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November 19, 1987

87-176

President, Administration
Team Resign At Southeastern

By R.G. Puckett

N-CO
(NC)

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--W. Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary for nearly 14 years, resigned during a special called meeting of trustees Nov. 17.

Morris Ashcraft, who has been academic dean for seven years, also resigned from the deanship, but will remain on the faculty.

Both resignations are effective July 31, 1988, or when successors are named.

The resignations of the two top officials at the Southern Baptist Convention-affiliated seminary had been expected since the trustees' fall meeting Oct. 12-13. Both Lolley and Ashcraft told the faculty and student body in a chapel service Oct. 22 they were setting in motion the termination of their service to the 37-year-old seminary.

Somewhat unexpected were the resignation of three top administrators: Jerry Niswonger, assistant to the president for student development; W. Robert Spinks, assistant to the president for financial development; and Rodney V. Byard, assistant to the president for communications.

Niswonger will take early retirement because of circumstances at the seminary and a heart condition. The alumnus of the school suffered a heart attack two years ago and had by pass surgery. His physician has advised him to avoid stress and excessive activity.

Spinks, who for 10 years has been Southeastern's first full-time development director, cited progress in fund-raising for special projects and endowment, and told the trustees: "I have been both happy and successful in my work here. Now, because of the recent changes at Southeastern, I find it necessary to seek employment elsewhere."

Byard will take early retirement effective Dec. 31, 1988. Niswonger will conclude his service to coincide with Lolley's leaving and Spinks will set an effective date later.

The called meeting of trustees was scheduled to begin at 8 a.m. in the conference room of Plantation Inn, a motel near the campus, a departure from normal practice under which trustees meet on campus. The session, however, was delayed until 8:31 a.m. because of a caucus by some of the trustees who wanted to remove Lolley by Jan. 1, 1988.

James T. DeLoach of Houston, vice chairman of the board, told Todd Ackerman of the Raleigh News and Observer some of the "more extreme" members wanted an interim president to take over in January.

"A lot of things were talked about and that was one, but I think something of a consensus really came about here," DeLoach said of the decision to have Lolley stay until July 31, 1988.

DeLoach supported the recommendations of an ad hoc committee that met Nov. 3 and agreed to the date and terms of Lolley's termination. In addition to DeLoach, others who participated in the ad hoc committee were Chairman Robert D. Crowley of Rockville, Md.; and past chairmen Jesse Chapman of Asheville, N.C., and W. Lee Beaver Jr. of Chesterfield, Mo.

William Delahoyde of Raleigh, N.C., offered a motion to refer the details of the termination of all five employees to the trustee executive committee. A substitute motion was offered by Mark Caldwell of College Park, Md., which called for all resignations and retirements to be received as they had been stated by the individuals.

Lolley supported Caldwell's substitute motion, saying: "I urge you to consider the fact that we called a meeting of all 30 of the board of trustees. If we had thought this was a matter for a smaller group to handle, we would have called the executive committee into session.

"I think I have an obligation by our documents to speak to the whole board. I think you as a board have an obligation to respond to what I have said."

The substitute motion was approved 23 to 3 with one abstention. Chairman Crowley did not vote; two of the 30 trustees were absent.

James Bryant of Fort Smith, Ark., made a motion that G. Paul Fletcher, director of business affairs, be named executive vice president and chief executive officer during the transition, receiving an additional \$6,000 annually for the added responsibilities.

Trustees concluded, however, that the documents of the seminary make no provision for an executive vice president and that until Lolley vacates the president's office there could not be two chief executive officers. However, Fletcher will assist Lolley during the transition, and, if a new president is not found by Aug. 1, 1988, Fletcher will become acting president.

Lolley praised Fletcher for his efficiency in financial affairs and his devotion to the seminary.

"I am not political or theological," Fletcher told the trustees, friends and students. "I love the seminary and will serve it and my president as long as he is here."

In the event the new president prefers another financial officer, Fletcher will be given at least one year's notice of termination.

Under terms agreed to by trustees, Lolley will be permitted to live in the president's home until July 31. Since he is eligible for a sabbatical, which he has not taken, an amount equal to one year's base salary (\$72,000) will be deposited in his annuity funds with the SBC Annuity Board. He also will receive the traditional 10 percent of salary severance plus four weeks of pay for vacation earned but not taken.

Lolley also will be allowed to take an item from the office he has occupied for 14 years as a memento of the position. "That could be anything from a pen to a computer," Lolley explained, and quipped, "I plan to take the computer." There is no computer in Lolley's office.

Health insurance, unless he is covered by other employment, will be maintained until age 65 and then the seminary will pay the Medicare supplement as for other employees. He and Mrs. Lolley will have plots in the seminary cemetery.

An indebtedness of \$10,000 which Lolley has with the seminary will be forgiven. In keeping with policy for employees, the Lolleys had borrowed money on a second mortgage from the seminary at favorable interest rates.

Dade Sherman of Monroe, N.C., challenged the package, saying he is pastor of a small Southern Baptist church and a \$100,000 severance package would be hard to defend to his people.

Lolley said many of the provisions of the severance package were not his requests but any effort to say it was worth \$100,000 would be refuted. Lolley placed the value on the package at \$27,000 because he has an insurance policy for \$55,000 on which he pays the premiums and has the seminary as beneficiary.

DeLoach and Beaver defended the recommendation from the four trustees who worked out details of the severance. They called it fair but not excessive for the position and Lolley's contribution to the seminary during the past 14 years.

Ashcraft will take a sabbatical to which he is entitled and return to the faculty to teach theology. As dean, he will be given 10 percent of his salary (\$4,810.50) as severance pay.

The 11-member executive committee met in closed session Nov. 17 to discuss the procedure for securing a new president.

Crowley, who pledged the procedures set forth in the seminary's documents will be followed "meticulously," said he has received three recommendations, but they cannot be considered candidates because none has been contacted. He denied the rumor that Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, will be the next president.

The next meeting of the trustees will be in March 1988, at which time the board's executive committee will report on the implementation of the SBC Peace Committee report. Some trustees said a new president should be secured before the implementation of the report, while others contended the matter should be settled before a new chief executive arrives. No final conclusion was reached.

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Lolley, Crowley
Speak On Issues

By Larry E. High

N-CO
(NC)

Baptist Press
11/19/87

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--A strongly-worded statement from the top administrator of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary spelling out why he is leaving was read during a news conference less than three hours after a special called meeting of trustees "accepted with regret" his resignations.

President W. Randall Lolley and Dean Morris Ashcraft resigned effective July 31, 1988, unless successors are elected before then.

Lolley and Ashcraft, along with Robert Crowley, a Rockville, Md., pastor who was elected seminary trustee chairman last month, read statements during the two-hour news conference, and then held a question-and-answer session involving media representatives and seminary students. (See separate story on Ashcraft's comments.)

"The vision I see for Southeastern Seminary," Lolley said, "is not seen by many of the men (trustees) with me. They do not see my vision. Perhaps I do not see theirs. Our differences, as I have told them, range from matters of governance, through theology and ecclesiology, to management and leadership styles.

"We really cannot stand ambiguity and hostility any longer. We must have clarification and healing. To that end I have moved to terminate my presidency."

Lolley said he has "four lingering questions which I must ask Southern Baptist people," as he leaves the post he has held since 1974.

The first is, "Southern Baptists, do you recognize the differences between free-conscience, conservative trustees, and trustees with pre-packaged agendas who must report out the results of their agendas?"

Lolley criticized some trustees who "cannot come to orientation or to trustee meetings with completely open minds. They have never set foot on this campus before becoming trustees. Yet, upon arrival, they seem to know precisely what needs to be done and who needs to be disciplined. They have a pre-packaged agenda upon election."

He added that during the October meeting of trustees, the "new majority of Southeastern trustees ... were captured by agendas from pre-meeting caucuses and prearranged political maneuverings. In such a climate, no matter who wins, the seminary loses."

Lolley's second question is, "Southern Baptists, do you recognize the differences between 'biblical inerrancy' as a legitimate personal conviction or a theological construction and this concept as a code word for power politics?"

Lolley said there is a wide variety among those people who use inerrancy to describe biblical authority. "The difference that really makes a difference is between a 'theological inerrantist' and a 'political inerrantist.'

"It has already been established that the next president at Southeastern will be an 'inerrantist.' Southern Baptists must observe, as my successor is sought, whether the test will be 'theological inerrancy' or 'political inerrancy.'"

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The third question Lolley asked is, "Southern Baptists, do you recognize the differences between our 1963 confessional statement and our 1987 functional creed?"

He claimed the Peace Committee report, adopted at the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, moved the denomination from a confession, the Baptist Faith and Message statement adopted in 1963, to a creed.

"It has done so by suggesting that we now have an official interpretation, allegedly based upon majority opinion, of our 1963 confessional statement," he said.

"Put simply, our confessional statements up to this point have all allowed us to interpret them as we were led by God's Spirit while exercising our freedom of conscience. Now the only 'correct interpretation' open to us is the one supposedly embraced by the majority of others no matter what we as individuals in conscience may conclude," he said.

"The ultimate issue in all this, my friends, is freedom -- free consciences, free churches and free classrooms," he added.

Lolley's final question is, "Southern Baptists, how long will you go on calling young girls and women to faith in Jesus Christ; telling them to dedicate all their gifts to his Lordship; recommending them from your churches to your seminaries; and then upon their graduation refusing to consider them as your pastors and teachers?"

The seminary president said: "Do you realize that you are requiring us in your seminaries to be duplicitous with your daughters? And that you may be muscling in on the calling of God."

In his statement, trustee Chairman Crowley said: "Changes will result from the change of administration. We hope and expect that a broader spectrum of views, including conservative theological views, will be included and respected at Southeastern Seminary. These changes will hopefully result in a positive theological dialogue on this campus which will make for a more healthy intellectual climate of openness and tolerance for alternative viewpoints."

Crowley added: "I am committed to see Southeastern Seminary excel in quality theological education in the training of ministers for the accomplishment of the Bold Mission Thrust of our Southern Baptist Convention. For after all, our only reason for existence as the Southern Baptist Convention is that we may cooperate together in an obedient response to the missionary and evangelistic imperative given us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

"I am grateful to God that we are proceeding through these difficult times with a sense of growing unanimity among the trustees.

"We hope that our trustee meeting today has helped to clear the air of rumor, innuendo and suspicion. We hope that in the months to come the unrest over the future of Southeastern will diminish as we endeavor to work together for the good of this school.

"The trustees solicit the prayers of all our constituency as we seek to accomplish these goals," Crowley concluded.

Following the statements, and in response to a question about the statements by Lolley and Ashcraft, Crowley said he "had really hoped this press conference would be much less combative than it has been. I must say that I am disappointed, I'm really disappointed. I wouldn't even begin to defend myself against some of the things that have been said. I don't think it's necessary. People who observe this in an objective manner will have to make their own decisions and I'll have to live by those decisions."

Lolley responded: "I think a man deserves the right, once, to say why he is leaving the job of his dreams. I took that responsibility seriously. I don't intend to talk about it a whole lot more. I've said all I intend to say. If Bob (Crowley) thinks I have seized an opportunity negatively and wrong, I'm sorry."

Ashcraft Cites Reasons
For Leaving Deanship

By Larry E. High

N-10
(NC)

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Morris Ashcraft, who resigned as dean of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary Nov. 17 but will remain a faculty member, said trustee actions in the October meeting of the board "made it impossible for me to remain as the chief academic officer of the school."

Ashcraft, along with President W. Randall Lolley and three other members of the administrative team, submitted their resignations during a called meeting of the trustees.

Among the actions Ashcraft cited was the election of Robert Crowley, "an avowed fundamentalist" as trustee chairman to replace Jesse Chapman of Asheville, N.C., who was eligible for a second term as chairman, and the election of a new slate of committee nominees to replace those recommended by the trustee nominating committee.

Ashcraft said the slate "stacked the committees with fundamentalists in control of each."

Crowley later protested being labeled a fundamentalist: "I resent being called a fundamentalist. I have never been a fundamentalist. I believe that 'fundamentalist' has strong political overtones. If a person would look at my life and look at what I have done in my life in no way do I fit that description of radical, right-wing fundamentalist."

Ashcraft said another trustee action which led to his resignation was the election of James DeLoach of Houston as vice chairman of the board and his assignment to the committee on instruction. The dean charged that in a previous meeting DeLoach led the instruction committee "into a kind of interrogation of prospective (faculty) candidates which I had protested as ignoring the official doctrinal norm of the seminary and introducing another."

Later, DeLoach said: "I apologized for bringing the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy. But I said at that meeting that because we are discussing inerrancy it is very important for us to have some kind of definition on inerrancy for us to discuss. This one (the Chicago statement) seems to me to be the best one I have seen. I asked permission to use that statement and ask if these individuals (prospective faculty) subscribe to that position and that statement of inerrancy."

"If Dr. Ashcraft and others think I used that document in some kind of way to browbeat people, then that is totally not right from my perspective."

Ashcraft said another trustee decision which brought about his resignation was the election of James Bryant of Fort Smith, Ark., as chairman of the committee on instruction. Bryant, Ashcraft said, was attending his first meeting as a Southeastern trustee, and "had no knowledge of nor appreciation for the tradition of Southeastern, and left no doubt that he, too, was carrying out the agenda of the Pressler/Patterson coalition."

The dean charged Paul Pressler, a Houston judge, and Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, are on a "campaign to control the Southern Baptist Convention."

Ashcraft said: "In 1980 Paul Pressler, in Old Forest Road Church of Lynchburg (Va.) made his infamous statement, 'We are going for the jugular.' We have now identified some of the necks in which particular jugulars are located.

"Some Southeastern Seminary trustees are in league with these two national leaders and are helping to carry out the plan. My resignation is an indirect result of this takeover."

The action of the trustees during their October meeting which changed the "procedure for the election of new faculty members and the appointment of temporary teachers" also was cited.

The new procedure, introduced by William Delahoyde of Raleigh, N.C., "reduces faculty participation in the process to almost nothing," Ashcraft said.

Delahoyde, the dean said, "never attended a Southern Baptist college or seminary, but chose to attend a non-denominational seminary ... has been a Southern Baptist for only a short while."

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In the question and answer session, Delahoyde asked for a point of personal privilege to "clear the record concerning the allegations made about me." He said to Ashcraft, "The information you give, although correct on its face, fails to tell the background of my own personal pilgrimage in Jesus Christ."

Delahoyde said his mother was a Southern Baptist and "I grew up hearing a lot about the Southern Baptist Convention." He told of growing up in Wisconsin and his education, including attendance at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and concluded, "I am a Southern Baptist by conviction, not by coincidence."

Delahoyde also said a rumor suggesting he is a candidate for the seminary presidency is untrue, and "I have never done anything to give any credence to it."

In his statement, Ashcraft said his decision to resign came from the conviction that "I can no longer implement the policies of the majority of the trustees as required by position description."

"It is my belief that too many leaders in the SBC have capitulated to the pressure and agreed with it. No one has said a clear 'No!' Now President Lolley has said 'No!' It is my intention by resigning to say 'no' to the proposes and methods of the Pressler-Patterson coalition and our trustees who are carrying out this program.

"I will not be party to some of the actions now taking place and injuring persons, nor will I hold the coats of those who do," Ashcraft concluded.

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Medical-Dental Workers
Urge Colleagues To Help

N-10

Baptist Press
11/19/87

NASHVILLE (BP)--Medical missionaries who have set broken bones, removed gallbladders and pulled teeth around the globe urged their colleagues to join their efforts during the Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship's 11th annual meeting.

About 700 physicians, dentists, pharmacists, nurses and their spouses participated in the conference Nov. 12-15 in Nashville.

Missions volunteers -- who have given up time from their stateside practices to serve on mission fields -- told other doctors and dentists the ministry was worth the sacrifice.

"The bottom line was, I was scared," said Jack Rule, an ophthalmologist from Knoxville, Tenn., recalling when his family departed for a brief stint on the island of Antigua in the West Indies.

"We didn't know what to expect. But the Lord was on our side," Rule said. His wife, Mary Frances, added: "Each of us has been so blessed. A short-term missions tour has been the best thing that has happened to us as a family."

"We weren't there just as medical technicians; we were there as Christians. God used us in a very special way," Mrs. Rule stressed. Her husband described how the couple and their son, Andy, fitted Antiguans with their first pairs of glasses, donated from Americans: "These people were thrilled. Many of them were far-sighted and finally were able to read the Bible for the first time."

Rule pleaded with his colleagues to go on missions trips themselves: "When we were leaving, we already were planning the next trip. When you go, it gets to you; you have to go again. Take your family and make it a family thing. Some of you say you can't get off. Sure you can -- just mark an 'X' in your datebook, call the (Southern Baptist) Foreign Mission Board and they'll find a place for you to go."

Another volunteer, dentist Lee Cope from Jackson, Miss., defined a missions volunteer as "one who says yes to the call of God." He related four reasons why other healthcare professionals should volunteer for missions.--more--

"A major reason is because we should be together ... with one purpose" working as Southern Baptists to share the word of God and perform medical-dental missions work, he said. "One reason to be a volunteer is to encourage missionaries, pastors and those that labor on the field."

Also, volunteers benefit from the physical and spiritual exposure to the ministries of Southern Baptists and missionaries from other denominations who work on mission fields, he said, adding a final reason: "We've got to come back to life, to come home to our own city. God has not only called us to minister on foreign fields, but in our own city."

In addition to the volunteers, Southern Baptist career missionaries described their experiences and the lessons they have learned on mission fields around the world.

"My whole life is based on the effects of prayer, from the time I was conceived until now," said Tim McCall, a family practitioner in Eku, Nigeria. He described a series of near-tragedies that happened to him and his family over a period of a few months in 1986: a tractor he was driving flipped over and pinned him underneath in a cloud of gaseous smoke; his son, David, contracted hepatitis; David was bitten by a poisonous snake; McCall contracted a tropical virus.

But in each case, prayers -- including those offered by Southern Baptists every day for their missionaries -- sustained them, he said. The tractor accident left him with minor muscle damage, all that remains of the snakebite are two small scars on David's foot and both of them fully recovered from their illnesses.

Wayne Thorpe, a pediatrician assigned to Nepal, described the experiences he and his wife, Pat, a public health worker, have had in the Himalayan country north of India.

On a humorous note, he explained how few people in the country have toilets and noted that a village leader where Mrs. Thorpe was working had honored her with rights to use his family's private latrine, the only such facility in the area.

Unfortunately, when diarrhea struck in the middle of the night, she could not get to the latrine because a cow had backed itself into the door and would not budge. "We're one of the few public health units in the world where cows use latrines and people do not," Thorpe quipped.

Turning to a more serious subject, Thorpe described how he and his wife work through United Mission to Nepal, comprised of specialists from many nations, to serve in the predominantly Hindu nation. "It's going to be very difficult for Southern Baptists alone to win the world with the gospel," he said. "But we are not alone. The Lord is using others."

Bill Skinner, who along with his wife, Fran, pioneered medical missions in Paraguay, told how God has used Southern Baptists in that South American country. He recalled how a visiting Baptist once asked him if medical missions is worth the money it costs. "There's so much hunger and suffering and dying in the world," Skinner responded. "Jesus sent us to heal the sick."

But medical missions has done more, he added. He reported one pastor told him a medical clinic in one day resulted in more conversions to Christ than a week of revival services produced. During the Skinners' tenure in Paraguay, Baptists in the country grew from one church to 58; and people fitted with glasses by Southern Baptists read the Bible for the first time and came to know Jesus Christ, he said.

Vincent Waite, a missionary to Ghana, told participants missionaries must cross barriers, learn the language and accept a new culture if they are to be effective. It is necessary to gain access to the people's culture, to learn their dances, to understand their way of doing things, he said: "Once you've danced their dance, then you have the privilege to begin sharing at a deeper, spiritual level. You gain entry into the people's real hard hearts."

David Sorley, who now works in Kenya, described his previous work in Uganda. He warned that AIDS, so prevalent in Uganda, is a difficult problem all doctors must face. AIDS, however, provides an opportunity for Christian witness, he said, adding, "I have a vision of hundreds of Baptist doctors, nurses, dentists and other healthcare people going out into the entire world to minister to the sick and dying as AIDS sweeps the globe."

Nigeria missionary Martha Hagood described the vast starvation and thirst in that country, a problem that is "endemic, insidious and malignant." She told of Baptist efforts to bring clean water within five kilometers of every person in the country.

Hagood also related how missionaries in Nigeria are attempting to teach people to read the bible, a source of strength for Baptists during recent riots. "We cannot destroy the Bible," she said. "The Bible is in the hearts of the people."

The novelty of being a doctor in a foreign country, other than "traveling where no guide will take you," is treating unusual diseases, said Lee Baggett, who works in Mexico. Missionary doctors are not involved in impressing colleagues or worrying about the IRS or malpractice suits, he said: "We look at a patient and bring the best skills, knowledge, guessing and praying we have. We do the very best we can with what we've got."

And Southern Baptist missionaries also try to treat souls, added Kathleen Jones, who is retiring after 34 years in Indonesia: "We are not there just to practice medicine. We're there to use our medicine to tell people about the Lord."

She related how medicine has enabled Baptists to treat both the physical and spiritual needs of people in Indonesia. The country's government limits evangelistic missionaries to only 10 years of residence in the country. However, the restrictions do not apply to medical personnel.

She asked participants in the conference to pray that the restrictions on evangelistic personnel would be lifted. "Unless this is reversed, we will lose half of our evangelistic staff," she said.

Jones noted, however, that ministry through the 150-bed hospital where she has worked reaches people. Worship services are conducted daily at the hospital and a clinic, and tracts are displayed for use with patients. Medical personnel pray with patients. "Through the ministry of this hospital," she said, "we have seen doors open for the preaching of the gospel throughout Indonesia."

Join Missions, Aid Students,
Healthcare Leader Requests

W-CO

Baptist Press
11/19/87

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist physicians, dentists and nurses need to increase their participation in missions and minister to students preparing for medical careers, surgeon Wilbur Lewis said during the annual meeting of the Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship in Nashville.

Lewis, a general surgeon from Oklahoma City and outgoing president of the 11-year-old organization, urged cooperative efforts with both of Southern Baptists' missions boards in career, short-term and volunteer missions.

"Our fellowship and the Home Mission Board envision expanded efforts to touch lives in our land," Lewis said. He also cited Cooperative Services International, an office of the Foreign Mission Board that is seeking Southern Baptists with vocational skills -- including those in the medical profession -- to serve on a short-term basis in countries where the convention cannot send missionaries.

Lewis, a former missionary to Paraguay, was among 15 people who helped start the fellowship in 1976. The organization now has about 1,800 members. More than 700 attended the Nashville meeting, and more than 400 are participating in volunteer mission projects this year.

"New vigor for future activities must come from student ministries," Lewis said, urging members to promote goals of the organization through Baptist Student Union groups or church ministries to medical students.

Lewis, with his wife, Gladys, teaches a Sunday school class for medical students at First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City. "A vocationally oriented Sunday school class may be a way for you to relate to local students," he told fellowship participants.

He listed other goals for the organization: expanded membership, development of state and local chapters, creation of projects to utilize skills of retired medical personnel, publication of a quarterly journal and employment of an associate to the executive director of the fellowship.

Describing the scrub sink where he prepares for surgery as his "prayer closet," Lewis urged medical personnel to seek God's guidance in making ethical decisions: "Biomedical ethics have become extremely complex. We are forced to take stands on issues that have no clear answers. As I confront the crisis of ethical and moral decision-making, these are moments when I listen for the sound of God's encouraging whisper."

He asked members to participate in the fellowship's prayer partnership program as "one of the best ways to feel the warmth of our united purpose." He also challenged them to witness for Christ through their work and their daily lives as well as to participate in home and foreign mission work.

"It is only in making ourselves vulnerable that we can experience the sweet taste of victory in leading another person to the Lord," he said.

Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks reminded participants of the constants that never change: the need for Christians to pray and the knowledge that it "costs to be part of the redeeming work" of God.

Many Christians are afraid to do God's will because of what it might cost to "sell out" to God, he observed. Yet the truth is it costs more not to do God's will, he contended.

Southern Baptist Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder said "Touching Lives -- Growing Churches" is not merely a corporate theme adopted by the board, it is a lifestyle of evangelism to which all Christians should adhere.

"Touching Lives -- Growing Churches is a gospel mandate," Elder said. "As ministers of the gospel, you are in places to meet human needs."

He said Southern Baptist agencies and boards should "work as partners to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth." And he urged the healthcare professionals to "bring persons through your work to know Jesus Christ. Together, we can touch lives and grow churches."

William L. Hendricks, professor of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., led Bible studies during the meeting.

He challenged participants not to think of themselves as scientists, but as artists: "You are those who practice the art of medicine which is predicated on a variety of sciences. If you can see yourselves as artists, something of the grace of God can begin to flow more fully and completely through you."

The weekend meeting was a "high spiritual moment" in the lives of the medical-dental personnel, acknowledged David C. George, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Nashville. But "the glory of the mountaintop will fade pretty quickly ... tomorrow will be Monday," he said.

However, "the mountaintop of inspiration and the valley of service belong together," George said. He provided three suggestions for re-entering the valley of service, advising participants to "come down" into the valley by following Jesus, developing understanding and serving others.

In a business session, fellowship members elected Ray Reid, a dentist from Tampa, Fla., as the organization's new president. John Bryan, a physician from Waco, Texas, was chosen president-elect.

Participants also voted to refer a statement on AIDS, which currently is being drafted by the Christian Medical Society, to the fellowship's executive committee for a final decision.

In its initial stages, the statement affirms the sanctity of marriage and deplors extramarital sexual intercourse, homosexual activity and intravenous drug use and declares family life teaching and sex education are the "God-given responsibility of parents." It says Christian physicians should provide care for AIDS patients, even with threat to their own lives.

Participants also referred to the executive committee possible action or statements that could be made by the fellowship in regard to pharmaceutical companies that manufacture products that can be used in abortions.

Members briefly debated the propriety of the fellowship's involvement in such issues, especially in light of its expressed purpose as a support organization for medical missions.

"We have a responsibility to take moral stands as the only organized group from the medical profession in the Southern Baptist Convention," said Ramon Meguiar, an obstetrician/gynecologist from Jesup, Ga. He proposed working closely with the SBC Christian Life Commission on medical ethics issues, promising, "There's going to be more than AIDS and abortion."

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Foreign Missions Prayer Week
To Spark Year-round Commitment

By Art Toalston

N-FMB

Baptist Press
11/19/87

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists face a pivotal Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions, Nov. 29 through Dec. 6.

When this year's foreign missions emphasis concludes, church leaders throughout the denomination will urge members to commit themselves to pray daily for missions at home and abroad.

Minette Drumwright, director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's office of international prayer strategy, hopes Southern Baptists will gain such "a deepened awareness of the lostness of the world" during the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions "that a sense of urgency will continue throughout the year."

The week of prayer will mark the start of the National Missions Prayer Plan, a denomination-wide program coordinated by the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union to heighten daily prayer for missions.

And the week of prayer, with a theme of "Pray -- That All May Hear," is when Southern Baptists begin settling upon their part in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, which, along with Cooperative Program unified budget giving, funds much of the work of 3,800-plus missionaries in 111 countries. This year's goal is \$75 million.

During the week of prayer, the number of prayer concerns will be expanded on the Foreign Mission Board's PrayerLine telephone service. PrayerLine can be dialed toll free from 49 states, 800-ALL-SEEK (800-255-7335). In Virginia, a toll call is needed, 804-355-6581. FMB President R. Keith Parks will share initial prayer items Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26, and add other concerns Nov. 30 and Dec. 2 and 4.

Dec. 6 also is the date for the monthly concerts of prayer for world evangelization in Sunday worship services, Sunday schools, church training programs and other activities that day.

PrayerLine, which began in late January, topped the 100,000-mark in total telephone calls by mid-November. "The number of callers has far exceeded our projections," Drumwright noted, voicing excitement over "the many ways people are making use of the prayer needs and missions news shared on PrayerLine." In many cases, callers record the PrayerLine segments and replay them during worship services, prayer meetings and WMU, Brotherhood and Sunday school sessions.

Drumwright added that PrayerLine will be one means of undergirding the National Missions Prayer Plan. "PrayerLine is an effort to have current prayer needs and requests available to all serious pray-ers who, in turn, release God's power through their praying into all the nations of the earth," she said.

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