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Report 'Not Creedal,'
Peace Chairman Says

By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee "did not draft a creedal statement," nor is it a "watchdog," Charles Fuller told members of the SBC Executive Committee during their September meeting.

Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., and chairman of the 22-member group that has studied the SBC controversy, reported to the Executive Committee on how the committee plans to go about its new role and responsibility.

In addition to hearing Fuller's report, members of the Executive Committee also acted on two other matters relating to the group:

-- Adopted a report responding to the convention on the theological stance of the 19 employees of the Executive Committee that is the most specific response yet adopted by entities of the SBC that have taken action on the report. The action also gives the strictest instructions to current employees of any of the entities that have responded.

-- Named Perry R. Sanders, pastor of First Baptist Church of Lafayette, La., to replace W. Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, who resigned after the report was adopted in St. Louis in protest of continuation of the committee to monitor the responses of the agencies, and appointed David Maddox, a Fullerton, Calif., land developer and immediate past chairman of the Executive Committee, to replace William O. Crews, who resigned because he has become president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

Fuller told the committee the report and recommendations "are no longer the property of the Peace Committee. The report and recommendations were adopted by the convention, hence, we are all now in the posture of seeking to carry them out in ways which will engender reconciliation in our fellowship."

He said the committee "expects to maintain the lowest profile possible prior to the annual convention (in San Antonio). We feel the responsibility for our report is now in the hands of the convention which adopted it, through the trustees of its entities. We firmly believe in the trustee process and now that process is to be honored and given its opportunity to function.

"We intend to magnify the trustee process and wait upon the emergence of its leadership," he added, saying the Peace Committee probably will meet "sometime between April 25-29, 1988, dependent upon the availability of the Peace Committee members, the agency and institution presidents and the trustee chairpersons of those agencies and institutions."

Fuller said the date will allow all of the national entities of the SBC to have met and had time to prepare "a written report ... to be sent in advance ... regarding the progress and process of facilitating the recommendations the convention has adopted."

All members of the Peace Committee were hesitant about continuance, he said: "We recognize the dangers inherent in such an assignment. To be called a 'watchdog' committee is as repulsive to us as is the idea of one in the minds of those who see us in that role.

"We are not to be a watchdog committee, and it is our intent to keep our spirit above that plane," he said, adding the "interest of peace would not be served but rather might be threatened if the assignment of observing responses to the report were given to a new committee or to the Executive Committee or given to no one, opening an arena of self-appointment to anyone and everyone who wished to draft an unofficial evaluation for the convention to debate."

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The chairman also told the Executive Committee the Peace Committee "gave equal importance to all sections of the report. Such was clearly stated by the chairman when he told the convention messengers that the report section was foundational to the recommendation section. That ... was the unanimous conclusion of the committee."

Fuller continued: "With immediate respect to that segment of the findings section, listing four examples of what we concluded most Southern Baptists believe concerning the Baptist Faith and Message statement on the Bible, it must again be pointed out, we did not draft a creedal statement. We said the four statements on scriptural position were examples of dominant Southern Baptist belief. We did not intend them to become creedal. We said what we meant, not what some have said we meant."

The four statements, included in the report, say the Peace Committee "found that most Southern Baptists see truth without any mixture of error for its matter," as meaning, for example, that:

"1. They believe in direct creation of mankind and therefore they believe Adam and Eve were real persons. 2. They believe the named authors did indeed write the biblical books attributed to them by those books. 3. They believe the miracles described in Scripture did indeed occur as supernatural events in history. 4. They believe that the historical narratives given by biblical authors are indeed accurate and reliable as given by those authors."

Fuller said that although "one section specifically pertains to seminary administrators and faculty members, the general thrust of the recommendation, regarding the building of future staffs, applies to all Southern Baptist agencies and entities."

That recommendation, he pointed out, "put the emphasis upon the building of future staffs and faculties. The committee has repeatedly said, within its deliberations, and openly, we do not believe the solution to our controversy is to be found in the wholesale dismissal of existing staffs and faculties."

"Those who serve, teach and work within the guidelines of the Baptist Faith and Message, in our view, are secure and should continue to be. If they do not serve, or have not served, within the guidelines ... they should be answerable to the trustees of the entity they serve whether a Peace Committee had ever existed or not," he said.

In its official response to the report, the Executive Committee adopted, without dissenting vote, a statement which assures the convention "that the professional staff of the Executive Committee over the years has accepted the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted in 1963 as a whole and specifically that portion which addresses the Scriptures. ..."

The response also requests "the chairman and the president/treasurer of the Executive Committee to meet with the SBC Peace Committee as scheduled and report to them that the staff of the Executive Committee continues to demonstrate strong commitment to the Bible and accepts, without reservation the entirety of the Baptist Faith and Message, with the illustrations given in the Peace Committee report of the prevailing views of Southern Baptists."

"We further pledge ourselves and instruct the employees of the Executive Committee to abide by and support the SBC Peace Committee report in both its spirit and in the letter of its recommendations."

Although the report was adopted after only short discussion by the Executive Committee, it was discussed at length by the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee.

During the discussion in subcommittee, members, by a one-vote margin, inserted the reference to illustrations and the final sentence, putting the Executive Committee on record as adopting the most specific interpretation of the Peace Committee report and most strict instruction to any of the agencies which have acted on the document.

The Executive Committee, without debate or opposing vote, also elected Sanders and Maddox to fill the vacancies on the Peace Committee.

While there was no discussion in the plenary session, the replacement of the members generated discussion in the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee.

The officers of the Peace Committee had recommended Maddox and Peter Rhea Jones, pastor of First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga., as replacements. Maddox was elected without opposition, but one member opposed Jones' election to the group.

Jones subsequently was not nominated, but Sanders, Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church of Austin, Texas, and Mrs. Owen Cooper of Yazoo City, Miss., wife of the late former president of the SBC, were nominated. After a first vote eliminated Mrs. Cooper from consideration, subcommittee members nominated Sanders on a divided vote.

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Executive Committee To Study
Staff Ecumenical Participation

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press
9/25/87

NASHVILLE (BP)--A question of ecumenical involvement bracketed the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee's fall meeting Sept. 21-23 in Nashville.

During the early moments of the meeting, Executive Committee President/Treasurer Harold C. Bennett reported on his recent visit with Pope John Paul II. And one of the final items of business was a 26-24 vote to put the question of the EC staff's ecumenical involvement before the committee next February.

Bennett was one of 27 non-Catholic U.S. religious leaders who met with the Roman Catholic leader Sept. 11 in Columbia, S.C. Bennett spent about 20 minutes telling EC members about that meeting and explaining his reasons for participation.

"I felt that under God's leadership I should be part of that meeting," Bennett said. He reported telling the pope about Southern Baptists' goals for world evangelization, describing Southern Baptist mission work in 111 countries and insisting that the cause of Christ would be improved if relationships between Catholics and missionaries in those countries were improved.

In addition to the opportunity to address the pope about missions and Baptist/Catholic relations, Bennett's reasons for meeting the pope included the appropriateness of participation by the SBC -- the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination -- in a meeting that addressed the status of Christianity in America; the Baptist Faith and Message statement's affirmation of Christian cooperation; and assurances by SBC Foreign Mission Board officials that his participation probably would not hurt but could help the work of missionaries on foreign fields.

The maker of the motion to review EC staff participation in ecumenical events said Bennett was trapped in "the pope's PR extravaganza." Kenneth R. Barnett, a pastor from Lakewood, Colo., said Bennett, by virtue of his position, cannot act as a private citizen at such meetings and maintained "all Southern Baptists were affected" by Bennett's participation.

"If they could have met on neutral ground with meaningful dialogue -- to privately discuss the abuse of our missionaries by Catholics -- that would be different," said Barnett. Rather, Bennett "was part of the pope's PR extravaganza. We were part of something we should not have been. One man ought not unilaterally make that decision."

Barnett predicted the committee would approve participation in most meetings and could do so by mail. "I'm satisfied that on a lot of meetings we'd say he could go, as long as they were characterized by substance and meaningful dialogue," he said.

In other matters, committee members:

-- Expressed opposition to "the practice of hotels and motels which offer sexually explicit in-room movies to their guests." The measure was approved in response to a motion presented at the SBC annual meeting this summer in St. Louis that requested leadership in "a nationwide boycott of Holiday Inns, Inc., because of their involvement in the pornography industry."

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Members of a subcommittee that studied the issue learned Holiday Inn was not named in the statement because of the potential for a lawsuit, since not all Holiday Inn facilities offer sexually explicit movies. However, the EC statement also affirmed the "Resolution on Pornography" that was passed at the St. Louis meeting that said the "Holiday Inn chain is the largest offender" of offering in-room sexually explicit movies.

-- Authorized Bennett, in his capacity as EC president and treasurer, to take the "Crowder lawsuit" to the U.S. Supreme Court, if necessary. The suit was filed Dec. 5, 1985, by four messengers to the 1985 SBC annual meeting who said their rights had been violated by rulings made concerning the election of the 1986 Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees.

U.S. District Judge Robert Hall decided in favor of the SBC and the Executive Committee May 5, 1986, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. The plaintiffs -- Robert S. and Julia Crowder of Birmingham, Ala.; Henry Cooper of Windsor, Mo.; and H. Allen McCartney of Vero Beach, Fla. -- have appealed to the 11th U.S. Court of Appeals, where oral arguments were made May 27.

"We expect affirmation of the lower court's decision, and that will end the matter unless the plaintiffs should decide to carry the case to the Supreme Court," said EC attorney James P. Guenther of Nashville. Bennett reported the committee has spent about \$185,000 on the case.

-- Voted to print the 1987 SBC Christian Life Commission minority report to the convention's annual meeting in the 1988 SBC Annual. The action followed an SBC motion that the minority report -- made by 12 of 31 CLC commissioners -- be printed in the 1987 SBC Annual.

However, the minority report was not included in the 1987 book "because the copy for the Annual was sent to press prior to the regular meeting of the Executive Committee." SBC Recording Secretary Martin Bradley of Nashville reported he noted the minority report among the proceedings of the 1987 SBC meeting: "I attempted to maintain consistency in the way the business matter was reported. ... I picked up what I believed to be the essence of the report."

Arguing in favor of including the text of the report in the next Annual, SBC President Adrian P. Rogers of Memphis, Tenn., said: "The convention did vote to hear the minority report. It did happen. This needs to be a matter of record."

-- Proposed a bylaw revision regarding the SBC parliamentarian. The current bylaw 11, "Parliamentary Authority," merely notes "Robert's Rules of Order" (latest revised edition) is the SBC parliamentary authority.

The proposed revision renames the bylaw "Parliamentary Authority and Parliamentarians." It states, "The convention president, in conference with the vice presidents, shall select a chief parliamentarian and assistant parliamentarians, as necessary, to advise the presiding officers of the convention on matters of parliamentary procedure."

The proposal also notes the parliamentarian must have sufficient knowledge and experience and must be certified by at least one of the two national parliamentarians' associations.

-- Asked the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee to re-examine its request to amend the policy on exhibits at SBC annual meetings to allow exemptions for non-affiliated but predominately Southern Baptist seminaries. The original request would have allowed Luther Rice Seminary, Criswell Center for Biblical Studies and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary to operate exhibit booths at SBC annual meetings.

But EC members voted 40-20 to send the request back to committee for further study. Included in that measure was a proviso ensuring those three schools exhibit space at the 1988 SBC annual meeting, if the policy change is approved. The proviso was offered because the exhibit reservation's November deadline comes before the next EC meeting in February.

Two SBC agency heads spoke against a policy change. Arthur Walker of the Education Commission cited a potential for lawsuits by potential exhibitors who might be turned down. Lloyd Elder of the Sunday School Board said the "larger issue" is a question of whether the SBC is going to take a societal or convention approach to its work. He also warned a change would mean the convention would be "inundated by 30 publishers" who also would want exhibit space.

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EC member Paul Pressler, a Houston judge, countered that lawsuits, a societal approach and other publishers "have nothing to do with the issue. The issue is three schools' right to have a booth at the Southern Baptist Convention."

-- Accepted a report from the EC public relations workgroup that the seven-member panel "is studying the Baptist Press news releases from April 1, 1987 to Feb. 1, 1988, to determine balance in the news releases." Workgroup Chairman Julian Motley, pastor from Durham, N.C., said the intention of the study "is not to imply any imbalance but to address a concern held by many Southern Baptists."

In another move related to the denominational news service, EC members responded to an SBC motion calling for a new study of the Baptist Press structure. Their recommendation noted "conclusions derived from a study of the structure of Baptist Press in 1982 are still considered valid, and ... an additional study should not be made."

EC members also approved a motion instructing the Baptist Press staff to send members all Baptist Press releases.

-- Heard a challenge from SBC President Rogers urging Southern Baptists to end their bitterness toward one another. The pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., said he perceives bitterness as a "very real problem in Southern Baptist life" in the wake of the convention's theological/political struggle.

Citing bitterness is a source of hostility and evil speaking, Rogers said, "I don't want in our Southern Baptist Convention for us to be doctrinally straight and organizationally clicking and not to be filled with the love of the Lord Jesus."

He called for Southern Baptists to remove bitterness through repentance. He also urged them to hold true to their convictions: "Let's contend for what we believe. Let's be strong. Let's be courageous. But God forbid that we have any bitterness or hostility. God cannot bless us if we do."

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(Also contributing to this article were Dan Martin of the Baptist Press central office, Lonnie Wilkey of the Education Commission and Karen Benson of the Woman's Missionary Union.)

Public Affairs Funding,
Procedures Study Set

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
9/25/87

NASHVILLE (BP)--The question of who gets \$448,400 designated for "public affairs" in the 1987-88 Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program allocation budget will be studied by a five-person committee appointed during the September meeting of the SBC Executive Committee.

The committee, to be chaired by Scott Humphrey, a real estate broker from Alexandria, Va., will study "the details of the funding of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the funding of the Public Affairs Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and develop procedures to be recommended for the funding."

The question of "public affairs funding" was handed to the Executive Committee in late August when the reconstituted SBC Public Affairs Committee requested written clarification of an action at the 1987 annual meeting of the SBC which restructured and gave new responsibilities to the 18-member PAC, a standing committee which relates to the BJCPA, a coalition of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada.

The request asked clarification "as to whether or not" the intent of the action which restructured the PAC "was that funds allocated for the Public Affairs Committee were to be disbursed to that committee for their distribution to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs by vote" of the PAC.

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A special fact finding committee of the Executive Committee spent a year studying the matter before bringing a rewritten bylaw 18 to the 1987 SBC annual meeting in St. Louis. Messengers overwhelmingly adopted the bylaw which revised membership of the PAC, as well as gave it instructions to "work with" the BJCPA, but also to "function as a separate committee serving the Southern Baptist Convention."

During the 50-year history of the BJCPA, members of the PAC, by virtue of election to that committee, have been SBC representatives on the BJCPA board. Funding of the BJCPA has been provided through the Cooperative Program allocation budget, while funding for the PAC has been provided through the convention operating budget, administered by the Executive Committee. Traditionally, the PAC has met only in conjunction with the BJCPA, and only in recent years has it met separately.

The matter was complicated because the bylaw revision did not address the question of funding, and because the line item in the 1987-88 CP budget simply listed the \$448,400 to go to "public affairs."

Although the matter was discussed only briefly during the Executive Committee's plenary session, it was discussed at length during a meeting of the program and budget subcommittee, whose responsibilities include the allocation of financial resources to SBC entities. The creation of the study committee was a compromise between two other recommendations, one of which suggested providing funds to the PAC and another which declined to fund the PAC.

Subcommittee members were told they should consider seriously the SBC constitution and bylaws, as well as the program statement of the PAC and BJCPA, before making a decision.

During plenary session discussion, John Cothran, a real estate developer from Greenville, S.C., and chairman of the program and budget subcommittee, told members he has appointed a committee to study the funding and to report back to the subcommittee in January and to the entire EC at its Feb. 22-24 meeting.

Cothran did not publicly name the committee members until asked to do so by Robert Goode, a pastor from Greensboro, N.C. In addition to Humphrey, members are Tommy Hinson, a pastor from West Memphis, Ark.; C. Ray Fuller, a director of associational missions from Joliet, Ill.; James Baucom, a pastor from Martinsville, Va.; and Ann Smith, a homemaker from Greensboro, N.C.

Also to serve with the committee as ex-officio but voting members will be Cothran and Executive Committee Chairman Charles Sullivan, a pastor from Lenoir City, Tenn.

In a short meeting following the conclusion of the Executive Committee session, Humphrey told Baptist Press the committee will keep a narrow focus and concentrate only on the details of the funding. The committee scheduled two meetings, both to be held in Nashville, one for Oct. 15-16 and the other for Dec. 10-11. It also will meet in conjunction with the program and budget subcommittee meeting Jan. 20-22.

Humphrey told Baptist Press: "It seems to me we are dealing with two groups, and we voted one budget. We told the two groups to do a job, but we told them to do it jointly and independently. Both groups want some of the money or all of the money. It seems to me we are dealing with a budget and financial management problem."

He added the committee "wants to do what the convention wanted to do" in reference to providing funds for the PAC and the BJCPA.

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Executive Committee Sets
Cooperative Program Goal

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press
9/25/87

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee has proposed a \$145.6 million goal for the denomination's 1988-89 Cooperative Program unified budget.

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The Cooperative Program finances Southern Baptist missionary, educational and ministry efforts worldwide. It originates with Southern Baptists' individual gifts to their churches. The churches pass on a portion of those gifts to state Baptist conventions, which in turn pass on a portion of their receipts to the Executive Committee for disbursement to 19 Baptist entities.

The 1988-89 fiscal year will begin Oct. 1, 1988, and will end the following Sept. 30. The \$145.6 million goal will be presented for final approval to messengers to the SBC annual meeting next summer in San Antonio, Texas.

The Cooperative Program goal is divided into three categories. The basic operating budget, phase I is \$137,610,000 and will be distributed among the 19 entities. The capital needs budget is \$6,899,000 and will be divided between eight agencies. The basic operating budget, phase II is \$1,091,000 and, if met, will be distributed among the 19 entities in the same proportion as they received phase I funds.

The proposed budget is 4 percent larger than the 1987-88 budget of \$140 million.

Executive Committee members also voted to "receive as information" the 1988-89 Cooperative Program budget requests from the 19 recipient entities. Those requests -- specifically for the basic operating budget, phase I -- totalled \$144,671,883.

The committee also voted to "express gratitude for the tremendous growth in the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, the Cooperative Program and encourage continued strong support of these programs for missions and evangelism."

In another matter, the committee responded to a motion offered at the 1987 SBC annual meeting in St. Louis that requested a 10-member study committee be formed to "study the allocation formula for the distribution of Cooperative Program funds to our six seminaries in order to determine the most equitable and appropriate distribution, taking into consideration the geographical as well as the economic aspects of each."

The committee's response noted the institutions workgroup of its program and budget subcommittee is "the appropriate group to study the allocation formula." It requested that subcommittee report next September "concerning a formula which takes into consideration the geographical, economic aspects and other relevant matters pertaining to each seminary."

Alvin O. West, a layman from Washington, noted the presidents of the six SBC seminaries historically have been the primary shapers of the funding formula and asked, "Are we taking this out of their hands completely?"

James E. Jones, a pastor from Campbellsville, Ky., and chairman of the institutions workgroup, responded: "They are in agreement with us, and we do not intend whatsoever to leave them out of this matter. The seminary presidents realize this is not their formula. This is in the hands of the Executive Committee."

The subject of seminary finances also came up in discussion of three measures that authorize two seminaries to borrow money.

The first allows Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., "to borrow up to \$1,189,000 to establish a reserve fund for operating needs, with the understanding that the loan will be repaid from rental income from building tenants, over a period not to exceed 30 years."

The authorization further stipulated any reserve funds used for operating expenses would be restored to the reserve account within five years; collateral for the loan is a seminary-owned 32-unit apartment complex; and if the apartment complex is sold to satisfy the loan, "an amount equal to the \$1,110,646 in SBC capital needs funds used to purchase the apartment complex will be held from the sale of the complex to be used by the seminary for future capital projects. ..."

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Responding to committee members' concerns about setting up a reserve account to pay operating expenses, Golden Gate President William O. Crews noted the account is needed to cover "an anticipated shortfall over the next two years." The shortfall was set in motion by increased seminary programs that are financially dependent on the seminary's annual fund, which lagged during a recent interim period between presidents.

Crews told the Executive Committee the seminary's options were to "cut back these programs, sell the apartments (which are appreciating in value) or come to you." He admitted his choice was unpleasant but pledged to repay the reserve as soon as possible.

The second authorization also involved Golden Gate, allowing the seminary to borrow up to \$1,443,000 to construct the Southern California Seminary Center. Asked about the wisdom of approving this loan authorization in light of the reserve fund authorization, Kenneth Mahanes, chairman of the business and financial plan workgroup and a pastor from Dayton, Ohio, said the move "seemed to the committee to be a wise investment."

The seminary already is leasing space for its Southern California center, he noted. Construction would give the seminary rent-free space, and rent from other tenants of the new building would pay off the loan.

The third authorization allowed Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., "to borrow up to \$864,000 for the construction of student housing, with the understanding that the loan will be repaid from rental income and seminary operating funds within a period of 30 years."

Dealing with another financial matter, committee members requested its business and finance subcommittee to "continue to monitor the progress of the (SBC) Radio and Television Commission under the terms of the \$10 million loan authorization agreement adopted by the Executive Committee Sept. 16-18, 1985. That subcommittee voted to express concern to RTVC trustees "that borrowing from contingency reserve funds for operating program expenditures is not within the letter and spirit of the \$10 million loan agreement."

That loan authorization was granted to provide the RTVC with funds to help carry it through the early years of its ACTS television network. A special study committee of the Executive Committee has been working with the RTVC since the loan authorization was made, and that group ended its work with the Sept. 21-23 EC meeting.

While this matter was being discussed in a subcommittee meeting, subcommittee members voted 6-5 to overturn a motion that stated, "... the Executive Committee strongly urges the ACTS network to obtain a pledge to Southern Baptists from anyone who receives free or reduced rate time on the ACTS network not to be a candidate for elective office in the Southern Baptist Convention within one year of his last appearance on such free or reduced-rate time on the ACTS network."

When the RTVC issue came to the floor of the full Executive Committee, Paul Pressler, a layman from Houston, said, "People are wondering: Is the Radio and Television Commission/ACTS supporting candidates for the Southern Baptist Convention presidency?"

He noted two "Baptist Hour" preachers were candidates for office during the 1987 SBC annual meeting. Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church was a candidate for president, and James Flamming, pastor of First Baptist Church of Richmond, Va., was a candidate for first vice president.

"There is suspicion, and it must be corrected," Pressler said. "You are doing a dangerous thing for Southern Baptists to give the impression, accurate or not, that the 'Baptist Hour' is used to promote presidential campaigns."

RTVC President Jimmy R. Allen said the commission is "trying not to have candidates. We're looking for folks that will preach the gospel with commitment and skill." He said 'Baptist Hour' preachers are selected on 12-month rotations, and Jackson and Flamming were chosen by the commission to begin their rotations last January, "six months before the elections."

Pressler noted Jackson has told a Texas group he will allow himself to be nominated for SBC president again next summer and asked Allen, "Are you going to allow him to continue?"

Allen responded: "We will finish the rotation. This happened in the middle of the year. We will finish the year."

Pressler said he would offer a motion on the issue later in the Executive Committee meeting. When that time came, he declined to do so, saying: "I will leave it up to the sensitivity of the agency to see what they do about it. Because if they are not sensitive to this matter, it will be detrimental to that agency. This is not a threat; it is a matter of fact."

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Old-New Tensions Face
Future Of World Hunger

By Marty Croll

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NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--There has not been a lot of success with the type of program David Sorley is planning for people living in tar paper shanties in Nairobi, Kenya. But the Southern Baptist missionary is used to standing against odds.

Sorley, a physician, left the eastern Ugandan village of Bunambale more than a year ago, after national Baptists suggested that his method of dealing with disease and deprivation would be better practiced elsewhere. His method? Teach basic health care -- focus on preventative rather than curative medicine.

His story points up the tension between old and new ways Southern Baptists are meeting people's physical needs overseas. And while he evaluates his Uganda experience as having "limited success," many attempts by others at similar health programs -- such as those in Zimbabwe, Yemen and India -- have gained widespread acceptance.

Six years ago, the people of Bunambale told Sorley they wanted to know how to stay healthy. He trained local teams of Ugandans to perform basic healthcare procedures and led about half of them to faith in Christ. He also worked with Baptist churches in the area and began an outreach to Muslims. For four years he passed along everything he could about spiritual and physical health.

But some people never understood. "They said, 'Now, we've hung on here for four years -- when are you going to build a clinic and staff it with nurses and doctors?'" Sorley recalls. "Somehow 'missionary, white face,' became associated with that type of thing."

Sorley trained in the emerging field of community-based health care after missionary experiences in Ethiopia during the 1970s convinced him of the limitations of more traditional institutional health ministries. In Ethiopia he repeatedly saw the same preventable diseases and knew they resulted from a way of living that education could change.

Now Sorley is in the United States on furlough, still sorting out what he learned from Ugandans who wanted something more than community-based health. When he returns to Kenya next year, Sorley will try again, although he says programs in urban settings have a history of even fewer successes than in the more stable rural villages.

Sorley's approach to health relates less to healing and more to maintaining wholeness. He believes if Africans will learn how to keep themselves in good working order, day by day, they will need fewer of technology's costly cures. And less free medicine.

But such an approach is hard to sell to those who have become dependent upon Western giveaway programs, Sorley says. "People start asking, 'Where is my bag of flour? And where are my beans?'"

In Uganda Sorley had hoped to set up a healthcare system that could continue without him. To an extent, he succeeded. The workers he trained continue to help those who come to them. Weeks before he left, a neighboring village began working with him to set up their own community health program. And days before he left, he received word that Ugandan health services had decided to try using some of his approaches to health care.

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Sorley's project is the type of approach strategists at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board believe is needed to stem mass deprivation during coming years. Worldwide, as cardboard ghettos swell and the gap widens between very rich and very poor, the board is seeking new ways to reach people. Southern Baptists in their churches will consider the plight of the hurting when they recognize World Hunger Awareness Day Oct. 11.

Compared to 10 years ago, the board pays increasing attention to solving problems rather than simply meeting immediate needs. More emphasis than ever is given to teaching hygiene and nutrition and providing clean water. In short, more for action instead of reaction, and prevention instead of Band-Aids.

For example, only about one-third of the Southern Baptist world hunger dollar goes to buy and distribute food, as opposed to 1977 when almost all of it went for that. "Our missionaries are trying to set up model projects that deal with underlying causes," says John Cheyne, the board's chief hunger-relief planner. "These projects can then be easily duplicated by local groups and governments."

Southern Baptist missionary Harold Watson has been working 23 years to perfect one such project in the shadow of the highest peak in the Philippines. Through the Baptist Rural Life Center he developed and the Christian farmers' clubs he helped start, Watson and his team of Filipino agriculturists give new life to rutted and eroded hillsides. They have offered hope to thousands of peasant farmers throughout Asia who have come and taken the ideas home to their own washed-out gardens.

The underlying purpose of the Rural Life Center is concealed in its name, REDEEM: Research, Extension, Development, Education, Evangelism and Missions. Projects like Watson's offer Southern Baptists a special opportunity to reach people, according to Cheyne. Combined with a Christian emphasis, these programs teach how spiritual and physical wholeness relate. About 40 churches have grown out of Watson's work.

"I can't say we've lifted the living standard of people by 1 or 2 percent -- I cannot say that -- but I can say there are definitely footprints, that the evidence of what we are doing is over the island," Watson says. From one end of Mindanao to another, visitors can see reflections of his work, at various stages of development.

These projects have hidden benefits. In 1985 Watson was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award -- considered the Nobel Prize of Asia -- for encouraging international use of his hillside farming technique. His use of Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) has gained fame among development people worldwide. And that means it is in demand.

Cheyne hopes demand will carry SALT and other projects behind lines where traditional missionaries are unable to go. He foresees teams of short-term workers taking ideas like SALT into such countries, one way Southern Baptists will share a gospel of physical and spiritual wholeness with countries that have turned away missionaries because of politics and ideology.

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CORRECTION

In BP 87-141, dated Sept. 22, 1987, in the article, "Senate Gets Mixed Signals On SBC Endorsement of Bork," please delete the sixth paragraph, which reads, as sent: "According to a review of SBC annuals by Lynn E. May Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission, the convention has never publicly supported the election or confirmation of a public official. A resolution passed by the SBC in 1976 "reaffirmed the long tradition of non-endorsement of any political candidate."

Replace the sixth paragraph with:

"Lynn E. May Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission, said he has reviewed SBC annuals since 1845 many times and cannot recall any other time when the SBC or one of its agencies or committees has publicly supported by name the confirmation or election of a candidate for public office. However, in 1976, the convention adopted a motion which 'reaffirmed the long tradition of non-endorsement of any political candidate.'"

Thanks, Baptist Press