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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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87-161

Brotherhood Trustees Affirm
Handling Of Peace CommitteeN-60
(B'hood)
By Jack Childs

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--"The Brotherhood Commission has established the position that we're a service agency of all Southern Baptist churches, and we have stayed out of the convention's controversy," Brotherhood Commission President James H. Smith told the agency's trustees during their Oct. 21-24 meeting.

As follow-up to the Southern Baptist Convention's Peace Committee Report, Smith told the Brotherhood trustees he distributed copies of the Baptist Faith and Message to all Brotherhood Commission employees and "walked through it with them."

"We have a small staff -- only about 65 people -- and I know their hearts, but I told them to come and talk with me if anyone had a problem accepting the Baptist Faith and Message Statement. No one came."

In a unanimous vote, trustees expressed approval of the way the matter has been handled by the Brotherhood Commission.

Les Albro, an automobile dealer in Jeffersonville, Ind., was re-elected chairman of the trustees; Billy Summerlin, a hospital administrator in Gadsden, Ala., was re-elected vice chairman; and Tom Browning, a Social Security administrator from Prairie Village, Kan., was re-elected secretary.

After a six-month trial period, trustees gave permanent approval to a restructure of the Brotherhood Commission's staff which resulted in two major divisions of work, program services and support services.

Coupled with this action was approval of a change in by-laws reducing the number of the agency's committees to two. Each committee will elect three officers who also will serve on the executive committee with the officers of the agency.

Other approved by-law changes included establishment of a nominating committee process for electing officers of the trustees in the future. Up until now, elections have been conducted from the floor.

Trustees participated in a full day's training session in the new Brotherhood curriculum which was released to Southern Baptist churches this fall. In a joint session, state Brotherhood leaders, staff and trustees also studied "The Doctrine of the Priesthood of Believers."

In other action, trustees approved allocation of financial assistance from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to Brotherhood Commission work in new work areas.

They also received an update on the Brotherhood Commission's involvement in providing assistance to the Korea Baptist Seminary in Taejon for lay involvement in the church.

Smith also presented a plan from the men's department of the Baptist World Alliance to provide Bibles to Russia at a cost of \$5 each and told how the Brotherhood Commission plans to assist in this project.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Brotherhood Commission

Homebound Latin Americans
Said Ripe For TV Ministry

By Art Toalston

F - FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--With the increase of terrorism in some parts of Latin America, people stay at home more and keep their television sets on an average of 12 hours a day.

This situation, according to Jose Missena, a Baptist leader from Paraguay, makes the continent ripe for a Baptist television ministry that can meet Latin Americans' deepest needs.

He shared his heartbreak -- and his vision -- during a retreat of Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board administrators in Richmond, Va.

While locked inside their homes, behind "great walls, with large dogs," families are watching TV, and Missena hopes someday Baptists will give them something substantive to watch. Missena is the board's Latin American consultant for evangelism and church growth.

One study showed TV sets are on for an average of 12 hours a day, he said. Soap operas comprise much of the fare, and these simply increase "the sense of desperation in the lives of people," he said.

In war-torn El Salvador, for example, Sunday evening worship services begin at 5. "Just to go out at night is a great danger," Missena said.

Programs featuring such American preachers as Jimmy Swaggart of Baton Rouge, La., are aired throughout Latin America, and numerous Bible studies related to these telecasts are springing up, he said.

Viewers tend to get the impression these preachers are "the sole proprietors" of truth and most evangelicals in America endorse what they say, Missena said.

Baptists, on the other hand, offer nothing in the way of continent-wide television programming, and nothing is in the works.

Latin Americans know there are Baptist churches in their neighborhoods or in other communities, "but people do not know what it is we really believe," he said.

If Baptists take no action, Missena is worried "the electronic churches are going to push us off in a corner."

He noted that when Roman Catholic Pope John Paul II visits Latin America, he delivers major addresses on human problems such as violence and hunger. People then ask Baptist acquaintances, "'And what do you believe about these subjects?' We (Baptists) have not really defined ourselves on these subjects," Missena said.

If Latin America's Baptists had a quality TV ministry, they could visit homes and find people ready to invite them in to talk.

Alan Compton, the board's senior media consultant, endorsed Missena's vision but added Baptists will need an overall evangelistic strategy. Otherwise, he said, "We will not have Christians mobilized to take advantage of the results."

Status Quo Mindset
Stifles New Growth

By Frank Wm. White

N-SSB

NASHVILLE (BP)--A status quo mindset could be the greatest barrier to growth in the Southern Baptist Convention because it creates an unwillingness to reach out to others, the leader of Southern Baptist Sunday school work charged.

One of the most crucial indicators of satisfaction with the status quo is a decline in the number of new Sunday schools started during the past year, said Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school division at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Southern Baptists started 826 new Sunday schools during the 1986-87 church year, which ended Sept. 30. The total is down from the 944 starts of the previous year and falls short of the goal of 1,400.

Texas, which has led the convention in starts for several years, also reported the largest number of starts for 1986-87, 268. However, this total was down by 127 from the 395 starts recorded in 1985-86 and below the 331 starts of 1984-85.

Florida again ranked second among state conventions in 1986-87, recording 89 starts, a slight increase from 81 the previous year and 72 in 1984-85.

California had the third-highest total with 34 starts -- slightly more than half the 61 recorded in 1985-86.

"We've got to start new Sunday schools if we are going to reach the Bold Mission Thrust goal of 50,000 Southern Baptist churches by the year 2000," Piland said.

Historically, new churches begin from a new Sunday school work or a mission point that has a Sunday school early in its development, he pointed out.

The need to reach people who are not attending any church and would likely not attend a larger, established church is a more critical reason for starting Sunday schools, Piland explained. "Every record we have shows that new work grows faster than established work," he said.

Piland said new Sunday schools are needed in traditional areas as well as newer convention areas. Population shifts create new locations for Sunday schools, and critical needs for new work exist in most urban areas.

"We don't even need to talk about a saturation point. As long as you have 50 percent of the people in Nashville and other Bible Belt cities who are unchurched, you need more churches and Sunday schools. Two-thirds of the nation's population is unchurched. We can't reach them without more units," Piland explained.

"People are almost blinded into not seeing the world around them. We need to keep the mission of the church in mind, and we won't have a status quo mindset."

Joining Texas, Florida and California in the top 10 conventions are Alabama, North Carolina and Ohio, with 31 each; Georgia, 30; Northwest, 29; Michigan, 24; and Arizona, 21.

Totals for other conventions are Kentucky, 17; Missouri, 16; Oklahoma, 15; Indiana and Tennessee, 14 each; Louisiana, Nevada and New England, 13 each; Arkansas, 12; New York, 11; South Carolina, 9; Illinois, Pennsylvania/South Jersey and Virginia, 8 each; Minnesota/Wisconsin, Mississippi and Colorado, 7 each; Kansas/Nebraska and Wyoming, 6 each; Alaska, Maryland/Delaware and Utah/Idaho, 5 each; Hawaii, 4; Iowa, Northern Plains and West Virginia, 3 each; and Puerto Rico, New Mexico and foreign, 2 each.

Differences Attract
Spouses, Conflict

By Terri Lackey

N-SSB

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--While a husband and wife are attracted to each other as much by their differences as by their likenesses, it is those differences which often cause disagreements, a married couple told their peers.

Bobbye and Britton Wood, a preparatory school English department chair and a family ministries consultant, respectively, from Fort Worth, Texas, led sessions at a Fall Festival of Marriage conference at Glorieta (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

About 550 people attended the weekend conference sponsored by the family ministry department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

While differences can work to strengthen a marriage, the conflicts that arise from those differences must be dealt with in a positive way, said the Woods, members of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

"Disagreements are usually absent of anger, while conflicts have the presence of anger," he said.

Because husbands and wives many times grew up in households with very different conflict management styles, they must learn to deal with each other's style until a mutual agreement on how to settle conflict can be worked out, he said. The Woods call that process "creative use of conflict."

They said inappropriate ways for handling conflict include shouting, third-party (taking it out on someone else), sulking or 'power' pouting, bringing up the conflict in front of others, denial or avoidance, and physical or verbal abuse.

"No relationship is without conflict," he said. "You either have conflict or you're just not honest about it."

To settle conflicts which arise, a couple must be committed to the growth of the relationship and they must find a communication style that works for them, he said.

"Most importantly, couples must be aware that conflict arises from deep feelings," he added.

"If you find out what is causing this person to feel so strongly about the conflict, this conflict can eventually lead to intimacy," she said.

The Woods gave as an example a conflict they had recently over his hoarding of magazines. One day she went through the house and threw them all in the trash, making Britton furious.

After the anger subsided, they took the time to find out why each was so angry about the other's habit. It turned out she was terrified he would become a "pack rat" like his grandfather, junking up their home. And he discovered he kept all of his magazines because of his thirst for knowledge.

"When we worked out the basic conflict, we began to be able to see the other's feeling and deal with it," he said.

"Approaching conflicts in this way can be a win-win situation," she added.

"It is important to realize that you don't have to always be right," he said. "There are probably three perspectives in conflict -- my understanding, my spouse's understanding and the right understanding."

The Woods suggested couples find the conflict management style that works best in their relationship and practice it.

Arab Seminary Students
Meet In Cyprus For Now

N-FMB

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)--The Arab Baptist Theological Seminary has been denied official recognition by Cyprus, creating a problem for students applying for visas. However, government officials have agreed to provide two-month renewable visas for the students to continue their training, at least temporarily.

Seminary training will continue for the current academic year, but long-range plans for its location are uncertain. Ten students from Lebanon, three from Syria and two from Jordan are being affected by the visa restrictions, said Bill Trimble, a Southern Baptist missionary and dean of students.

The seminary moved from Beirut to Cyprus in March after the U.S. government ended passport privileges for Americans in Lebanon. Three Southern Baptist missionaries are the nucleus of the faculty: Trimble of Rodessa, La.; Emmett Barnes of Potosi, Mo.; and David King of Livingston, N.J.

The seminary operated in Cyprus by renting classroom space and housing for 16 students at an interdenominational conference center near Nicosia. Two students, one from Lebanon and the other from Jordan, graduated in June.

The fall semester already had been delayed more than three weeks while the seminary waited for word of the Cypriot Ministry of Education's decision, Trimble said. Space has been rented in a hotel in the port city of Larnaca.

A revised application for the seminary to operate on the Mediterranean island was submitted in August. The government turned down an initial application earlier in the summer.

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French Baptists To Pray
For Home Missions In November

N-FMB

Baptist Press
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LONGJUMEAU, France (BP)--French Baptists have designated November as a month of prayer for home missions.

All 82 churches affiliated with the Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches of France will pray daily for the 38 congregations being supported through home missions efforts across France.

"This new coordinated prayer effort is a first for French Baptists, and we're really excited about what it can mean," reported Charles F. "T" Thomas, Southern Baptist missionary who serves as consultant for Interior Baptist Mission, the federation's home mission board.

The new prayer effort is being coordinated by the board in cooperation with the Union of Baptist Women. A poster showing mission locations and a book detailing specific prayer requests are being distributed to Baptists to use in the new program.

"French Baptists are asking that Southern Baptists join with them in praying for evangelism in France," said Thomas. Southern Baptists have a major interest in France, since 17 Southern Baptist missionary couples serve there. All are involved in church starting except for one couple serving an English-language, international congregation in Paris.

French Baptists have grown in recent years from 3,125 members in 56 churches and 48 missions in 1980 to about 4,500 members in 82 churches and some 70 missions and preaching points today. French Baptists baptized more than 300 converts during 1986. The MasterLife discipleship training program being introduced to French Baptists now is expected to lead to greater numerical and spiritual growth in the future, Thomas said.

Evangelism remains a major need in France, where evangelicals remain small in number. While many of France's 55.4 million people are labeled Christian, most have little or no church involvement.

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Students Take Gospel
To Fort Worth's Poorest

By Mark Wingfield

(CO)
(SWBTS)

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--If Jesus had brought his earthly ministry to Fort Worth, Texas, he surely would have visited Butler Housing Project.

Instead, two Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary students are walking where Jesus would have walked, taking the gospel to those who might not hear it otherwise.

Jesus often ministered to the poor and downtrodden of his society. And the 1,400 residents of Butler live in the poorest, most crime-ridden section of Fort Worth, isolated from the community by a triangle of major highways.

Most residents don't own cars and can't even afford 75 cents to ride the city bus. So-called friends who do have cars may charge \$3 for a ride downtown.

"These people aren't going to hear the gospel unless we take it to them," said Jacques George, a social work student intern with Tarrant Baptist Association. Through the association's Urban Allies program, George is assigned to meet the needs of Butler residents.

Although the material and physical needs are obvious, spiritual needs may not seem as pressing to residents, she said: "Their focus is on right now -- how I'm going to put food on the table, how I'm going to put clothes on my kids. Spiritual needs aren't a priority.

"But they're hungering spiritually, even if they don't know it."

She tries to visit every family that moves into the project. In that initial encounter, she lets them know how the Baptist churches of Tarrant County can help meet physical needs and how the Baptist mission in Butler can meet spiritual needs.

Brighter Hope Mission began with two women George led to accept Christ in 1985. They began a home Bible study which has grown into a mission meeting in the project's community center.

Carl Burns, a doctor of education student, is mission pastor. He commutes to Dallas to teach in a public school every weekday, is writing his doctoral thesis and ministers in Butler several days each week.

That means the mission's greatest need is volunteer teachers, he said. At least three area churches have joined the effort, lending members to teach Bible classes and direct the mission's activities.

Burns gives the mission all the time he can, because the need is so great, he said. "I look over the faults and keep going," he noted.

In its first 19 months, Brighter Hope has baptized 22 people and accepted 16 others by profession of faith. Members plan to have a church building by 1990.

Other religious groups have come and gone in the project, Burns said: "The residents don't expect us to be permanent. But we've already been here longer than any religious organization. I'm proud of our track record."

Burns said his greatest ministry is evangelism: "I'm trying to move the gospel into the hearts of these people. We're drilling in them Jesus, Jesus, Jesus all the time.

"The gospel is being carried."

In the mission activities, the Butler children eagerly look for friendship from the volunteer leaders. The adults intensely soak up every devotional thought they hear.

Despite ongoing struggles for survival, those people George and Burns have reached cling to their faith. "Their faith is the only hope they have in life," George said.

That makes the mission of Brighter Hope even more important.