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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hasty, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4228

June 8, 1988

88-93

World evangelization
groups to meet in Asia

By Erich Bridges

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--More than 400 plans exist among Christians to evangelize the world by the end of this century, and the authors of many of them will meet next January in southeast Asia to find ways to cooperate.

The Global Consultation on World Evangelization by A.D. 2000 and Beyond will be held Jan. 5-8, probably in Manila. The agenda is remarkably open-ended: many of the sessions will allow participants to interact and find out exactly what others are doing to carry out world evangelization.

Most historical attempts to evangelize the entire world have failed, mission researchers say, primarily because of disorganization, isolation and competition among Christians themselves.

"What's happening now is very different, especially in the last few years," said Thomas Wang, the Chinese chairman of the consultation's steering committee and international director of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. Wang was in Richmond, Va., June 4-6 meeting with a small program committee to plan an agenda for the January world consultation.

"All of a sudden it seems many of God's servants all over the world have begun to take the end of this century, not as a magical number, but as a target, a goal, a stimulation for world evangelization," Wang said. "Is something happening? What is God trying to say to us? There has never been an age in the history of the church that is more qualified to tackle this task of world evangelization in terms of manpower, resources, technology, communications and transportation."

The multitude of plans set to climax in the year 2000 include world strategies of the three biggest international gospel broadcasting agencies, Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust and Campus Crusade for Christ's New Life 2000, among hundreds of others.

"Some are weak and some are inactive," Wang admitted. "But some are really pushing forward, and among those active ones about 20 really have a global overview being actively pursued."

No single group is sponsoring the gathering. An informal steering committee of 12 international mission leaders met in Los Angeles May 18, representing such agencies as the Lausanne committee, World Vision, the 2-million-member Evangelical Churches of West Africa, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Partners International, Campus Crusade and the U.S. Center for World Mission. They adopted five "purposes" for a proposed world consultation:

1. To accelerate the growing interest, attention, momentum and prayer in the body of Christ for world evangelization by A.D. 2000.
2. To promote mutual encouragement and the exchange of information among denominations and agencies which are planning for world evangelization by A.D. 2000.
3. To promote cooperative efforts in world evangelization among those planning around the milestone of A.D. 2000.
4. To encourage denominations and agencies which have yet to set A.D. 2000 goals to set ones that are biblical, measurable and strategic.

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5. To lay the foundation for further consultations to be held at later dates at the regional and national level.

Invitations to the consultation are going to key denominational, parachurch and mission groups by region, continent and movement, with an emphasis on full representation from the fast-growing Christian church of the Third World and Southern Hemisphere.

"We're trying our very best to say this movement has an international ownership," Wang stressed. "The Third World must not feel this is something from the West alone. It is the whole body of Christ that together has given birth to this movement, although God has used the Lausanne people and Southern Baptists and many others."

Another non-negotiable element is the primary importance of world evangelization itself, according to consultation program chairman Bill O'Brien of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"We're saying very openly from the outset to all those invited (that the consultation is for) those who have plans or have shown a commitment" to world evangelization, O'Brien explained. "If you're going to debate whether world evangelization is valid or not, you would not feel comfortable at this meeting. So some may select themselves out. But they will do it; we won't."

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Lolley says he 'popped off'
about CP, mission giving

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
6/8/88

ATLANTA (BP)--Former Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Randall Lolley said he regrets implying that churches should withhold contributions to the Cooperative Program to prevent funds from going to the SBC Home Mission Board.

Lolley, who becomes pastor of First Baptist Church, Raleigh, N. C., on July 1, sought to clarify comments he made in an interview published by the Florida Baptist Witness published April 14 and distributed by Baptist Press on May 4.

"I popped off," Lolley quipped in an interview in Atlanta following a commencement address on June 4 for graduates of Mercer University's Atlanta campus.

In the Florida interview, Lolley expounded on what he called "responsible denominationalism." He said he personally did not want to finance the type of leadership he sees in Jerry Vines, a possible nominee for SBC president, or Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board.

During that original interview, Lolley said he would find a way to keep Southern Baptist missionaries on the field, but said: "I'll be danged if I'm going to send ... Larry Lewis any more money to disenfranchise churches that choose to call women as preachers, divorced persons as pastors, or have a pastor who has the gift of speaking in tongues. ...

"That's the only way I know to send him a signal -- just keep the money -- because if you keep sending the money, he's going to keep assuming that you're supporting everything he's into," Lolley said in the Florida interview.

In Atlanta, Lolley admitted he did not realize before how his comments would be perceived by missionaries who receive their support from the SBC Cooperative Program and special mission offerings. He had just returned from a trip to the Far East where he met with missionaries in Korea and Hong Kong.

"Some of them are really troubled," he said. "They are wondering if they will be able to carry out their life's work."

"But I'll guarantee them that if I have any influence as pastor of a local church, the life-line that sent them there and keeps them there (the Cooperative Program) is not going to be cut," Lolley declared.

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Asked if his idea of withholding funds from an agency with policies he does not like is consistent with "responsible denominationalism," Lolley said it depends on "how you define the adjective 'responsible.'"

Lolley said there is nothing new about the idea of threatening to withhold financial support from agencies with policies an individual does not like. He pointed out James T. Draper Jr., former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, made a similar proposal in 1985. "The fundamentalists have been threatening to do this (withhold funding), and have been doing this, for years," he said.

The new development, he added, is that "moderate pastors and lay people" are concerned because control of the denomination has shifted to more conservative leaders who are making changes the moderates oppose.

Lolley conceded that if the practice of withholding funds is carried to its ultimate extreme, it could destroy the Cooperative Program and radically change the nature of the denomination toward a more "independent-type" Baptist convention.

He described the Cooperative Program as the "Achilles' heel" where the denomination is most vulnerable. "The whole thing rests on an obedience to an unenforceable. It is a fragile house of cards held together only by the writing of a check."

"We haven't really dealt with this issue yet as a denomination," he said. "That's what I meant by responsible denominationalism -- we must deal responsibly with this question. There are going to have to be a lot of people at all levels wrestling with this question," Lolley said. "I don't think anyone has come up with an answer yet."

Lolley said he had no plans to present a proposal to his church in Raleigh to cut Cooperative Program or special mission offering gifts. He said he had not discussed the matter with church leaders.

Emphasizing strong support for the Cooperative Program and the work of the denomination's 7,500 home and foreign missionaries, Lolley said he had throughout his entire ministry "worked like a dog" to promote the Cooperative Program. He pointed out that when he left the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C., the church was giving half its total income to missions. "I'm not about to come back 14 years later and say, 'Let's dismantle all that.'"

"Any way that I can clear that up, I want to do so," Lolley concluded.

Lolley also emphasized he would under no circumstances allow his name to be nominated as vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He had announced on May 2 he would not be a candidate, but rumors have persisted since then he might reconsider. Lolley said he "absolutely would not" reconsider his decision against being a candidate.

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Videotape of news conference
by SBC presidents 'misused'

By Greg Warner

Baptist Press
6/8/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Videotaped coverage of a February news conference with SBC president Adrian Rogers and two former presidents, which was recorded "for news purposes" by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, reportedly is being used for the political ends of SBC conservatives.

"We do feel that the purpose of our tape was misused," said Lloyd Householder, director of communications for the Sunday School Board, who said the videotape now is being distributed for "political purposes."

But Houston Judge Paul Pressler, who was responsible for reproduction and distribution of the videotape, said its use at recent meetings and in publications of conservatives is not political.

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Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., and former SBC presidents Bailey Smith of Atlanta and James T. Draper Jr. of Texas, called the news conference for Feb. 25 to clarify the "agenda" of recent SBC presidents and present a "Conservative Southern Baptist Affirmation," reportedly written by Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas.

Board employees videotaped the news conference for use on its television program, "NewScene," which airs on the Baptist Telecommunications Network. At Rogers' request, Baptist Press had arranged with BTN to acquire a copy of the event for Rogers, who told reporters at the news conference he wanted to distribute it "as widely as possible."

Pressler said he asked Rogers for the tape, which he then combined with three other hour-long segments on "issues in the SBC." The other segments feature Dallas pastor W.A. Criswell, motivational speaker Zig Ziglar of Dallas, North Carolina Judge Samuel Currin and Richard Land of Criswell College. All are leaders of the conservative faction in the SBC.

The videotape was promoted and sold at recent Texas speaking engagements of Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., and a likely candidate to succeed Rogers as SBC president. It also was advertised in two recent issues of the Southern Baptist Advocate, a conservative newspaper.

In a letter accompanying the videotape to Baptist Press, Householder expressed misgivings about its potential use. "Our concern lies in the fact the Sunday School Board has sought neutrality in the midst of all the political unrest in the denomination," he wrote. "Consequently, never would we have been party to taping a meeting and allow the tape to be used for purposes other than news presentation or record-keeping."

Householder's letter noted the tape was given to Baptist Press "without constraints, but with the stated hope it will be used only for the purpose of news presentation or record-keeping."

Al Shackelford, director of Baptist Press, relayed the tape to Rogers as requested, but placed no restrictions on its use. Shackelford's letter to Rogers, however, asked the president to "use discretion in how this tape is used."

"In this day in which the fairness of Baptist Press is being challenged," Shackelford wrote, "I would not want to appear that we were supporting or opposing the content of the press conference. ..."

Rogers did not respond to requests to discuss use of the videotape.

Robert Tenery, editor of the Advocate, said Pressler reproduced the tapes, which included the entire press conference, and asked the newspaper to handle distribution. Tenery said 118 copies had been sold at a cost-recovery price of \$15 apiece. Each of the four segments of the videotape is about an hour long, he said.

Pressler would not comment on production of the tape in protest of what he called a "smear campaign" by the Florida Baptist Witness, which reported on use of the tape. "I do not think the Baptist press has given an accurate picture of what's been going on in the convention," he said, adding he was encouraging people to "reach beyond those sources" for information about the SBC.

Pressler said he acquired the videotape from Rogers but was unaware of any restrictions on its use. He said its promotion in the Advocate and in Vines' "church growth" conferences was not political.

"I hope all Southern Baptists would be happy to hear what their Southern Baptist president and former presidents have to say," he added.

Vines said he was unaware that the tape was sold during a May speaking engagement at Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston, or other stops in Texas.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, also hosted Vines during his trip to Texas. He said the tape was not sold or promoted at the Euless meeting.

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Draper said the SBC presidents talked before the news conference about recording the event for later distribution. He acknowledged Pressler's involvement may have made it more political, but he said the Sunday School Board was not at any risk for recording the event and making the tape available. "Had BTN not done it, Adrian would have brought his own equipment and done it," he said.

Shackleford confirmed Rogers offered ahead of time to arrange video coverage of the news conference. Shackleford said he agreed to Rogers' request and was unaware of any concern about use of the tape until just prior to the event. "Frankly, I didn't have a choice," he said. "I had made a commitment."

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HMB reports Annie gifts up,
elects staff and missionaries

Baptist Press
6/8/88

ATLANTA (BP)--As of June 7 Southern Baptists have given 19 percent more to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions than at the same time last year.

The final total on this year's offering could show a 5 to 8 percent increase over last year if current giving patterns continue, Home Mission Board Executive Vice President Bob Banks told the board's executive committee.

During their June meeting, the executive committee elected a new director for the church planting department, an associate director for the planning and services research department, a new national consultant, eight missionaries and 12 church planter apprentices.

Banks reported \$18.64 million has already been received toward the 1988 Annie Armstrong goal of \$37.5 million. This is \$3.6 million more than had been received at the same time last year, he said.

Although current receipts represent 49 percent of the goal, the final total is projected to reach only \$34 million, or 90 percent of the goal, but would be 8 percent more than was given through the Annie Armstrong offering last year.

Banks cautioned that projections based on current giving are only estimates and do not mean the final report will be as good.

Jim Hill, associate director of the board's church starting department since 1984, was promoted to department director, effective June 16. Hill succeeds Nelson Tilton who earlier had transferred to the board's metropolitan missions department.

A native of Missouri, Hill graduated from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City. He previously was director of church extension and language missions for Blue River-Kansas City Baptist Association and was pastor of four churches in Missouri.

Richie Stanley, minister of education at West Side Baptist Church in Greenwood, S.C., was elected associate director of the board's planning and services research department. He succeeds Rudee Boan, now on the staff of Gardner-Webb College, Boiling Springs, N.C.

Stanley is a graduate of North Carolina State University in Raleigh, the University of Kentucky in Lexington and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He previously was a statistician for the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Ann Putnam, a home missionary in Alexandria, Va., was elected national consultant on church weekday ministries and disabled persons. She has been under appointment of the Home Mission Board as director of Christian social ministries in Alexandria since 1982.

Putnam is a graduate of the University of North Carolina in Greensboro and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. She previously was associate in community ministry at Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

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Centennial Shines Through
SBC Controversy, Leader Says

By Susan Todd

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Celebrating a centennial of God's goodness and provision to Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union was divinely timed to shine through controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention, says a former national WMU leader.

In a recent address to WMU employees and in a later interview, Helen Fling, former national WMU president, gave God the credit for WMU's recent "Centennial Celebration" and for 100 successful years of missions education and mission support.

"It has been a difficult year within the 10-year crisis in our convention, we've all been prayerfully aware of it," she said. "We've all been aware of the statistical falldown in baptisms and giving."

But there is cause for celebration amidst the difficulties, Fling said.

"Personally, I believe God oversees everything and overlooks nothing. I think he has blessed WMU in such a way so as to affirm us in our purpose and maybe clarify our purpose for people who were unsure of us," Fling said.

"I don't think it was any accident that WMU's centennial was this year."

Even though it is easier to remember the good parts of WMU history, Fling acknowledged that things have not always been easy or festive for WMU. For example, she referenced the tension-filled days of racial inequality.

"We've been through difficult days before," she said. However, "God has simply affirmed and encouraged us to stay with our purpose and not be sidetracked by anything."

Fling added, "We might already be a divided convention were it not for the fact that we're committed to prayer and to home missions and foreign missions."

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CORRECTION: In BP story "Brocks minister in midst of Mozambique suffering," mailed 5/23/88, please change the woman's name in the first paragraph to "Brenda."

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