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N-CO

87-185

Subcommittee Begins Study
Of Public Affairs Funding

By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE (BP)--A seven-member subcommittee of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee began a study of convention funding of public affairs during a two-day meeting in early December.

The subcommittee, according to Chairman Scott Humphrey of Alexandria, Va., has a "very narrow assignment: To study the details of the funding of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Southern Baptist Convention Public Affairs Committee."

The subcommittee was appointed during the September meeting of the Executive Committee, following a request of the newly reconstituted Public Affairs Committee for clarification of which organization is to receive public affairs funds, the BJCPA, a coalition of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada, or the PAC, an 18-member standing committee through which the SBC relates to the BJCPA.

The question of who oversees the funding came about after messengers to the 1987 annual meeting of the SBC adopted the report of a fact-finding subcommittee that revised the bylaw governing the membership of the PAC, and suggested the group work in conjunction with the BJCPA but also assume added responsibilities.

The SBC action did not address the question of which group gets the funding, but at the first meeting of the newly reconstituted PAC, questions arose as to who has control of nearly \$475,000 allocated for the work of public affairs in the convention.

Since the September meeting of the Executive Committee, when the study to clarify the funding dilemma was ordered, the PAC met again. In October, the PAC voted 8-4 to recommend that the SBC "dissolve its institutional and financial ties" with the BJCPA and requested \$485,200 "to fund and staff" the PAC "as an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention ... beginning Oct. 1, 1988"

Humphrey said the study subcommittee's responsibility is "to clarify the funding process in light of the action taken by the convention." During its early December meeting, the study group concentrated on the action of the annual meeting rather than focusing on the subsequent events.

Humphrey said a key point in the report of the fact-finding subcommittee -- which was adopted at the 1987 annual meeting -- is the wording of a paragraph in which the Executive Committee recommended "that the Southern Baptist Convention continue to relate to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs through the Public Affairs Committee ... and that this relationship be in keeping with the bylaws of the Southern Baptist Convention and the program statement of the PAC as adopted by the SBC."

The Virginia layman said the key words being studied by the funding subcommittee are "continue" to relate to the BJCPA, but "through" the PAC.

The subcommittee spent a great deal of its December meeting studying the specific actions of the fact-finding committee, watching a videotape of the presentation during the St. Louis convention and reading minutes of the two meetings of the PAC, seeking to determine the intent of the fact-finding subcommittee and the convention in regard to funding.

Humphrey said the funding subcommittee hopes to come to some conclusions about the matter and to formulate a recommendation to be presented to the program and budget subcommittee of the Executive Committee when it meets to conduct budget hearings in late January 1988.

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In addition to Humphrey, members of the committee include Thomas Hinson of West Memphis, Ark.; James E. Baucom of Martinville, Va.; C. Ray Fuller of Joliet, Ill.; and Ann Smith, Greensboro, N.C. Also serving on the committee are John C. Cothran, chairman of the program and budget subcommittee; and Charles Sullivan, chairman of the Executive Committee, who are ex-officio voting members.

Also participating in the meeting were Harold C. Bennett, president-treasurer of the Executive Committee; Ernest Mosley, vice president of program and budget of the Executive Committee, and James P. Guenther, convention attorney.

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N-SSB

Consulting Editors Express
Enthusiasm For Commentary

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press
12/7/87

NASHVILLE (BP)--The first meeting of consulting editors for a new multi-volume Bible commentary to be published by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board was marked by cooperation and eagerness to move the project forward.

Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas and the first of the editors named to the team by Sunday School Board trustees, called the group "harmonious and creative."

"I've always been enthusiastic about the project," Patterson said. "If our editors' group does its work properly, this commentary will have a profound influence and impact on the denomination for years to come."

Discussion in the two-day meeting Nov. 23-24 was wide-ranging. The group looked at format, potential writers, publication dates and audiences who might benefit or be interested in using such a commentary.

The commentary, to be written by biblical inerrantists, was approved by board trustees in February 1987, with the first volume expected to be released in 1991.

One of the format suggestions from the consulting editors was that the commentary have about 40 volumes, to allow adequate space for writers and to be able to include the biblical text. The suggestion was approved by Broadman Press officials so that decisions can be made related to publishing and copy-length requirements for writers.

The consulting editors also recommended the volumes be 5-1/2- by 8-inch hardback books that can be as long as 400 pages, depending on the space needed to deal with a particular book or books of the Bible. Broadman officials approved both of these recommendations.

Robert Sloan, associate professor of religion at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, said the consulting editors hope the commentary "will serve the church."

"It is not our intention to parade scholarship, but we do want each scholar to do his homework and serious research into the text to present the material in a way that speaks to our generation," Sloan explained.

"Our group had a good sense of fellowship and a strong unity of vision and purpose that this commentary will be strong, evangelical scholarship. We hope that it will get wide use in evangelical denominations throughout the United States."

Michael Smith, general editor for the commentary and chief editor of general religious books in the Broadman products department of the Sunday School Board, reported the editors believe pastors and seminary students will be the primary audiences for whom the new commentary will be written.

But the format proposed by the editors will make the commentary useful for anyone who wants help in understanding the Bible, Smith added. College and seminary professors also were identified as important potential users.

The consulting editors listed 139 potential writers, and others will be added to provide a pool of qualified individuals from which the writers can be selected, Smith said.

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Other forthcoming decisions will be which translation of the Bible to use in the new commentary, assigning and grouping books of the Bible into volumes and assigning writers to books.

The other consulting editors are Curtis Vaughan of Hendersonville, N.C., who recently retired as professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; L. Russ Bush III, associate professor of philosophy of religion at Southwestern; Kenneth Mathews, professor of Old Testament and Semitics, Criswell College; and Larry L. Walker, professor of Old Testament and Semitic languages at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn.

Another meeting of the consulting editors is scheduled Jan. 22-23 in Dallas.

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N-HMB

Baptists Need Soul-Winners, Church
Planters, Awakening, Lewis Says

By Joe Westbury

Baptist Press
12/7/87

HONOLULU (BP)--The three greatest needs of the Southern Baptist Convention are soul-winners, church planters and spiritual awakening, the president of the SBC Home Mission Board told state evangelism directors meeting in Honolulu.

Larry Lewis' comments followed a report that SBC baptisms for 1987 will drop 5 percent, to their lowest level in nearly a decade.

"There is no greater need in the Southern Baptist Convention than for soul-winning pastors," Lewis said. "We need to pray that God will raise up a group of witnessing pastors, deacons and laity. But it has to start with the pastor ... it has to start with the leaders. Everything rises and falls on leadership, those individuals who will be models and will equip their laity to be soul-winners."

A major cause of the denomination's projected loss in baptisms is pastors who fail to keep prospect lists for church visitation, he said: "Don't tell me the reason we are down 5 percent is because there are no prospects in our communities. It's a shame that we have more than 37,000 churches and don't even baptize an average of 10 individuals per church."

Lewis also challenged the directors to pray for 1,000 church planters to be added to the missionary force.

"We need modern-day apostles, those sent forth to start churches, ministering, witnessing and winning people to Christ. Pray that we will have the human and the financial resources to start 1,000 new churches each year toward our goal of 50,000 churches by the year 2000," he said.

"We will not get excited about church starting until we realize that the way we incarnate Jesus in our day is by establishing Bible-teaching, soul-winning churches. My goal is not 50,000 churches. We don't need more churches doing nothing," he added. "When we see churches becoming the body of Jesus -- ministering, witnessing, sharing -- just as if he were there, then America will be brought to God.

"Will we be another shipwreck in the history of denominations that forgot their mission, discarded their priorities, caught up in all kinds of speculative concerns?"

Southern Baptists need spiritual awakening to sweep the country and their denomination, he concluded.

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Darrell Adams Finds Career
As Professional Musician

F- BJC
By Kathy Palen

WASHINGTON (BP)--In the fall of 1977, Darrell Adams decided to become a musician.

Although he had been "doing music" all his life -- he began singing before audiences when he was in the third grade and put himself through college by performing -- Adams says no one ever encouraged him to think about music as a career. "No one wants to encourage you to do something that seems really risky," he says.

But Adams recalls that during the third year of his theology program at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary he "needed to get out and do something, to make a vocational decision." So with the encouragement of his wife, Adams decided to try his hand at being a professional musician.

Early in his career, Adams relied on contacts he had made during the two years he and his wife, Alice, were US-2 missionaries doing student ministry at the University of West Virginia. For several years, he also was a consultant with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and traveled to areas where Baptist ministry was new to perform and talk about HMB programs.

"I got around the country," he says, "and gradually began to learn the things you need to do to let people know you're available." He also learned to adapt his repertoire for various types of programs, he adds.

Adams, 38, recalls going to Nashville in 1981 to explore the possibility of recording an album. While there, he says, he saw the "difference between who I was and what had become the business of contemporary Christian music."

Although he describes that field as having a definite style, Adams says he thinks it is big enough to include a folk singer like himself. But, he adds, he doesn't think the industry is intentionally inclusive.

"Like with anything else you can package, there's a popular style that's going on at any one time," he explains. "But you always have people on the edges who are essentially trying to reach a similar audience but are doing it in a little different way. Whereas the industry hardly ever reaches out and pulls these people in, in a lot of ways these people are the best hope for an industry because they're not tied up in doing the same old thing. They provide creative initiative.

"I think the audience is big enough to absorb many more different kinds of music and styles than what it's getting. There are plenty of people out there who are going to be interested if you've really got something to offer. Most people are open to Christians who are trying to be artists and are not taking advantage of a popular style or a popular theology, but whose faith is obviously something that is a growing experience."

While his brand of music may not always be commercial, it remains popular with audiences, Adams says. Pointing to a current resurgence of interest in folk music, he explains, "It tells and preserves our story in a time when people feel like they need some hook to the past as they are propelled toward an uncertain future."

Proof of that resurgence is reflected in Adams' recent appearances on the radio program "A Prairie Home Companion" and the television programs "Hee Haw" and "Country Crossroads." His latest recording, "Home," also was listed No. 1 in Billboard magazine's "Critics' Choice for Gospel Recordings of 1986."

Describing the national attention he has received as "hard to comprehend," he says: "It feels good to be wanted.

"To be known as an artist is setting you apart. You can't put a qualitative value on recognition. It has to do with a person's ability to lock in on what he does and finding an audience."

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Most of the songs Adams performs are his own compositions, works for which he cites "pain" as the inspiration.

"Creativity for me always comes out of pain," he says. "That doesn't always mean tragedy. It is being able to see situations where there is the unknown in it -- whether a tragedy which you can do nothing about or something terrific that changes everything. It is the wonder and tragedy of human existence."

Adams often writes about issues such as hunger and peace. He doesn't consider these issues to be matters of personal opinion or choice for the community of faith.

"They are not issues at all for the church," he says. "This is where our faith contacts the world. We do ourselves a faithless thing when we avoid these things that make us uncomfortable and challenge us. That is not faith."

Adams' music also is influenced by people he has known throughout his life. He recalls growing up in small rural churches in New Mexico and western Texas where for him faith was not an idea or concept, but people who lived out their commitment in everyday life. He mentions the late comedian Grady Nutt, who encouraged him to consider attending seminary, and Southern Seminary's Glenn Hinson, "a truly spiritual man whose spirituality seemed to be deepened by his study." He also is challenged by people -- such as hunger lobbyist Art Simon or peace activist Jim Wallis -- who have changed the way they grew up or have given up things in their lives because of a faith stance.

In addition to writing about social issues, Adams also donates his time to give benefit performances for various organizations, such as Bread for the World, a Washington-based hunger lobby group.

"I think we ought to lend our time and efforts to anything that is something that needs to be done," he explains. "It's a way to encourage and be a part of living out the gospel within the community of faith. It's the least I can do."

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SBC Agencies Explore Alternatives
For Small Church Program Needs

N-SSB
By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
12/7/87

NASHVILLE (BP)--Representatives of Southern Baptist Convention boards and agencies that relate directly to church programs have begun work toward recommendations of alternative programming approaches to meet special needs of new and established small churches.

The coordinating committee of the SBC Interagency Council established a special workgroup to explore possible alternatives for churches that have difficulty implementing the wide variety of program offerings available to SBC-affiliated churches, reported workgroup Chairman Gary W. Cook, vice president for church program organizations at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Thus far the workgroup has addressed the differences in needs of two types of small churches -- older, stable congregations and new congregations with the potential for becoming much larger -- both with about 40 people regularly in attendance.

The first group is found typically in non-metropolitan areas, Cook said. Most such churches have limited human and financial resources, making difficult the implementation of programs found in larger churches.

New congregations that anticipate becoming larger, he said, have great needs for spiritual development and leadership training.

In both cases, the workgroup is giving attention to helping small churches perform their mission, functions and tasks, Cook said, "because the Bible admonishes all Christians to 'be doers of the word and not hearers only.'"

Included in the tasks of a church, regardless of size, are teaching the Bible, equipping disciples, teaching missions, engaging in missions activities and developing personal ministries, among others.

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The 16 people representing church program work at the national, state and associational levels are contributing more than expertise in church program planning, Cook said. Their personal experiences with small churches include childhood attendance, conversions and adult memberships in both established and new churches; pastorates, both long-term and interim; involvement in beginning new churches; and ongoing relationships with small churches through denominational work.

Lyndon Collings, associate vice president for missions at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said he hopes the efforts of the workgroup will make members of small churches aware "the denomination sees small churches as significant."

June Whitlow, associate executive director of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, said she feels the effort is "tied in to Bold Mission Thrust. The involvement of small churches in providing missions information to members will increase prayer and financial support for the denomination's missions program. We recognize that in WMU, we are not in some small churches because they feel overwhelmed with our program, but there are lots of things these churches can do in mission support."

"My dream is that we'll come out with some resource helps that will communicate to small churches that the denomination really does care about them," said Ralph Halbrooks, director of the rural-urban church department of the Alabama Baptist Convention.

The denomination lost 1,700 open-country and village churches between 1955 and 1985, said Gary Farley, associate director of the Home Mission Board's rural-urban missions department.

"Many of them dried up because of changing populations in the areas they were serving," he said. "I hope this study will provide a way for churches to become more intentional in what they do, to become vital and growing congregations again. I hope we can come up with a process to help them feel good about themselves and be effective in attracting" non-Christians.

The studies and recommendations from the workgroup are "for the denomination to support the churches, not so the churches can support the denomination," Cook said.

Recommendations are expected to be presented to the Interagency Council's coordinating committee in 1988.