying that at least 25,000 Southern Baptist churches will join in the "Concerts of Prayer," in which the board has challenged every church to pray especially for world evangelization on the first Sunday of each month.

"Today, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us call on this board, this staff, all the missionaries, our Baptist co-workers around the world, Southern Baptists and all Christians to pay the price (in prayer and commitment) of making the difference between life and death for the multitudes of our earth," he appealed.

Three key executives who have announced plans to retire this year will be part of a staff transitional committee that will assist in interpreting the board's reorganization to staff, missionaries and Southern Baptists and to help adjust policy and procedures to the new structure. John Mills, director for work in West Africa, who will be 65 this year, will join Charles Bryan and Winston Crawley, vice presidents whose retirement plans were announced in December. The three will work with Homer Beaver, who will chair the group as part of his new duties as executive assistant to the president.

General administrative matters will be handled by an Administrative Council headed by Beaver, which will meet quarterly.

In other actions, the board expressed appreciation to Harwood and Louise Cochrane of Rockville, Va., for the gift of all the stock of Hanover Real Estate Corporation. The board voted to dissolve the corporation and should realize approximately \$1.5 million.

Approval was given to begin Southern Baptist missions work in Western Samoa, bringing the number of countries and territories where Southern Baptists have missionaries to 110. The board also appointed 30 new missionaries and reappointed 10.

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

Rogers Undecided
About Second Term

By Ferrell Foster

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Adrian Rogers says he has not decided yet whether he will allow himself to be nominated for a second term as president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

However, the current SBC president said, "Probably at this point I'm more inclined to, than not to. But, that certainly is not settled, by any stretch of the imagination, in my heart and mind. I do realize, however, that I need to make up my mind moderately soon about this," Rogers said.

Rogers' comments came during a news conference at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He was on the campus to preach in the seminary's regular chapel service held Feb. 10.

The pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., said his visit to the seminary had significance only in that "I love and appreciate this seminary, and I'm grateful for the atmosphere on the New Orleans campus and the reverence for the Word of God that is here." Rogers graduated from New Orleans Seminary in 1958 with the bachelor of divinity degree.

During the chapel service, Rogers said, "The key to living the Christian life is knowing who you are in Christ." Once we have accepted who we are in Christ, we are free to accept each other, he said.

"... There's plenty of me to give because Christ is in me, and his love is in me. ... He giveth and giveth and giveth again. And, there's enough in me to share with you and still have all I need.

"I don't have to use you, con you, manipulate you, abuse you, put you down, or brag to you. I can just love you because I know who I am," Rogers said. "Fellowship ... that's what God is aiming at because he has made us acceptable in love."

Rogers, a member of the SBC Peace Committee, was asked during the news conference if he expected the committee to recommend that denominational workers be required to sign a statement of theological orthodoxy.

"No, I don't," Rogers said, "But, I want you to understand I'm speaking very unilaterally there. I don't think the mindset that I read in the Peace Committee is so much of a statement as it is a standard.

"We just want to have a standard toward which we work," he said, adding, "The convention, in toto, must set that standard. And, we have every right to expect those who serve us and receive a salary from us to fairly represent what the constituency wants taught."

Rogers also reiterated his support for the Glorieta Statement made by the presidents of the six SBC-owned seminaries. "The Glorieta Statement said that the Bible is not errant in any area of reality," Rogers said. "Not errant and inerrant are synonymous. ... The second part, in any area of reality, what is reality? Reality is what's real — history, science, philosophy. So, that's a very strong statement."

However, Rogers said, "The problem is at least two of those presidents went back to their constituencies and to their alumni" and qualified what the statement meant.

"Now, if they did not mean that, they should not have said it, and that's the problem, how slippery these things are," Rogers said. "That's what they've been saying the whole time, so why call it a breakthrough? And, if they did mean it, then indeed it was a breakthrough. So, that's where we're having difficulty right now."

Rogers said he anticipates an end to political maneuvering within the convention. "I don't think the Peace Committee will do away with it," he said. "I think that when the issue is settled, that kind of maneuvering will disappear like a dew drop in the desert. It will just evaporate because there will be no need for it.

"I really believe all of the political maneuvering that we see is spawned out of a theological problem and if the theological problem is properly dealt with the political thing will die of itself."

He said "the issue" is the Scripture. "...The issue is not right or left. The issue is not moderate or conservative. ... The issue is what holy Scripture is."

Now, "we are getting much more able to look at the situation for what it is; and, therefore, I'm hoping for the first time that Southern Baptists will be able to make a choice, in the crystal clear sunlight, as to what the issues are."

The best thing that is happening, Rogers said, is that "we are getting the issues out into the open." He said there have been hurt feelings, unfounded accusations, and challenged motives; but, slowly "the debris ... is being cleared out of the way so we can see what our real problems are."

Rogers, who also was convention president in 1979-80, said he feels "more at ease" in the position this time. "I'm just simply not as intimidated. I was very green," he said, adding there were "a lot of things I did not know then that I know now."

"And, I've had a lot of time to reflect on it; and, obviously, I've had more experience, and so I feel a lot more at ease in what I'm doing."

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Seminary Executive Committee
Affirms Glorieta Statement

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
2/12/87

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--The trustee executive committee at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has unanimously embraced the Glorieta Statement and commended President Roy L. Honeycutt for steps taken to implement the statement.

Acting on a recommendation from board officers, the 19 executive committee members commended the denomination's six seminary presidents "for having initiated creative proposals designed to further the cause of reconciliation within the Southern Baptist Convention."

The Glorieta Statement was announced last October by the presidents of the six seminaries at a prayer retreat at the Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center attended by SBC agency executives and members of the convention's Peace Committee.

In the statement, the presidents committed themselves "to the resolution of problems which beset our beloved denomination" and expressed eagerness "to be partners in the peace process."

The Glorieta Statement, which later was "affirmed" by the Peace Committee, set forth seven specific "commitments" related to fairness and balance in teaching and selection of faculty, compliance by faculty members to the seminaries' confessional statements and continued emphasis on spiritual growth, evangelism and missions on the seminary campuses. It also announced a series of three national conferences on biblical inerrancy to be held in the next three years.

Southern Seminary's executive committee affirmed the commitments "as appropriate guidelines for the continuing and effective ministry" of the seminary and commended "the fidelity with which those commitments are being implemented" by the seminary administration and faculty.

The trustee affirmation came after Honeycutt outlined some of the steps taken by administration and faculty. They included:

-- "Maximum support" of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy to be held May 4-7 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center. Honeycutt has been involved in planning the meeting, and several Southern Seminary faculty members will be program participants.

-- "Continual and thorough review" to assure that faculty teach and write in accordance to the seminary's "Abstract of Principles."

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— Plans for guest lectureships through 1990 based on "support for a balance of theological perspectives."

— Enlistment of conservative evangelical scholars such as David S. Dockery of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, and Millard Erickson of Bethel College in St. Paul, Minn., as visiting professors. Additional invitations are in process.

— "Careful review" of student evaluations of professors to ensure that all instruction is respectful of varying theological viewpoints. Willis Bennett, dean of the school of theology, noted that more than 500 individual comments were included by students on evaluation forms last year and that he had "discussed with each professor those few comments which were critical."

After commending the progress made to date, trustees also requested the seminary administration to develop and report to the board additional "action plans" for further implementation of the Glorieta Statement's commitments.

The trustees' action came less than two weeks before the convention's Peace Committee makes its progress report to the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville, Tenn.



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