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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE  
SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #75  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
(615) 244-2357  
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. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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88-153

Missionaries helping  
at Seoul games

By Erich Bridges

SEOUL, South Korea (BP)--As victorious American diver Greg Louganis prepared to receive an Olympic gold medal, Southern Baptist missionary Barbara Jackson combed his wet hair with motherly concern, carefully avoiding the stitches covering the gash he received earlier when he collided with the diving board.

Meanwhile, missionary David Bishop was speaking at courtside to the U.S. women's basketball team at the invitation of Coach Kay Yow, an active Christian, and Assistant Coach Barbara Gill, a Southern Baptist. And over at the modern pentathlon competition, missionary T. Thomas from France was acclaimed a lucky mascot by the French team after they won an event while he was with the team on the sidelines.

Nearly 45 Southern Baptist missionaries -- including 13 taking vacations or brief leaves from assignments in nine outside countries -- are working alongside Korean Baptists at the Olympic Games in Seoul. Their goal: to provide a helping hand and a Christian message to as many foreign visitors as possible.

The 10,000 athletes from 161 countries are not the main focus of the missionaries' ministry, said Bishop, but "whatever we get to do with the athletes or inside the Olympic Village is gravy."

Missionary team leader Bishop, a competitive marathon runner from South Carolina, has spent years preparing for this moment. Long before the games began, he led many of his fellow missionaries to work closely with the Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee and its president, Baptist layman Park Seh Jik. They taught English to Olympic workers and provided a variety of other services.

The ministry shifted into high gear a week before the games began, when missionaries and Olympic officials gathered near the main stadium to open Baptist Visitors' Center -- a service and hospitality oasis for all foreigners in Seoul for the games. Halfway through the Olympics, the center was averaging about 75 visitors a day, including many athletes' family members needing assistance or just eager to hear a familiar language.

Wearing special red, white and blue warm-up outfits designed and provided by the Adidas Shoe Company, teams of missionaries and Korean Baptists rotate between the center, the main sports complex and the streets of Seoul giving assistance, answering questions and talking to as many people as possible. In addition to the athletes, an estimated 200,000 foreign visitors are in Seoul for the games.

Another 13 Korea missionaries, like Barbara Jackson, were assigned by the Olympic Organizing Committee as interpreters and assistants at the track and field, swimming, diving/water polo and gymnastics venues. Bishop received full access to all sports sites and Olympic Village.

The 13 visiting missionaries -- from Taiwan, Japan, Macao, West Germany, Spain, France, Chile, Cyprus and the Middle East -- concentrate on making contacts with visitors from the language groups they serve, especially those from countries closed to the Christian gospel. They are equipped with literature and Bibles in the languages of those they tried to meet.

Some of the most successful conversations are not in Baptist Visitors' Center, but in spontaneous encounters on the street, in shopping areas and near the sports venues, as missionaries listen for their target languages.

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"Some of my best contacts came with the Mexican taekwondo team down at one of the places where the tourists go," reported missionary Gene Huckaby of Chile, who had met athletes from five Spanish-speaking countries after a week of work. "We had a real good conversation with them and exchanged business cards with the coach and that kind of thing.

"At the weightlifting competition, one of the weight lifters was from Panama. After he lifted, he went outside, and I saw him there and went up and started talking. They are anxious to hear someone else speaking Spanish. The people are open."

That went double for visitors from Arab countries. "When an American walks up who speaks their language, they just light up like a Christmas tree, regardless of your religious affiliation," said missionary Gary White from Cyprus, a veteran of work in Lebanon and Jordan. "They're willing to talk to you, and most of the time they will take your Christian literature."

The missionaries are not limiting themselves to their own language specialties, however. "I'm not here just looking for Arab people," White said. "We're quite interested in trying to reach people from eastern European countries, like East Germany and Poland."

White also praised the Korean Christians involved in the evangelistic effort. "A lot of other countries could take a good look at the Koreans and what they do and how strong their faith is," he said. "It's really rewarding for us to be here and work with these people."

Security is heavy in and around the sports sites, but the Baptist workers have had more contacts with athletes than they expected. The only problem with evangelizing at the games, they said, is the sheer number of religious groups of every description handing out material. Some overly aggressive groups who shove tracts into every hand in sight have irritated many visitors.

"You don't beat the water if you want to catch fish," said missionary Wayne Jenkins. "They're scaring people off."

The Baptist team, on the other hand, is "not looking for a body count," according to Bishop. "Our main emphasis is on planting seeds and providing a Christlike model for all to see."

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Southern Baptist missionary Lounette Templeton contributed to this story. Photos expected later in the week.

Non-SBC schools approved  
to exhibit at convention

N-10

Baptist Press  
9/26/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Three non-Southern Baptist Convention-related schools will be given exhibit space at the annual meetings of the SBC under a new exhibit policy adopted during the fall meeting of the SBC Executive Committee.

The schools -- Criswell College in Dallas, Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Fla., and Mid-America Seminary in Memphis, Tenn. -- had not been allowed to exhibit at the annual meeting under current policies, which were reaffirmed by the Executive Committee last February.

The schools, however, will be eligible to exhibit on a "space available" basis starting at the 1989 annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev. Exhibitors pay the cost of their own displays and a cost-recovery fee for space and services, convention officials said, noting no SBC Cooperative Program budget money will fund the three displays.

The new exhibit policy was one of five actions taken during the Sept. 19-20 meeting of the Executive Committee relating to the annual meeting. The committee also dealt with proposed bylaw changes, funding, the National Day of Prayer, resolutions of appreciation and other matters.

Another action, expected to be discussed during the February 1989 meeting, relates to a resolution concerning objections to a television program by Bill Moyers, "God and Politics," aired on the Public Broadcasting Service.

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The new exhibit policy was one of only a few actions discussed during plenary sessions of the Executive Committee, and the only action to draw negative votes.

The policy sets up a three-tiered system that includes primary and secondary exhibitors, as well as exhibitors sponsored by primary exhibitors. The most significant change is the set of secondary exhibitors, which includes only Criswell, Luther Rice and Mid-America.

Russell Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, opposed the inclusion of the three non-SBC related schools, calling it divisive. "It seems to me that when the fellowship of the convention is so tentative, this might not be the time to add one more thing that chips away at the cooperative concept," he said.

Gordon Graham, pastor of First Baptist Church of New Braunfels, Texas, and chairman of the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee, said he believes it "would be divisive if we leave them out," and urged committee members to "allow them in."

Charles Sullivan, pastor of First Baptist Church of Lenoir City, Tenn., and chairman of the Executive Committee, called for a voice vote of those favoring the new policy, and for those who opposed it to raise their hands. Ten members of the 76-member committee voted against the changes.

In another convention-related matter, the committee selected Dallas as the convention site in 1997; Atlanta in 1999, and New Orleans in 2001. Selections were made so far in advance because of the difficulty in negotiating convention center space on the dates needed, officials said. Messengers to the 1989 annual meeting must ratify the action.

The committee also declined to act on a motion referred from the 1988 annual meeting suggesting a study of the feasibility of state or regional convention sites. Committee members were told the staff of the Executive Committee is working with a group of physically handicapped people to better serve the special needs of the physically handicapped.

The committee also voted to refer a motion concerning convention personalities to the 1989 Order of Business Committee. The motion, made at the 1988 annual meeting by Susan Lockwood Wright, pastor of Cornell Avenue Baptist Church in Chicago, recommended "women in church-related vocations be selected to lead worship" at annual meetings and, beginning in 1989, women alternate with men in preaching the convention sermons.

In matters relating to the constitution and bylaws of the SBC, Executive Committee members declined to make changes suggested by motions referred to them during the 1988 annual meeting.

The committee declined to recommend a change in the method whereby Cooperative Program funds are divided between state and national causes. Currently, state conventions vote to determine the percentages that will be kept in the states and shared with national and international ministries. The motion requested the churches be allowed to set the divisions. The action noted churches always have the right to designate funds as they choose.

The committee also declined to recommend a change in the definition of a cooperating church. A motion referred suggested cooperating churches be required to give at least 5 percent of undesignated funds to the Cooperative Program for five years before being accepted.

The bylaws workgroup is continuing to study two matters: a requirement that anyone serving in either an elected or appointed position in the SBC be required to have been a member of a cooperating Baptist church for at least a year before appointment, and possible changes in Article III of the constitution, which sets the basis of messenger representation.

Churches are entitled to one messenger and gain more up to a maximum of 10 either by membership or by contribution to Southern Baptist causes. The constitution says churches may have a messenger for every 250 members or \$250 contributed. The dollar amount has been the same since 1888, and that is the area under study.

Committee members also declined to change the current constitutional statement relating to the election and term of office of the SBC president.

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Two vacancies on the 1988-89 Committee on Nominations also were filled. Murray Wheeler, a retired executive and member of First Baptist Church of Toland, Conn., was named to replace Wendell B. Bithar of Bolton, Conn., who declined to serve. John Click, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Wichita, Kan., was elected to replace D.L. Mitchell who moved from Coffeyville, Kan., to Neosho, Mo., and became ineligible to serve.

A 10-member committee to plan the SBC Sesquicentennial Celebration in 1995 was appointed. Named are John Sullivan, Shreveport, La., chair, and Minette Drumwright, Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va., vice chair.

Others are pastors Joel Gregory, Fort Worth, Texas; and Warren Hultgren, Tulsa, Okla.; Mississippi Baptist Convention Executive Director Earl Kelly, Jackson; SBC Historical Commission Executive Director Lynn E. May Jr., Nashville; church history professor H. Leon McBeth, Fort Worth, Texas; former president of the Woman's Missionary Union Dorothy Sample, Flint, Mich.; and the current chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

A resolution expressing concern over the PBS program concerning the Southern Baptist Convention was referred to the Public Relations Workgroup for study and a report back to the Feb. 20-22 meeting.

Committee members were told the resolution was presented at the 1988 SBC annual meeting, but the Resolutions Committee had not had time to deal with it. The view the hour-long special presented of the controversy in the SBC, subcommittee members said, caused "grave concern" which the Executive Committee should address.

The Executive Committee deferred action on two measures related to funding of Southern Baptist seminaries.

It "received as information" a report that its institutions workgroup is "continuing to study the possibility of putting a cost-of-living factor, and other factors, into the seminary funding formula" and that a committee is to report to the program and budget subcommittee in January. The cost-of-living variable has been advocated by supporters of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, who have said living expenses in the San Francisco area dictate the need for extra financial support from the SBC.

It also received a report that the program and budget subcommittee is continuing to study a request from Golden Gate Seminary for a "special allocation" of \$7.8 million spread over five years. Proponents again cited the expense of living and operating in the San Francisco area.

In another financial matter, the committee expressed appreciation to Cecil A. Ray of Georgetown, Texas, for his five years of service as director of Planned Growth in Giving, the denomination's long-range stewardship/discipleship emphasis. It also turned development and promotion of Planned Growth in Giving over to the SBC Stewardship Commission.

Finance also came up in a recommendation to substitute a new Article VI in the SBC Business and Financial Plan, for the first time asking convention entities to provide the Executive Committee with an annual report on their fund-raising activities. Officials noted the new action does not force the entities to get permission for fund raising, but it is designed to "provide better coordination and information and to clarify ambiguity." The change will be presented to messengers to the 1989 SBC annual meeting next summer.

The Executive Committee ratified resolutions of appreciation for three retiring state convention executive directors: John P. Baker, Northern Plains; Tom J Madden, Tennessee; and Dan C. Stringer, Florida.

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Note to editors: Madden's middle initial is an initial only and has no period.

Texas CLC opposes comments made  
by Southern Baptist CLC members

By Ken Camp

N-Texas

DALLAS (BP)--The Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission issued a statement Sept. 22 opposing "disturbing views" on race relations, world hunger and peace expressed at the Sept. 13-14 meeting of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"Some comments made ... at the recent meeting of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission represent a radical departure from the historic positions of both the Southern Baptist Convention and the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commissions," the Texas CLC said.

Both the Texas and Southern Baptist Christian Life Commissions are moral concerns and social action agencies charged with the responsibility of speaking to, and not for, Baptists on ethical and public policy issues. The prepared statement by the Texas CLC, notes that while the agencies have comparable program assignments, each operates independently of the other.

The statement takes issue with numerous comments made at the recent Southern Baptist CLC meeting in Nashville. Although he is never mentioned by name, the Texas CLC statement particularly voices opposition to comments on race relations, world hunger and peacemaking reportedly made by commissioner Curtis W. Caine, Sr., a medical doctor from Jackson, Miss.

According to the prepared statement, the Texas commission "unequivocally" rejects Caine's labeling of Martin Luther King Jr., as a "fraud" and his statement that "apartheid in South Africa ... doesn't exist anymore and was beneficial when it did."

"The Texas and Southern Baptist Christian Life Commissions have consistently spoken against all forms of racial discrimination," the Texas CLC said.

The CLC statement also rejects "the cynical view of world hunger evidenced" in Caine's remark that, "Starvation has been used since time immemorial to control people."

"Southern Baptists have prayed for and given to the starving of this world," the CLC stated. "Compassion wed to action is the model response to human need given to us by Jesus."

The statement also notes the Texas CLC rejects Caine's idea that "'peace' means anything that promotes communism."

"Trivializing peace in this way ignores clear and important biblical teaching," the statement reads. "The Christian Life Commission has consistently urged Southern Baptists to pursue the vision of peace which permeates the Bible from the prophets to the Sermon on the Mount to the Apostle Paul.

"To equate the use of the word peace with promoting communism belittles the identity of the Prince of Peace and the biblical mandate to be peacemakers."

The Texas CLC statement commends newly elected CLC Executive Director Richard Land "for his stand in opposition to many of these disturbing views," pledges commitment to cooperating with the Southern Baptist CLC in efforts to promote applied Christianity, and urges Southern Baptist CLC members "to express their support of policies that reflect clear opposition to racism, support of peace with justice, commitment to minister to the poor and hungry and affirmation of the historic Baptist understanding of church-state separation."

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CORRECTION: Please note the following correction in the 9/23/88 BP story titled "Lockard becomes 5th staffer to resign CLC":

The second sentence of the 12th paragraph should read: He oversaw the national seminar and other conferences; dealt with race relations, biomedical ethics and moral problems confronting teenagers; and was the CLC's official liaison with other SBC agencies.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

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