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April 14, 1987

87-54

Lewis Named President
Of Home Mission Board

N-CO
By Dan Martin

ATLANTA (BP)--By a vote of 52-15, Larry L. Lewis of Hannibal, Mo., was elected president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board during a special called meeting April 10.

Lewis, 52, president of 800-student Hannibal-LaGrange College, was the unanimous selection of the seven-member search committee that presented its recommendation at the two-hour called session of the 84-member board.

Lewis, a former home missionary and church planter, will assume office June 1, succeeding William G. Tanner, who left the HMB presidency in June of 1986 to become executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

The college president, who also has been a pastor and staff member for a state Baptist convention, was elected on a roll-call vote after efforts to cast a secret ballot had failed 38-20.

Orris Bullock, pastor of Fort Foote Baptist Church of Fort Washington, Md., urged the secret ballot "in the light of the importance of this decision."

O.S. Hawkins, pastor of First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., supported the roll-call vote, saying, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

Troy Morrison, search committee chairman and director of church-minister relations for the Alabama Baptist Convention, called the unanimity of the diverse search committee "a miracle."

The committee that selected Lewis was named in August, after directors voted 40-36 to ask a previous committee to resign and be replaced by a group "that will give fair representation and proper balance to all members of the board."

Morrison said the seven members, plus HMB Chairman Clark Hutchinson, who functioned as a voting ex-officio member of the search committee, met 12 times for more than 600 hours in their search to seek a successor to Tanner.

"We received 100 letters recommending 65 persons," Morrison told the board members. "We seriously considered every one."

He said the group interviewed eight people and finally interviewed Lewis on three occasions: "On March 27, the committee took a secret ballot. We were elated when Dr. Larry L. Lewis received the unanimous vote of the committee."

He noted Lewis is "dedicated to Jesus Christ, has a love for the Southern Baptist Convention and is committed to missions and evangelism."

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Lewis has been a home missionary; a pastor of a local Southern Baptist church; an administrator at Hannibal LaGrange College, affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention; and is "a dreamer ... a planner ... a proclaimer ... a healer ... a unifier."

"The time has come for us to close ranks, to beat our denominational spears into plowshears. We have been on spiritual warfare with each other ... majoring on differences. The fact the search committee of different and diverse people, holding different theological views, could present a unified recommendation should say to the convention that we can come together," Morrison said.

Not all members of the board, however, greeted Lewis' nomination with enthusiasm and support.

Marvin Prude, a retired oil company executive from Birmingham, Ala., and a former vice chairman of the board, said the presentation was "magnificent ... one of the most astute jobs of selling I have ever seen. ..."

He said he had "done some investigation on my own ... talking to some of the statesmen of the convention. I have yet to find one who would recommend this man to head the Home Mission Board."

Prude said the board was "taking a man from a place with a \$3 million budget and asking him to be in charge of a \$70 million one and from a few staff members to 365 staff members. I say we don't want this man to head up the HMB." Prude also was critical of the search committee, saying it was named to bring a person who "was not leaning one way or the other. I think we have been betrayed. ... You (the search committee) have done what the other committee was accused of doing."

Prude said he was going to vote against Lewis, and, when the roll-call vote was taken, did cast his vote in opposition.

Hawkins objected to Prude's remarks, saying they are "not the opinion of this board." When Hawkins referred to Lewis's selection as "a miracle," he was interrupted by amens and applause.

Lewis was questioned by six trustees on his relationship with the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, doctrinal integrity, the direction he would lead the board, his relationship with the seminaries, his views on women and on charismatics.

He told Beth McGhee, a former president of the Arizona WMU from Tucson, he is "an enthusiastic supporter of the WMU," and added, "Any church that doesn't have a strong WMU is missing something very important".

He added the national WMU is very important to the HMB since the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions contributes some \$37.5 million to the work of home missions.

Lawanna McIver, a pastor's wife from Dallas, asked Lewis if he would "attempt to implement" a doctrinal statement at the HMB similar to one required of faculty and staff at Hannibal-LaGrange College, in which persons employed on the faculty must attest to their belief in a personal devil, a literal hell and "the actual existence of a primeval couple named Adam and Eve."

Lewis, who was framer of the resolution adopted by the Missouri Baptist Convention that required such a statement by faculty and staff of Missouri institutions, said he believes the Baptist Faith and Message Statement, "which is in use now" at the HMB "is adequate."

"All of those who would be employed in an elective staff position are asked that they be in concurrence with the Baptist Faith and Message Statement and also that they be loyal members of a local church, that they refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco or harmful drugs. In addition we request that all of our elected personnel be effective witnesses," Lewis said.

"I was impressed with the standards that we already have in place, and I see no reason to change them," he added.

Tom Sneed, pastor of First Baptist Church in Hannibal, Mo., quoted a newspaper interview in which Lewis said it was "doubtful that there is a single inerrantist on the faculty of some (SBC) seminaries."

"I am wondering how you will relate to the seminaries," Sneed asked.

Lewis responded, "I do love the seminaries, and I am anxious that their commitment to the inspired word of God be certain and sure."

He also said: "I am a conservative, and I do not apologize for that one moment. I do believe the Bible is the inspired, infallible word of God.

"My love for a brother is unconditional, never predicated on agreement with me, on inerrancy, on any other issue. We are all brothers in Christ. I will work with every one of the 21 agencies. My predominant question will be, 'How can we at the Home Mission Board work with you and support your work to make it even better?'

"I stand ready to serve the whole convention, moderates and conservatives, all of us together. I do believe if we can get our minds off the squabbles and get our hearts and minds set on winning this nation to Christ, then we will find that unity we have sought."

In response to a question from D.F. Norman, director of the pastoral ministries department of the Georgia Baptist Convention, on appointment of charismatics, Lewis said:

"I have a problem when we use the term, 'anyone involved in the charismatic movement.' I think we have to be very careful about how we define it. "I do not think it would be wise for the Home Mission Board to appoint or approve anyone who openly practiced tongues speaking, but I think we have to be very careful about how we handle this matter. ..."

James Strickland, pastor of First Baptist Church of Cartersville, Ga., asked Lewis if he supports the ordination of women and if a woman were called as pastor of a Southern Baptist church would the president-elect "support unconditionally the right of the church to call as pastor who it feels led to."

Lewis replied he believes in the role of women in ministry. "I hate to think of where the denomination and the churches would be if it were not for the women who have, throughout the years, done so many effective ministries for the churches."

He commented he has a "strong belief" in the rights of the local church. "If a church feels led on the local level to elect a woman as pastor or deacon, I don't see it is the purview of the Home Mission Board to try to interfere with the autonomy of that local church."

Lewis referred to recent actions by the trustees that prohibit pastoral aid for churches that call women as pastors and noted the convention in 1984 passed a resolution opposing women as pastors: "The convention has very emphatically and very explicitly expressed their feeling that they do not favor women serving in the role of pastors. So I do not feel that the Home Mission Board should implement a policy which would be contrary to the expressed will of the convention."

Strickland pressed his point and noted the conflict between a church that would qualify for pastoral aid but who called a woman as pastor "seems unresolvable."

Lewis agreed, noting it seems a "darned if you do and darned if you don't situation. But you are going to offend somebody any direction you move."

He said he believes the HMB "exists to serve our churches. I don't see how it is possible for the chief executive officer of any Southern Baptist Convention agency to say, 'I am going to be independent to an explicit action of the convention.' "I think the day when we can sort of thumb our nose at our constituency and go our own way is over." *

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Lewis Hopes Presidency
Can Rally Divided SBC

N-LO

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
4/14/87

ATLANTA (BP)--"I hope my presidency of the Home Mission Board can be a means of rallying our convention around the overarching goal of reaching America for Jesus Christ," Larry Lewis said.

Lewis made the comment during a news conference following his election as president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board April 10.

"I hope we can put the squabbles, strife and dissension behind us and move on toward that overarching task," he added.

Lewis, 52, also said: "It would grieve my heart if my election is the source of greater strife and discord (in the convention). I am beholden to no man, beholden to no group of men. Nobody met somewhere and pulled me out as their candidate."

He said he had been recommended to the seven-member search committee by a "pastor's wife, who was washing dishes and thought her former pastor would be a good man for the job."

Lewis, president of 800-student Hannibal LaGrange College in Hannibal, Mo., dealt with doctrinal integrity, the role of women in the church, abortion, the SBC Cooperative Program budget and charismatics as he met with the news media following his election.

Lewis was asked if future staffers and missionaries would have to profess faith in a personal devil and a literal hell in order to work for the Atlanta-based agency of the Southern Baptist Convention. A reporter noted faculty and staff at the small Missouri College are required to agree with the doctrinal stance in order to work for the school.

"I think the Baptist Faith and Message Statement is an adequate statement for the Home Mission Board. I do not anticipate expanding it," Lewis said.

He added he believes "quite strongly that those who would lead denominational programs such as evangelism, church growth and church planting should be people of impeccable doctrinal integrity."

"Frankly, I don't believe the policies we now have would allow us to hire in a professional position people who did not believe in a personal devil and a literal hell," he added.

Lewis said he will be "involved" in the hiring of future staff members and will discuss their views of Scripture before employment.

He said the convention has gone on record -- "and overwhelmingly so" -- as believing that Article I of the Baptist Faith and Message Statement on the Bible means the Bible is historically, scientifically, theologically and philosophically true.

"I do not feel people ought to be playing word games with a clear statement of faith. ... It says what it means and means just what it says," Lewis added.

"As we employ professional staff in the future, we will be very careful about moral integrity and doctrinal integrity. ... If we have a person in a significant staff position who has questionable theology, it causes an affront to the whole denomination," he said.

Lewis was asked if the statement means that in the future he will hire only professional staff who agree with his interpretation that the Bible is "historically, scientifically, theologically and philosophically" accurate in every respect, Lewis responded, "Yes, sir, that would be an accurate statement of my position."

Lewis also responded to other issues:*

-- Women. "I personally never have been able to discover from Scripture justification for the ordination of women, either as pastors or deacons. The biblical guidelines are very explicit that those who are ordained to lead the church in a pastoral role should be men."

He added the convention in 1984 had spoken against ordination of women. "Regardless of how I feel about an issue, it behooves us to concur with the direction given us by the convention."

When a reporter pointed out the vote on women in 1984 passed by a narrow margin, Lewis said: "Seldom does a resolution represent unanimous consent." He added the HMB should reflect the majority view and "be kind, loving and caring to all people."

He added, however, he concurs with HMB action declining to provide support to churches with women pastors. He noted the question is who the HMB will commission and support financially.

"We feel we cannot implement agency policy that is diametrically opposed to that which the convention has expressed. That is true with tongue speaking or women's ordination. We have no option but to go by that which has been given us by the convention.

"We need to take careful note when the SBC meets in annual session, drafts a resolution and approves that resolution. That is a communique to the agencies, and I think we need to listen carefully to it."

-- The Cooperative Program. "The Cooperative Program is a marvelous system. I strongly support the Cooperative Program and am opposed to negative designation."

He said churches who withhold support are "like children who take their ball and bat when the game is not being played their way. That kind of immaturity is unbecoming a person who is part of the community of God and a great denomination such as ours.

"I think our support should be consistent, and if there is something in the system we don't like, then we can work to improve it or change it. If we withdraw our support, it seems to me we have forfeited the right to really have much influence in changing what we feel is a matter of concern."

-- Charismatics. "I have never spoken in tongues and don't expect that I will," he said, in response to a question about the status of proposed action by the HMB to decline to appoint or commission people who are "involved in the charismatic movement."

"I don't think we should be part of employing or commissioning someone who is involved in speaking in tongues, but I am reluctant to see us invade the privacy of someone's prayer closet. How one prays in private should be private, and we should be very cautious in dealing with it."

-- Abortion. "I am a strong advocate of pro-life. I think that is the biblical position and in accord with the resolutions passed by the SBC since 1980. I am opposed to abortion except to save the life of the mother."

"I do feel the unborn baby is a human being and to terminate a pregnancy is to terminate the life of a human being. If God choses to terminate it through miscarriage or stillbirth, that is God's election, but it is not man's prerogative."

Lewis said he believes the matter of abortion should be dealt with by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission but would like to see a "discussion by the board about crisis pregnancy centers as to whether the establishment of such centers by the HMB would be feasible and practical."

-- Missions. Lewis said he had been called to be a missionary while in seminary, and about a year ago had begun to feel he would again become involved in missions work.

"God called me to be a missionary, and I don't think I will ever be happy until I am back in missions," he said. "I have enjoyed my work at the college, it was a beautiful thing, but I have had a difficult time seeing how that worked with my call."

"I did some research and found that every executive officer of the Home Mission Board but one since 1903 have been college presidents. I don't know what that has to do with it, but I think it is interesting."

-- His Commitment. Lewis told how his great-grandfather, Marcellus Whiteside, "reportedly started more Baptist churches in Missouri than any other man. He started 46 churches, primarily in northeast and north central Missouri."

"He was a church planter at heart, and so am I." *

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N-FMB

Board Drops SBC Seminary Rule;
Mid-America, Others Can Qualify

By Bob Stanley

Baptist Press
4/14/87

LEXINGTON, Ky. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted April 8 to drop its long-standing requirement that career missionary candidates must attend one of the six Southern Baptist theological seminaries for at least one year.

The new missionary qualifications policy, which will be reviewed every six months for the next two years, will open the door to qualified candidates from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn., and other accredited seminaries without further attendance at a Southern Baptist Convention seminary.

Board President R. Keith Parks said the new policy "grew out of a desire on the part of growing numbers of board trustees" to appoint graduates from Mid-America without requiring this additional year of study. He said the board's staff, while dealing with the question, decided the "whole qualification matter" needed review.

"The crux of the matter is the appropriate Southern Baptist identity of the missionaries representing the Southern Baptist Convention," Parks emphasized. He said the new requirements maintain "an insistence on Southern Baptist identity by focusing more on the local church and less on seminary education" as a test of this identity.

A year ago the board's committee on human resources, after considerable discussion, reaffirmed the policy requiring one year's study, for 26 semester hours, at an SBC seminary. But the issue of whether Mid-America graduates should be required to take this extra study has continued to be debated in the denomination during the past year. In February, members of the committee asked that the Mid-America matter be brought up again for consideration.

Proponents of Mid-America have said it was unfair to require their graduates to study an additional year at an SBC seminary. They said the seminary's faculty and trustees, and 97 percent of its students, are active members of Southern Baptist churches. They also pointed to the missions and evangelistic emphases of the seminary, as well as its regional accreditation.

A number of Mid-America graduates have been appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in recent years after the additional year's study at an SBC seminary.

The board has maintained that the year's attendance at an official SBC seminary supported by the denomination and governed by SBC-appointed trustees was needed to assure identification with Southern Baptists. It said its guidelines, which were in effect before Mid-America was founded in 1972, originally were adopted to deal with candidates from such theological schools as Princeton, Yale, Fuller, Vanderbilt and Dallas Theological Seminary.

In changing its policies, the board pointed to the "demanding and limitless" opportunities of world evangelization. "Our human resources must be mobilized as effectively as possible, without compromising quality," said an introduction to the new qualifications document.

At the same time, the statement added, "We affirm our own denominational educational institutions and encourage any and all Southern Baptists to utilize these educating, equipping centers."

Board staff who work with people considering a call to missions indicated they will continue to encourage attendance at one of the SBC institutions. However, Parks said the guidelines acknowledge that with the geographic spread of Southern Baptists, "some find it difficult to attend an SBC seminary."

In defining "SBC identity," the qualifications continue to require a "record of meaningful membership and participation in a Southern Baptist church." But to this, they add "commitment to and identification with Southern Baptists through fellowship, prayer support, giving, cooperation and service."

Other changes in the general requirements state that candidates must give evidence of "a sound biblical faith" and "conviction of truth as held by Southern Baptists." The latter phrase is lifted almost directly from wording of Article IX of the SBC Constitution on missionaries' qualifications.

In discussion April 7 by the board's mission management and personnel committee, both trustees and staff noted the Baptist Faith and Message statement will continue to be the test of missionaries' doctrinal beliefs. This statement, adopted by the SBC in 1963 and underscored in theological debates in more recent years, has been the standard applied in screening of missionary candidates.

Under the new policy, the board may consider qualified candidates from any seminary whose accreditation is "commensurate with that of our Southern Baptist theological institutions."

This definition of accreditation would permit the board, as it moves forward with its global evangelization and internationalization thrust, to consider applicants trained at an overseas seminary if they could meet other appointment requirements.

Harlan E. Spurgeon, vice president for mission management and personnel, noted the new requirements place greater responsibility upon overseas missions--the organizations of Southern Baptist missionaries on the field--to write job descriptions that define the exact educational and other qualifications needed to fill each particular missionary need.

Spurgeon said the guidelines also allow more flexibility. Not all church planting assignments may require a seminary graduate, he explained. For some church starting needs, the board in recent years has been willing to consider a person with two years' seminary study plus five or more years' pastoral experience in Southern Baptist churches.

Parks' statement on the new policy concluded: "Recognizing our responsibility under God and to Southern Baptists, we must never allow any single issue to become more important than the cause of reaching the whole world. We must not allow anyone or anything to polarize or fragment us. We believe that (this policy) is a means of responding to a concern in a way that continues to focus on our larger concern of world mission."

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'86 Lottie Moon Offering
May Total \$70.1 Million

N-FMB

Baptist Press
4/14/87

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--When totaled at the end of May, the 1986 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Southern Baptist foreign missions probably will be about \$70.1 million.

That total, if accurate, will top the 1985 offering by about \$3.3 million. But it will fall almost \$4.9 million short of the 1986 goal of \$75 million.

The normally reliable forecast comes from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, which depends upon the annual offering for nearly half of its total budget. The money supports the work of more than 3,800 missionaries in 110 countries.

Actual receipts at the Foreign Mission Board by April 6 totaled about \$64.2 million, but the board will continue to receive contributions to the 1986 offering through May 31.

The predicted shortfall would be the biggest yet for the Lottie Moon offering which has not surpassed its annual goal since 1981. Missionary salaries and operating funds will not be squeezed by the shortfall. But their capital budgets for housing, vehicles and church or institutional construction will face cuts.

Several recent annual shortfalls have caught mission budget planners off guard, but not this year's. Many Southern Baptists are struggling to survive financially in the oil depressed economies of Texas, Oklahoma and other southwestern states.

"I am not surprised, because of the continuing problem in those states that are affected by the oil crisis," said Carl Johnson, board vice president for finance. "The giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is a reflection of the economic conditions."

Johnson emphasized there is "no indication" the shortfalls are resulting from the ongoing factional battles in the Southern Baptist Convention. But he acknowledged "it would be difficult for us to measure that if it were happening."

"We do not see (offering) results by churches here. We see results by state conventions," he explained. "There are so many different things that can affect the offering that even if an offering is down, you're never really sure why. We think we can identify what the root cause is this year (in the southwestern states). But in all fairness we don't absolutely know that is the No. 1 reason."

Planners arrive at the forecast by analyzing Lottie Moon Offering receipts in 10 selected states over a three-month period and comparing them to receipts during the same period in previous years.

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N-CO

ACTS Seeks Financial Boost
From Jacksonville Supporters

By Greg Warner and Dan Martin

Baptist Press
4/14/87

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Fund-raisers for the American Christian Television System network visited Jacksonville, Fla., April 3 in search of financial backing for the fledgling TV service.

The 1,100 ACTS supporters who met for a free banquet were told their gathering constituted the largest ACTS dinner on record and the largest banquet in Jacksonville's history, even though about 600 guests did not show up.

The Jacksonville effort is a new approach in ACTS fund raising, because the cost was underwritten by nine corporate sponsors in advance of the event. Two of the sponsors donated \$28,000 to pay for the cost of the meal, and another \$41,000 was contributed by 10 other donors.

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Previously, fund-raising events had been based on ACTS paying the costs of the campaigns, which generated donations generally in the form of one-, two- and three-year pledges.

The necessity of spending money to generate donations has put the four-year-old network in difficult financial circumstances. During the first two years of fund raising, ACTS spent \$1.6 million in development efforts. In the same time period, the efforts generated \$2.3 million in pledges but had only received \$1.1-million in cash, leaving a negative balance of \$466,000.

ACTS officials told members of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee in February they were trying new approaches to fund raising. The Jacksonville plan is the first implementation.

"Jacksonville was a good experience for us in that it has taught us a new way to hold these events without the tremendous out-of-pocket, up-front expense of putting on a dinner," said Dick McCartney, executive vice president of ACTS' parent, the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

McCartney, explaining that most development or fund-raising activities are long-range events, said the previous dinners, which were heavy on pledges and short on cash gifts, caused some cash-flow problems since costs were incurred immediately while proceeds were gathered slowly.

"It was very tough for the first couple of years (after a campaign) because we were having to spend money when we were in a difficult situation over cash flow," he said.

According to Jacksonville ACTS board figures, a budget of \$63,000 was established to hold the dinner, including paying for the room, food, decorations, printing and expenses of consultants who staged the dinner.

The 12 donors who contributed to the advance gifts phase of the Jacksonville campaign will be featured in 30-second spot announcements on the local ACTS cable outlet, Channel 31, available through Continental Cablevision of Jacksonville, which is accessible to 129,000 homes.

Despite the optimism of national and local ACTS officials about the new approach to fund raising, the Jacksonville campaign did not reach the goal set for the effort. Sponsors had established a "minimum goal" of \$445,000, for the dinner. They also set a "challenge goal" of \$702,000 and a "hard goal" of \$225,000.

Ray Melton, pastor of San Jose Baptist Church in Jacksonville and chairman of the local ACTS board, estimated the effort raised \$191,000, but Bill Nichols, senior vice president of affiliate services for the RTVC, said the figure probably is closer to \$180,000.

Nichols said dinner patrons pledged \$106,000 and gave another \$5,000 in cash. The cash and pledges, added to the \$69,000 in advance gifts, total about \$180,000, he said.

Melton said: "We had hoped it would be more, but it could be significant that more people than usual asked for more information. Such inquiries often produce the largest donations, leaving open the possibility the \$445,000 goal can still be reached."

The \$111,000 in cash and pledges will be divided evenly between the local ACTS board and the national network, giving each participant pledges worth \$55,500.

The local workers and three ACTS consultants will continue to work the prospects for additional donations, Nichols said. He added another "new wrinkle" in the fund-raising approach is that there will be a follow-up contact with every person who attended the dinner but who did not make a pledge there.

The Jacksonville banquet was part of the RTVC's attempt to prop up ACTS, which has struggled to stay afloat since it went on the air four years ago. In 1985 the SBC Executive Committee authorized the commission to borrow \$10 million to cover expenses incurred in launching the network and to conduct a \$10 million development campaign to repay the loan. Commission leaders told the Executive Committee in February, however, that development results were disappointing, because income from the various fund-raising activities has not equaled expenses.

ACTS is relying on a major capital campaign in Atlanta and one-shot fund-raising dinners like the one in Jacksonville to bolster its financial fortunes. The Atlanta campaign, which by February had cost \$300,000 and yielded \$176,000 in pledges, is targeted to raise \$1.2 million by June.

A banquet in Washington, earlier this year produced pledges of \$85,000, Allen said. Additional banquets are planned for Harrisburg, Pa. and on Long Island, N.Y. Other campaigns have been held in Baton Rouge, La., Birmingham and Mobile, Ala., and San Jose, Calif. In each of the campaigns, the local ACTS board keeps a percentage of the gifts.

With the new emphasis on advance gifts, the RTVC is "looking at how many of these events we can have a year," McCartney said. "We may not be able to have as many in the future. We may have to stretch them out a little longer in order to develop the up-front money."

Nichols said of the banquets, "We don't plan on doing this forever." He told the dinner guests such efforts will be necessary for "a year or two" until commercial support from businesses replaces private donations as the network's primary source of income. ACTS does not ask for donations on the air. Most of the support for ACTS now comes from "the people who already are giving to their churches," he said. "We can't expect these people to support a network that's going to cost \$100 million a year to do the job."

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Kitchings Dies
In Mississippi

N-CO
(Miss.)

Baptist Press
4/14/87

JACKSON, Miss. (BP) -- Harold Kitchings, 60, executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, died April 8 in Jackson of bone marrow cancer.

Kitchings' funeral was April 10 at First Baptist Church of Clinton, Miss., with burial at Clinton cemetery.

A native of Eminence, Ky., Kitchings was a graduate of Mississippi College in Clinton and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He did post-graduate work at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and was awarded an honorary doctorate from Mississippi College.

Kitchings was pastor of First Baptist Church of Kosciusko, Miss., from 1965 until 1976, when he became executive of the foundation. He also was pastor of churches in Hattiesburg, Miss., and McComb, Miss. Earlier ministry positions were as associate pastor of churches in Dallas and in Jackson.

Active in denominational affairs, Kitchings' service on numerous boards and committees, included chairman of the Mississippi Baptist Education Commission, Attala County Baptist Associational moderator and president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Honors included being named in "Who's Who in Religion, 1976-77" and Mississippi College alumnus of the year for 1985.

Kitchings is survived by his wife, the former Ann Overstreet of Clinton; three children, Kat Nowell of Clinton, Karen Hitchcock of Mendenhall, Miss., and Hal Kitchings of Jackson; sister, Grace Hanna of Atlanta; brothers, Atley Kitchings of Birmingham, John Kitchings of Jackson, and Ben Kitchings of Long Beach, Miss.; and six grandchildren.

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Sarah Morgan Dies;
Mother of AB Leader

N-CO
(A. Board)

Baptist Press
4/14/87

DALLAS (BP)--Sarah Jane Morgan, mother of Southern Baptist Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan, died April 4 in Coffeyville, Kan., after a brief illness. She was 94.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Elmer E. Morgan, who died in 1973.

The funeral services were held April 6 in Coffeyville.

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