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February 11, 1988

N-AMB

88-24

Home Mission Board Employs  
Abortion Ministries Coordinator

By Joe Westbury

ATLANTA (BP)--Directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board have employed the agency's first coordinator for abortion alternatives and were challenged to volunteer for missions service.

Sylvia Marlene Boothe of Oklahoma City was named to the new position in the board's mission ministries division by directors during their February executive committee meeting. A former music missionary to Thailand and France, Boothe has been director of a crisis pregnancy center in Oklahoma City since 1986. She is a graduate of Oklahoma College of Liberal Arts and Texas Woman's University.

Board President Larry Lewis noted the position was created in response to a motion from messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in 1984, who requested abortion alternative counseling and materials for use by associations, churches and state conventions.

"Many Southern Baptists feel strongly that the critical social and moral issue of our day is the issue of abortion," Lewis said. "More than one-and-a-half million babies are destroyed every year, any one of them with unlimited potential. We see as part of our ministry the need to minister to the unborn child whose life is under threat and to the mother with the unwanted pregnancy."

Although Lewis previously had stated it is not the agency's place to speak on the morality and ethics of the abortion issue, he does feel strongly it is the board's responsibility to minister to people who are affected by it, both born and unborn.

The directors also employed Eduardo Docampo of Boston as associate director in the ethnic church growth department. Docampo has been director of language missions and Brotherhood for the Baptist Convention of New England for the past three years. A native of Cuba, he is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

In his report to the board, Lewis expressed concern over the decrease in the number of home mission volunteers in 1987. The agency reported a drop of 10,214, or nearly 20 percent, from the previous year's 52,110 volunteers.

The decline was in two areas of service: the number of young people who participated in mission youth groups and the number of adults involved in individual short-term projects of one year or less through the Christian Service Corps.

The number involved in mission youth groups dropped from 35,224 in 1986 to 22,410 last year. The decrease was caused both by a decrease in the record number of groups in 1986 and by a decrease in the average size of the groups from 40 to 30.

Although adult Christian Service Corps volunteers involved in group projects increased, adults involved in individual projects decreased. Most other categories remained about the same or increased slightly.

After detailing his own plans to give a week of vacation to volunteer mission service with his wife, Lewis challenged the directors to lead their churches to send out a youth group of 20-30 home mission volunteers and to enlist themselves on a similar project.

Directors also appointed 16 missionaries, 13 church planter apprentices, 16 missionary associates, and 15 mission pastors.

Nominate More Women  
As Trustees, FMB Asks

By Bob Stanley

N-●MB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A resolution urging nomination of more women as trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board won approval by about a 2-to-1 margin at the board's Feb. 10 trustee meeting. Some trustees did not vote.

The motion, introduced by Harrell Cushing of Gadsden, Ala., encouraged the Southern Baptist Committee on Nominations "to actively seek qualified, missions-minded women" among nominees it will present at the 1988 annual meeting and also in subsequent years.

Cushing's motion said "normal attrition and lack of women nominated" has reduced to nine the number of women serving on the 85-member board. Three of these will complete their terms in June, with a fourth eligible for nomination to a customary second four-year term.

Last May, trustees approved a motion expressing regret that no women were slated for nomination for election to the board at the 1987 convention and asked the convention's Executive Committee to "note this inequity in future years" and address it.

Last year's motion came too late to do anything about the 1987 nominations, Cushing said, noting enough time exists for this latest recommendation to be helpful to the nominating group. He said he had no political motivation in making the motion, he said, explaining, "There are missions-minded women in all spectrums of Southern Baptist life."

The resolution notes that through the years women "have served with distinction" on the board and cites the work of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union in promoting missions for a century. "Southern Baptist missions owe a great debt of gratitude to missions-minded women who have kept missionary zeal alive in our churches through missionary education and sacrificial missions offerings even when many men exhibited little interest in missions," it says.

Statistics show WMU-sponsored home and foreign missions offerings in Southern Baptist churches have raised more than \$1 billion during the past century.

Bill Pace of Valrico, Fla., said he concurred with the intent of the resolution but feared the matter would not be reported accurately by the Baptist state papers and would be interpreted politically. Paul Martin of Houston said as a lawyer he thinks it is illegal and out of order for a "totally independent body of the Southern Baptist Convention to try to dictate to another independent body how they run their business."

Barbara Cunningham of Houston disagreed with Pace, saying she did not believe the meaning of the resolution would be misunderstood.

Nannie Lou Crofts of Phoenix, Ariz., commented that no group of Christians should "refrain from doing good because of fear." Women have "added a dimension to the board which has been greatly appreciated by the men who have been members. It's with regret that I've seen the number of women gradually diminishing," she added.

Women trustees totaled 17 in 1984-85, but the total has gradually dropped each year. The death of Mary Dalton of Asheville, N.C., in December and the resignation of Dee Bryan of Bluefield, W. Va., in October because of her family's move to Texas further reduced the number. Replacements will be elected in June for these two, as well as for trustee Eddy Hallock of Lincoln, Neb., who resigned when he and his wife accepted missionary appointment in October.

After the board had prayed before voting, Harriet Gilbert of St. Simons Island, Ga., said the issue should not be whether a person is a woman but whether a person is qualified. She urged getting "missions-minded people" to serve on the board.

During the three-day meeting, the board appointed 11 new missionaries and reappointed six. One reappointed couple will live in Germany and work with Turkish people.

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That new ministry illustrates non-traditional approaches the board is exploring as it seeks new ways to do its part in working with other believers to share the gospel with all people by the year 2000. As a feature of the meeting, four vice presidents gave the trustees an overview of how the board is trying new evangelistic methods while continuing to use traditional career-missionary approaches where they are effective.

In 1987, for the first time, overseas Baptist churches with which the board relates baptized more than 200,000 people, President R. Keith Parks announced. The new mark was reached just six years after the yearly baptism total topped 100,000. Church membership grew by about 113,000 to nearly 2.15 million. That is a ratio of one baptism for every 10.5 members, compared to a ratio of 1-to-43.5 among Southern Baptist churches in the United States.

Trustees also authorized \$1.5 million in additions at the Cauthen Missionary Learning Center at Rockville, Va., about 20 miles outside Richmond. Most of the funds already are in hand from special gifts. The expansion is part of a master plan that will enable the center to eliminate overcrowding that has resulted from a doubling of use since 1985.

Parks presented plaques to Baptist leaders from two states and one association where the board conducted a pilot project this year to strengthen participation in the Lottie Moon Week of Prayer and Christmas Offering. Accepting were Roy J. Smith, executive director of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina; Ray P. Rust, executive director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention; and Doyle W. Braden, director of missions for Orange Baptist Association of the Los Angeles area in California, along with Woman's Missionary Union directors and other leaders from these areas.

As of Dec. 31, Parks said, North Carolina had increased receipts by 31 percent and South Carolina by 10 percent. Orange Association also has received indications of intensified support.

Smith later told the board an attendance goal of 16,500 has been set for the April 12 missionary appointment service in Greensboro, N.C. He and other North Carolina leaders are praying the service will lead to a time of spiritual renewal in the state, he said.

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Overseas Baptisms Top  
200,000 For First Time

N- FMB  
By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press  
2/11/88

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--For the first time, overseas churches related to Southern Baptist missions have baptized more than 200,000 people in one year.

Baptisms for 1987 totaled 203,824 among nearly 37,000 Baptist churches and mission congregations in 112 countries where Southern Baptist missionaries work.

"It took us 135 years to see the first yearly report of 100,000 baptisms," said R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. "We have passed the 200,000 mark after only seven more years." Annual overseas baptisms first surpassed 100,000 in 1981.

Baptisms overseas last year topped the previous year's total by 10 percent, averaging 558 per day. Despite the increase, and the 17 percent jump recorded in 1986, baptism growth must still average at least 11 percent every year until the end of this century to meet Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust missions/evangelism campaign goals.

The ratio of baptisms to overseas church members was one for every 10.5 members in 1987, compared to 1-to-43.5 among Southern Baptist churches in the United States.

National Baptists and missionaries started 1,070 churches during the year, an average of almost three per day. That brought the overseas church count to 17,769, a 6.4 percent jump over 1986. Mission congregations or preaching points increased by 338 to a total of 18,872.

The numbers show missionaries and their co-workers "are focusing on our primary purpose" -- evangelism that results in new churches, Parks said.

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Overseas Baptist church members grew by about 113,000 to nearly 2.15 million, a 5.6 percent rise, and Sunday school enrollment topped 1.5 million, a 10.1 percent increase.

Meanwhile, the number of national pastors rose by almost 15 percent to 16,680. Even more significant for the future, the number of current and potential Baptist leaders participating in some type of theological training soared by 40 percent to nearly 29,000.

Various Baptist conventions around the world also supported 179 of their own foreign missionaries in 37 countries, as well as 743 home missionaries.

Overseas church members gave nearly \$94 million dollars in offerings for the ministries of their churches and conventions in 1987, about 9 percent more than the previous year.

"This is phenomenal ... given the inflation, given the weakness of the dollar, given the economic conditions in which these people live. The fact of that kind of growth is nothing short of phenomenal," Parks said. Much of the money, he added, "is being channeled into home and foreign mission efforts from these emerging conventions."

Individual highlights included:

-- Brazilians once again led overseas Baptists in baptisms, with 66,447, a 20 percent national increase and a third of the entire world total.

-- Nigerian Baptists were second, with about 24,000 baptisms, a 19 percent increase.

-- Kenyan Baptists posted an 80 percent increase in baptisms to more than 14,000, along with a 30 percent jump in the number of churches and 22 percent rise in church membership.

-- Mexican Baptists experienced their best church-starting year ever with 115 new churches, or a 20 percent gain in total churches, climaxing a nationwide expansion effort and surpassing their annual average of 35 church starts in recent years.

On the down side, Tanzania and the Philippines experienced baptism declines compared to previous strong years. But Tanzanian Baptists still baptized nearly 16,600 people, one of the highest national totals, and Baptists in the Philippines baptized almost 10,000 baptisms despite a year of continuing political turmoil.

Southern Baptists sent 407 new missionaries abroad last year, down slightly from the 1986 total of 411. The net gain for the year was 83 after subtracting retirements, resignations and deaths, bringing the total mission force to 3,839. The 2.2 percent net gain "continues to move us to a projection of more than 5,000 missionaries by the year 2000," Parks said.

Southern Baptist volunteers abroad numbered 7,618, a 22 percent increase. The original Bold Mission Thrust goal of sending 10,000 volunteers annually by the end of the century may be reached in two or three years, Parks said. The goal recently was doubled to 20,000. Also, more than 1,000 Southern Baptists who went overseas last year for business or study contacted the Foreign Mission Board and took advantage of opportunities for spreading the gospel.

Southern Baptists also contributed almost \$8 million to hunger and relief projects. Medical missionaries and workers treated more than 1.5 million patients, and 150,000 adults and children received ministry from Baptist community centers.

Through media, missionaries and national Baptists reached an estimated audience of 250 million people via more than 22,000 hours of television and radio broadcasting. They distributed 10.6 million Christian periodicals, 5.6 million books, 19.6 million tracts and more than 80,000 video or audio cassettes.

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**CORRECTION:** Please change the political-affiliation titles in the 2/10/88 Baptist Press story titled "Coalition For Biblical Inerrancy Established By Missouri Pastor."

In the 8th graf, "fundamental-conservative" should be "conservative."

In the 10th graf, both references to "moderate-conservative" should be "moderate."

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

McSwain Named Dean  
At Southern Seminary

N-CO  
(SBTS)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Church and community professor Larry McSwain has been named dean of the School of Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

A Southern Seminary faculty member since 1970, McSwain will assume the deanship Aug. 1 after completing a spring sabbatical. He will succeed G. Willis Bennett, who has been both theology dean and provost since being named to the latter position in June 1987. Bennett, dean since 1983, will continue as provost, the seminary's chief academic officer.

McSwain, a 47-year-old Oklahoma native, is a graduate of Oklahoma State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He received the doctor of sacred theology degree from Southern Seminary in 1970.

Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt praised McSwain's "outstanding credentials as a scholar, administrator, pastor and churchman who has earned the respect of his teaching colleagues, pastors, denominational leaders and others with whom he has served through the years."

McSwain has been a pastor of Southern Baptist churches in Oklahoma and Indiana. He has co-authored two books and contributed articles to books and periodicals.

In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he was director of the seminary's master of divinity studies program from 1980 to 1983. He and his wife, Sue, have two children.

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Mississippi Church  
Shows Love 'InDeed'

By Tim Nicholas

F-CO  
(MISS.)

Baptist Press  
2/11/88

COLUMBUS, Miss. (BP)--A church member called the Loving Pet Shop looking for it. Another person came into First Baptist Church of Columbus, Miss., looking for Mary Lovindeedy.

They both were a bit confused about the name of the organization but had no doubts about its nature.

The Love InDeed ministry at First Baptist Church of Columbus exists to help people. It came out of a prayer group of eight laypeople several years ago who prayed that the downtown church might become more aware and meet needs of the people in the community.

Tom Pelphrey had been minister of education only a couple of days in January 1986 when some of those laypeople came to him telling him of their vision for a helping ministry.

Pelphrey was married to a person with experience in that direction. His wife, Cindy, had been social worker in government, private and secular agencies for 15 years.

The church assessed needs of the community and considered financial possibilities. What evolved was an organization that, led by Mrs. Pelphrey, involves about 150 church members.

Ministries of Love InDeed include:

-- An assistance referral team of 23 women who work on a rotating schedule in the church office. They interview clients, offer counseling and help with crisis intervention.

-- A literacy training team of 36 trained workers who teach adults to read at about the 6th grade level.

-- A prison ministry team that cooperates with the national Prison Fellowship organization. The ministry involves Sunday visitation and Bible study at the city jail. Leaders hope to teach an introductory course in the Christian life called "Survival Kit for New Christians."

-- Follow-up workers who visit or phone each person who goes to the ministry for any kind of assistance.

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-- A job discovery team that helps clients find work. "We try to find the ditchdigging jobs the carpenter can do when there is no carpentry," says Mrs. Pelphrey. The group also helps people prepare an application form and maintains a list of church members who can employ people, usually on a short-term basis.

"We do not hire anybody," says Mrs. Pelphrey, explaining the ministry only gives names to prospective employers. "This has probably been one of the most fruitful areas of our ministry. About seven people in the past month have gotten jobs, some just by helping them look through the want ads."

-- Emergency services or "burnout" team members who help the displaced, battered wives, and also help prisoners back into the community. Included is a crisis closet of household supplies, help for pregnant teens who want to keep their babies and several apartment furnishings.

-- A handyman team of members who help other members do such odd jobs as minor auto and home repairs.

-- The transportation team that was developed to take some of the elderly members home from church and to check their houses for them. Mrs. Pelphrey says the members haven't availed themselves of the service, but opportunities for ministry have arisen. One elderly couple lives in separate nursing homes because of different medical needs. Team members drive the woman to her husband's nursing home twice weekly for visits. The team also took a woman with a brain tumor to Birmingham, Ala., for treatments.

Pastor Bobby Douglas says the ministry "provides an outlet for us as a congregation to express our concern for people who are having difficulties." It also "puts us in a position of saying openly to the community that we care and we are interested."

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Video Tape Service Merged  
With SSB Telecommunications

N-SSB

Baptist Press  
2/11/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Responsibility for the Southern Baptist Video Tape Service, organized in 1980 by an ad hoc committee of state and Southern Baptist Convention executives, has been transferred to the SBC Sunday School Board's telecommunications department.

Earl Kelly, chairman of the Video Tape Service ad hoc committee and executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, said: "We feel that the Video Tape Service has provided an invaluable function in leading our churches into the vast world of training, education and inspiration via videotape.

"With the structures and new technology now available through the Sunday School Board, it is very natural that the tape service be incorporated into the board's telecommunications system, making benefits to our churches even greater."

The Video Tape Service has produced and distributed to state conventions 247 video titles dealing with teaching, training, denominational emphases and other subjects.

Funding for the service has been provided by state conventions with programing produced by Southern Baptist agencies. State conventions received one copy of each Video Tape Service program and distributed tapes to associations and churches.

Jimmy Edwards, vice president for church programs and services at the Sunday School Board, noted tapes produced by the service still will be available for rental at a small service charge through Baptist Film Centers and may be purchased through the board's customer service center.

Some Video Tape Service programs will be transmitted on BTN, the board's satellite telecommunications network, Edwards said.

State conventions will decide individually whether to continue distributing the service's tapes.

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