



**BAPTIST PRESS**

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October 26, 1987

87-160

Mercer Trustees Firm  
Behind Godsey, System

N-10  
(62)  
By Jack U. Harwell

ATLANTA (BP)--Trustees of Mercer University have taken a solid stand in support of President R. Kirby Godsey, in defense of the present system of electing Mercer trustees and in favor of a continued relationship with the Georgia Baptist Convention.

The stances were approved unanimously by 30 of Mercer's 45 trustees in a called session at Mercer Atlanta.

They met in response to a 16-page booklet put together by layman Lee Roberts of Marietta and mailed to about 6,000 persons in Georgia.

Roberts' booklet -- called an open letter to all Georgia Baptists -- charged Mercer with a long list of "immoral" acts and "debauchery" on the campus, and alleged that Godsey was a "universalist," based on speeches he made last January at Houston Baptist University.

The 16-page booklet by Roberts demanded that Mercer change its system of electing trustees -- letting Georgia Baptist Convention "freely" elect them -- or the convention would be asked to withhold allocations to Mercer; trustees would be asked to resign and trustees would be called on to return about \$13 million given to the school by the convention since Godsey became president eight years ago.

In the Oct. 23 meeting, Mercer trustees expressed 10 "resolves." Trustee Chairman Bob Steed of Atlanta said they were approved unanimously by the 30 trustees present.

One resolved to "maintain and strengthen the university's commitment to the fundamental Baptist traditions of academic and religious freedom, and the priesthood of the believer."

The second resolved to "proudly affirm the leadership of university President R. Kirby Godsey. He has demonstrated wisdom, strength and administrative ability which will serve Mercer and its students for years to come."

That resolve also stated: "Admonished by Matthew 7:1-2, we call upon all Baptists to respect the religious freedom of one another and cease the deplorable spectacle of intolerance of, and charges against, brothers and sisters in Christ."

The third resolve said that "We affirm that a university with a Baptist heritage should be distinct in certain aspects of campus and student activities." Therefore, it said, the school does not allow serving or consumption of alcoholic beverages on any of its campuses; does not permit publication in student newspapers material unsuitable in daily newspapers of Georgia; does not permit advertisement of alcohol, tobacco, contraceptives or firearm products; does not permit showing of X-rated or pornographic films on its campus and does not condone publications such as Playboy, "which demean the worth and sexuality of human beings."

Mercer trustees also resolved to "affirm the historic and mutually supportive relationship between Mercer and Georgia Baptists. The university is strengthened by the spiritual and financial support of Baptists."

Another resolve said "Georgia Baptists will be heard by the trustees and officers of the university," but neither Mercer nor Georgia Baptists "should nor will dominate or control the other."

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Some of the trustees' strongest statements came in a "resolve" which stated: "Pursuant to the charter of the university and our appointment as trustees, we cannot and will not compromise the authority vested in the trustees alone for operation and control of affairs of the university. We cannot and will not relinquish the responsibility which the charter vests in the trustees for nominating successors to the board."

Mercer trustees also rejected any "joint review panel that is charged to investigate or to study Mercer. It is the trustees and the trustees alone who bear responsibility for overseeing endeavors of the university." They said any question about governance of Mercer should be addressed directly to the president or the chairman of trustees.

Mercer trustees also spoke firmly for allowing non-Baptist persons to serve on the board of trustees. "The need for diversity within the board of trustees must be respected and affirmed by the Georgia Baptist Convention," the trustees resolved.

The final "resolve" by Mercer trustees said "the university must present an academic environment that places no religious constraints on inquiry, debate, scholarship, teaching, research or writing. At the same time, the university is fundamentally committed to the proposition that the Christian faith and Judeo-Christian moral and religious values will be presented in the academic program of the university, and that opportunities for worship and spiritual growth will be made available for students, faculty and staff."

At a press conference following the trustee meeting, Godsey told reporters: "The trustees reaffirmed the commitment of the university to being a Baptist university, to intellectual, academic and spiritual freedom."

He said: "This controversy has brought the university family together. When the foundations of religious and academic freedoms are shaken, we will stand together, united."

Trustee chairman Steed added: "Our trustees are of one mind, respectful of the Georgia Baptist Convention and its members, but emphatic in our determination not to change the system of electing trustees and governing Mercer University."

Griffin Bell, a Mercer trustee and former U.S. Attorney General, said, "The convention has no legal remedy except to cut off funds. ... If they put us out, we would have to resort to going directly to the churches."

Bell added: "This fight started 10 years ago in Texas. I wish they would go back to Texas and leave us alone. ... Mr. Roberts is apparently the leader in Georgia. I don't know who is helping him. I do know it is a grave issue. ... I don't think Lee Roberts represents the majority of Georgia Baptists, or Southern Baptists. We do think Georgia is the first state convention they are trying to capture."

Answering questions about his theological views, Godsey said: "I have never been called a heretic before. Baptists have always been known for the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer."

"Each person is responsible to God alone for his beliefs. That applies to me as well."

To which Steed responded: "I think Kirby Godsey's theology is as solid as a rock."

Many local associations and churches in Georgia have adopted resolutions about Mercer, some for and some against Godsey and the system of electing trustees.

Atlanta association voiced strong support. So did First Baptist Church in Augusta, birthplace of the SBC. But two of the state's largest churches -- Atlanta's First Baptist Church and Marietta's Eastside Baptist Church -- announced they would designate their Cooperative Program contributions around Mercer.

Charles Stanley is pastor of the Atlanta church; he is past president of the SBC. Clark Hutchinson is pastor at the Eastside church; he is current president of the Georgia Baptist Convention and will preside over the annual meeting Nov. 9-11 in Savannah. Hutchinson also is chairman of directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

## CORRECTIONS:

In Baptist Press mailed 10/22/87, in "Wife, 95, Praises Husband For 100 Years of Service" please make the 11th paragraph read "Dona Vera" rather than "Doq a Vera" as sent.

Also, in Baptist Press mailed 10/23/87, in "Dallas Baptist President Marvin Watson Resigns" in 9th and 20th paragraphs, please delete the reference to main matter (deleted word underlined). In 17th paragraph, please change national leaders to denominational leaders. In the same paragraph, please change the reference to \$2.5 million to \$3 million.

Thanks, BP

MK Surrenders To God,  
Becomes A Missionary

F - FMB  
By Eric Miller

Baptist Press  
10/26/87

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A daughter of missionaries to Africa began to hear God calling her to be a missionary when she was 11, but she resisted God.

Years later, however, Karen Ray and her husband, Mark, committed themselves to missions when they heard God speaking to them through a sermon by the late Baker James Cauthen shortly before he retired as executive director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The Rays were appointed fraternal representatives to Australia by the board in October, one day after her parents retired as Southern Baptist missionaries. During the appointment service, she recalled tearfully the years of running from God.

As an MK (missionary kid) growing up in Zimbabwe, she often was asked, "Are you going to be a missionary, too?"

"I would always politely say, 'No,'" she said. "But in my heart," she said with tears, "I would always say, 'Never! That's what my parents are -- not me!'"

During college, she married Ray, who had grown up in Korea, also as a Southern Baptist MK. He began to sense a call to the mission field and mentioned this to his wife.

"That really horrified me," she said. "That subject was dropped in our household, with the understanding that it was never to be brought up again."

Early in their marriage, the Rays did not attend church regularly. They either had to work on Sundays or they slept late on Sunday mornings. Ray read his Bible and prayed, but his wife did not.

She still was fighting a battle against God -- a battle that had gotten intense in college. When she left Africa for college in the United States, she told God, "Leave me alone -- I'm going to do what I want to do."

Off on her own for the first time, she went to fraternity parties and nightclubs and drank alcohol. She stayed away from church for three years and would not even pray during that time. Her grades were bad.

She was miserable, she recalled, adding, "I really sank to the bottom of the valley."

A few years later, after she and Ray were married, they went to Foreign Missions Week at the Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. They went simply for a vacation, since both sets of parents were going to be there during furlough.

"God sent in the heavy artillery through the powerful messages of Dr. Baker James Cauthen," she recalled of that week in August 1979. Cauthen challenged people like the Rays by saying, "If you don't go to the mission field, who will go?"

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"I finally put down my battle shield," she said. "What a burden lifted, and what a joy that I had lost that war."

She found her husband, and they cried together. Each had heard the same call and this gave them "goose bumps." During the service that night, they publicly committed their lives to foreign missions as the congregation sang "Wherever He Leads, I'll Go."

Board counselors at Glorieta told the Rays they would need seminary training and church work experience.

Ray resigned from a promising position as a bank loan officer and became a church janitor while enrolling at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Times were tough for them financially. When their second child was born, they paid the hospital bills with insurance money that had been allocated to repair their hailstorm-damaged car, which never was repaired.

Their finances improved, however, when he got a counseling position with a psychiatric institute in Fort Worth and she got a library position with a company there.

After seminary, they moved to Los Angeles, where he became pastor of the English-speaking congregation of a Korean church, Berendo Street Baptist Church.

Foreign Mission Board staff had estimated the Rays would obtain seminary training and church experience within five years. But it took them eight because they spent five years working their way through seminary.

"It's been a joy to serve our Lord, to grow and to mature and to learn to depend on him in all these years," Mrs. Ray said during their appointment service.

Ray's parents, Dan and Frances Ray, Southern Baptist missionaries to Korea for 34 years, will retire in a few years. The night before the appointment service, Mrs. Ray's parents, Sam and Ona Jones, retired as Southern Baptist missionaries to Zimbabwe after 32 years and were honored as emeritus missionaries.

To their parents, who were at the appointment service, Mrs. Ray said, "From the bottom of our hearts, we want to thank you for making us a part of your call in serving the Lord."

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Koreans Set Up Foreign Board  
To Meet Mission Responsibility

N-FMB  
By Michael D. Chute

Baptist Press  
10/26/87

SEOUL, Korea (BP)--Korean Baptists have broken from their societal approach to missions in a move to more effectively meet their "responsibility" to global evangelization.

Messengers to the annual meeting of the Korean Baptist Convention voted overwhelmingly late in September to form their own Foreign Mission Board.

The move was applauded by convention leaders as a manifestation of Korean Baptists' desire to become a "sending church" after three decades as "a receiving church." The new mission organization comes out of a real concern on the part of Korean Baptists to be "involved in the world missions enterprise," said Bill Fudge, a Southern Baptist missionary to Korea. He was an adviser during the formation process.

For the past several years, mission societies carried the foreign efforts of Korean Baptist churches. The three major groups were the Overseas Missions Society, made up of about 15 large churches; the Southeast Asia Missions Society, formed by 30 to 40 smaller churches; and the Pacific Islands Missions Society. There were also other, smaller societies.

The societies' problems of "control and gathering support" for missionaries were catalysts in forming the Korean Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said Han Ki Man, pastor of Yoido Baptist Church and chairman of the Asia Global Evangelization Consultation Committee. "More organization was necessary if we were going to do more than we were doing, if we were going to grow," he said.

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Han also cited the Korean leaders' realization that a convention-level organization "would benefit all the churches -- not a few select ones -- and would be beneficial to the development of the convention itself." Leaders felt the need "to pull together if we were really going to do something major," he added.

In an agreement which ended months of dialogue and negotiation, all Korean Baptist mission societies agreed to dissolve and combine their efforts.

Under the plan, five trustees of the new mission board will come from each of the three major societies. Five trustees will be Southern Baptist missionaries. Another five trustees will be selected at large by the Korean Baptist Convention. The 25-member board of trustees initially will be responsible for trying to broaden the base of support Koreans are giving to missions.

Korean Baptist churches support one missionary in each of four countries -- Paraguay, Taiwan, Japan and Fiji. They have one missionary in training for an assignment in Southeast Asia, which likely will be in Thailand. The Koreans recently appointed a missionary for service in the Philippines. They also support the mission work of Korean pastors in Brazil, France and Indonesia.

"Our Korean church is still very limited in its experience in the sending of missionaries," Han explained. "Yet we are awaking more and more to the fact that we have responsibility because of the grace that we have received (through Southern Baptist missionaries)."

From his study of Southern Baptist history, Han believes mission organizations "were formed for the purpose of doing that mission task that the churches, and individuals in those churches, felt God had called them to do."

"In Korea too, churches, church members, and pastors who have a vision for missions also have the belief that we should be getting together, trying to do what God is calling us to do," he said. "It starts with the local church, but it can come through the entire denomination to organize for world evangelization."

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(Mo.)

Iowa Baptist Annual Meeting  
Emphasizes Starting Churches

By Trennis Henderson

Baptist Press  
10/26/87

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (BP)--Emphasizing the theme, "Reaching People -- Starting Churches," Iowa Baptist messengers met Oct. 16-17 for the 16th annual meeting of the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship.

More than 120 messengers and 50 guests from 36 churches attended the two-day meeting at Immanuel Baptist Church in Cedar Rapids, said ISBF Executive Director Wyndell Jones.

Major business included the adoption of an \$894,049 budget for 1988 and approval of constitution and bylaw changes to restructure the size and representation of the fellowship's executive board.

The 1988 budget, a 1 percent increase over 1987, represents an effort to bring the budget into line with actual receipts, Jones explained. He said current giving indicates the 1987 budget may be met for the first time in recent years.

In addition to Cooperative Program unified budget gifts from Iowa Baptist congregations, other major income for the fellowship will include \$592,444 from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, \$31,684 from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and \$15,000 from the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Jones said messengers voted to channel 15 percent of the fellowship's income into the national Cooperative Program, a 1 percent increase over 1987. He added the ISBF's goal is to increase national CP gifts 1 percent annually toward an eventual total of 21 percent.

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Executive board changes include reducing the number of board members from 45 to 24 and electing at least two members from each of the state's eight associations. The changes will allow more balanced geographical representation while reducing the amount of executive board travel expenses, Jones said. The changes were adopted unanimously without debate.

Resolutions approved by messengers included affirmation of the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee recommendations adopted by SBC messengers in June, encouragement for churches to prepare for Year of the Laity and appreciation to Hannibal-LaGrange College in Hannibal, Mo., for its assistance to Iowa Baptists.

Jones said the "overriding tone" of the annual meeting "was a strong emphasis on starting new churches and strengthening churches we already have." Fourteen new missions or Bible study groups have been started so far this year, putting the fellowship on its way to achieving its long-range goal of having 100 Southern Baptist churches and missions in Iowa by 1991, he said.

Keynote speakers at this year's annual meeting included Don Wideman, Missouri Baptist Convention executive director; Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board; and Gerald Davidson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Arnold, Mo.

The ISBF's president and vice president each were re-elected to second one-year terms. Terry Davis, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Clinton, was re-elected president, and Ty Berry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bettendorf, will serve again as vice president. Paul Plavnick, pastor of Northbrook Baptist Chapel in Cedar Rapids, was elected secretary.

Next year's annual meeting will be Oct. 14-15 at Albia Road Baptist Church in Ottumwa.

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Housing Bureau Makes  
San Antonio Assignments

N-10

Baptist Press  
10/26/87

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--All downtown hotel rooms have been assigned to messengers who will attend the 1988 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, reported Convention Manager Tim A. Hedquist.

"Almost 4,000 hotel rooms in the downtown area have been filled," said Hedquist, vice president for business and finance of the SBC Executive Committee.

The assignments were made Oct. 14 by the San Antonio Housing Bureau, an organization unaffiliated with the SBC, Hedquist said. All 4,000 rooms were assigned to people whose housing requests forms were mailed to the Housing Bureau and postmarked Oct. 1, he added.

The Housing Bureau currently is feeding all assignments into a computer and sending an acknowledgement to each applicant who received a room, he said. The downtown hotels later will confirm the assignments and request room deposits.

However, applicants submitted about 1,000 more requests than rooms available in the downtown block, he said, noting the majority of the unfilled requests also were mailed Oct. 1.

These requests have been sent to the Executive Committee in Nashville, Hedquist reported: "We're notifying them immediately. People who did not get rooms will know before the people who got rooms receive their confirmations. Each applicant who did not get a room will receive a list of the other 41 hotels in the city, as well as a list of travel agents who have blocked rooms."

San Antonio has about 9,000 hotel rooms in addition to the downtown block of 4,000, Hedquist said. "Housing is going to be very, very tight," he reported, noting several groups already have blocked out rooms from the pool of 9,000, and others are attempting to block more.

Many of the blocked rooms are being reserved by people or groups who will attempt to funnel them to convention participants who are affiliated with their faction within the SBC theological/political struggle, he said.

"What concerns me is that when we come to the convention, we will have rooms available (from these blocks) all over the city," Hedquist said. "But it will be very difficult to get messengers who need the rooms connected with hotels that can help them."

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