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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #75C
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

May 14, 1987

87-75

Wayland Baptist President
Resigns Under Pressure

By Lonnie Wilkey

PLAINVIEW, Texas (BP)--David L. Jester, president of Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, since 1981, has resigned.

A college spokesman said Jester had been "under fire internally" from faculty, students and staff members due to severe financial problems in recent months. In late March the college's trustees cut the school's \$12.5 million 1986-87 budget by 20 percent or \$2.5 million.

Cutbacks included reducing present faculty and staff by 30 and eliminating some academic programs with limited enrollments, the spokesman said.

In addition to Jester, three of the college's vice presidents have resigned during the past month. Ron Mooney, development vice president, and Paul Butler, student development vice president, accepted similar positions at different Baptist colleges -- Mooney at Hannibal-LaGrange College in Hannibal, Mo., and Butler at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas.

Fred Teague, academic vice president, resigned to become dean of graduate studies at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo.

The college spokesman declined to speculate whether the vice presidents' resignations were related to Jester's administration.

Reports circulating in area media before a special called meeting of the trustees May 9 said Jester would be asked to resign. All parties denied those reports.

The college's spokesman said Jester was hospitalized May 11 for health problems and is unavailable for comment.

A statement released following the trustee meeting said: "Wayland Baptist University board of trustees has accepted with deep regret the resignation of David L. Jester as president. This resignation is effective as of June 30, 1987.

"The board of trustees is most grateful for the six and one-half years of dedicated service to Christian education which Dr. and Mrs. Jester have given to Wayland Baptist University."

Lubbock Attorney Kent Hance, spokesman for the trustees, said no decisions have been made regarding Jester's replacement.

Jerry Dawson, director of the Christian Education Coordinating Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in Dallas, said he felt Wayland's problems were directly related to the crisis faced by the oil and gas industry in Texas. He noted much of Wayland's endowment is in the form of oil and gas leases.

"Evidently the situation reached a point at Wayland Baptist University where everyone involved felt a fresh start needed to be made," Dawson said, and added Wayland has not come to the convention for help and he does not foresee the convention becoming involved.

Jester, 57, was director of the graduate program and professor of education at Georgetown (Ky.) College before assuming the Wayland presidency. The son of Southern Baptist missionaries, Jester served 13 years as a missionary in various educational capacities in schools and universities in Nigeria. He holds degrees from Georgetown College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and Columbia University.

Chairman Requests
Early Resolutions

By Linda Lawson

ST. LOUIS (BP)--The chairman of the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention Resolutions Committee has appealed to messengers to send drafts of proposed resolutions to him prior to the annual meeting of the SBC June 16-18 in Cervantes Convention Center.

Tom Melzoni, committee chairman and pastor of Central Baptist Church, Oak Ridge, Tenn., said having advance copies of resolutions messengers intend to submit to the convention will enable his 10-member committee to do more preliminary work before convention sessions begin.

The committee has set an orientation and work session Saturday morning, June 13, in St. Louis. He said all committee meetings will be open sessions.

Drafts of proposed resolutions should be sent to Melzoni in care of the SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce, Nashville, Tenn. 37203.

Melzoni emphasized that messengers who send proposed resolutions to the committee before the convention also must submit official copies for introduction at the convention. Messengers may submit the resolutions at a table to the side of the main platform during miscellaneous business sessions on the first day of the annual meeting.

"I hope the resolutions process this year will be smooth and sweet and give a positive report to the world that Southern Baptists are alive and well and interested in evangelism and missions," said Melzoni.

"We will attempt to follow the leadership of the Lord and send forth a positive, affirming message of the Baptist Faith and Message and of our institutions," he added. "We want to say to the world we are evangelical Christians who love God and love each other."

In 1986, convention messengers submitted a total of 52 resolutions to the committee for consideration. The record number of resolutions submitted by messengers was 74 in 1985.

Melzoni appealed to Southern Baptists to pray for the resolutions committee and for all proceedings of the 130th meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Home Mission Board
Elects Two Staffers

Baptist Press
5/14/87

ATLANTA (BP)--The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board elected two staff members and appointed 27 missionaries during their May meeting.

Bill Graham, who has been associate director of the missionary personnel department since 1983, was promoted to director of the department. He will be responsible for recruitment, screening and orientation of all candidates for missionary appointment by the board.

Before coming to the board, Graham was pastor of Middletown Baptist Church, Middletown, R.I. Previously, he had been pastor of churches in Manitowoc and Sheboygan, Wisc., and Paris, Texas. He is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Graham succeeds Irvin Dawson who became a national consultant for missions development field servicing.

Jerry Carl Wolverton of Nashville was elected to the new position of associate director of marketing services. Wolverton, former sales promotion supervisor for the SBC Sunday School Board, will assist with development of marketing strategy for the board's products and programs.

He has been a general contractor for the past two years, and is former director of the Donelson Christian Academy in Nashville, former minister of music and education for Woodcock Baptist Church, Nashville, and former regional sales manager for a company in Los Angeles.

Directors also appointed 12 missionaries, nine missionary associates, and six church planter apprentices.

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Missions Board Logs
5,000 Phone Calls

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The number of telephone calls in one week to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's PrayerLine topped 5,000 for the first time during the first week of May.

The previous one-week record was 4,130 during the first week of February when PrayerLine began, primarily to promote a "Concert of Prayer" among Southern Baptist churches for world missions.

PrayerLine is toll-free from 49 states. The number is 1-800-ALL-SEEK (1-800-255-7335). In Virginia, a toll call is needed, 1-804-355-6581.

One reason for the one-week record may be that pastors and other church leaders were calling to learn of the specific prayer emphasis for the May Concert of Prayer. This emphasis is on the first Sunday of every month in worship services and other church activities. Also, PrayerLine was promoted in late April during the first Southern Baptist Senior Adult Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

More than 3,500 of the calls came during the weekend when missions news is reported. Since its start, PrayerLine has received more than 40,000 calls.

"We are grateful for Southern Baptists' dramatic response to our missionaries' pleas for concerted, extraordinary prayer," said Minette Drumwright, director of the board's Office of International Prayer Strategy. "The Concert of Prayer and PrayerLine are providing timely, direct access to specific prayer needs."

"We are a missions people," Drumwright added, "and the prayers of Southern Baptists are the major missions strategy for releasing the power of God to change the lives of people all over the world."

PrayerLine is open around the clock, seven days a week. Anyone who experiences difficulty dialing PrayerLine is asked to alert the Foreign Mission Board during its regular office hours.

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CORRECTION: In Baptist Press story, "Presidents, Politicians Highlight Baptist College Commencements," mailed 5/13/87, please substitute the following for the first graf:

More than 14,800 students will receive degrees from Southern Baptist seminaries, colleges and schools during May and early June.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Harada Brothers Compare
Leprosy Experience To AIDS

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
5/14/87

KONA, Hawaii (BP)—Glenn and Paul Harada compared their pilgrimage with leprosy during the last 30 years to the current struggle families face when one member has AIDS.

The Harada brothers told of their personal feelings during a meeting of state and nationwide Southern Baptist missions leaders sponsored by the denomination's Home Mission Board. Glenn Harada is director of Christian social ministries for the Hawaii Baptist Convention in Honolulu.

During a three-hour dialogue with 120 Baptist missions leaders, Paul Harada, who has had leprosy since 1941, told of his acceptance by other family members despite having the most dreaded and misunderstood disease in Hawaii.

The Harada brothers urged family members and the church in today's society to love and accept people who contract AIDS, just as their family accepted Paul's leprosy.

Throughout their presentation, the Haradas compared leprosy to AIDS, saying there are striking similarities between the way people respond and react to Hansen's Disease, or leprosy, and AIDS.

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"AIDS is a kind of leprosy of the 1980s," said Glenn. The big difference, added Paul, is that drugs have been discovered to control leprosy, and it is now almost a non-disease. The greatest similarity is the way people respond when they learn they have either leprosy or AIDS, they said.

Paul, 61, recalled his family's reaction when he learned he had leprosy 46 years ago at the age of 15.

"I remember how stunned my dad was," Paul recalled. "It was like learning your son has AIDS today."

Paul was quarantined and sent first to a leprosy compound near Hickam Field in Honolulu and later to the leprosy colony at Kalaupapa, an isolated peninsula on the island of Molokai.

"You have to understand that leprosy became rampant in Hawaii in about 1865, when King Kamehameha V decided to banish all Hawaiians with leprosy to Kalaupapa," explained Glenn. "Since then, more than 7,300 Hawaiians have died of leprosy at Kalaupapa -- five times the number of Hawaiians who have died in all wars combined."

Glenn, now 42, was born three years after his brother was banished. He was not told he had a brother with leprosy until he was 10 years old, shortly before Paul was released from Kalaupapa.

"My father and mother did not understand the disease," Glenn recalled. "They had so many stereotyped feelings based on rumor and misinformation. It was a dark family secret no one talked about."

In 1954, after he had suffered with the disease for 13 years, Paul tested "negative" indicating he no longer had Hansen's disease. On Thanksgiving Day, 1954, he was allowed to return to his home.

The nine other brothers and sisters in the Harada family were sent to live with other relatives when Paul returned. "We were not allowed to eat or sleep in the same house with Paul, or to touch him, even though he no longer had the disease," Glenn recalled.

Paul insists leprosy is not contagious, and like AIDS is not transmitted by normal contact. Of the 10 Harada children, only Paul had leprosy.

When he returned home, Paul said, he was not concerned about himself, but how the family and neighbors would react to his return.

Glenn said he now feels his brother's banishment was "a great sacrifice for the sake of the family. If Paul had not been taken from us, I would not be where I am today as a minister."

His family had never publicly thanked Paul for the sacrifice he made for them as a family, Glenn said, but he wanted to do so on behalf of his entire family during the meeting in Kona.

Glenn said he felt Paul was a hero of sorts. He admitted, however, he was afraid. "I'll never forget how clean I scrubbed in my bath the first day I saw him," he said.

Although Paul's case was described as mild, he suffered some disfigurement, especially on his hands. He lost several fingers, and is only slightly able to use his right hand.

Paul was once told he would not live past age 24. "The disease is horrible, even horrific," he said. "It is very slow, but very sure." By about 1953, his hands, feet and face were a mass of sores. His nose was so infected he could not breathe through it. But by 1956, his sores began to heal. Today, there is only a slight trace of the disease.

Paul now lives by choice at Kalaupapa in a home provided by the state. About 100 other leprosy patients, their average age 62, live there by choice. The quarantine was lifted by Hawaii in 1969.

His wife also has had leprosy, but like Paul is now negative. "She is a beautiful person. We fell in love as teenagers at Kalaupapa," he said. "They have no children."

Although Paul admitted he felt "like an oddball," he said he had little anger about the way he has been treated. "I've been grateful that someone was taking care of me," he noted.

Religion is an important aspect of life among the residents at Kalaupapa, he said: "We talk about religion a lot. Our favorite scripture is the story of Jesus healing the lepers."

Paul and others with Hansen's disease have no objections to the term leprosy, but they react negatively to being called lepers.

Neither does Paul feel angry at God because of his suffering. "Suffering is like testing," he said. "It tests you to see what you are made of. We ought to thank God for our suffering. We thank God for good health and everything else. We ought to thank him for the crosses he gives us. The cross is a very significant thing in the redemption of mankind."

Even though he thought he would die of leprosy, Paul said he was not afraid: "Death was not a thing to be feared. I was almost looking forward to it. We will all die someday. We need to remember we are all just guests in this world -- we are just passing through. We don't own the world, God does."

Glenn described his brother as a philosopher whose greatest joy is tending his garden, fishing and planting flowers in the church yard at Kalaupapa. "His garden is his retreat," Glenn said.

Paul urged others to accept people with AIDS, just as his brother Glenn accepted him with leprosy. "We are all children of God," he said. "We are all part of God's family -- white or black, sick or well."

"The reality is that all of us will be touched by these kinds of questions at some point in our lives," he added. "I just hope what our family has experienced might help someone else deal with being stigmatized, ostracized and rejected by the rest of society."

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