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February 16, 1989

89-26

Trustees, executives stress
harmony at mission agency

By Art Toalston

N-FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Trustees and top-level executives of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board are in one accord, trustee chairman C. Mark Corts said during the trustees' Feb. 13-15 meeting in Richmond, Va.

"We are here to work together," Corts said.

Trustees received a statement of affirmation from 10 elected staff administrators expressing gratitude that trustee decisions "have been governed by a missions agenda" in the midst of the theological-political controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The executives were responding to a similar vote of confidence trustees gave Southern Baptist missionaries and Foreign Mission Board staff members in December.

In other business, the trustees approved a new mission personnel category -- International Service Corps -- placing the former Journeyman, Mission Service Corps and special assignment programs under one umbrella.

Trustees also appointed 20 new missionaries and reappointed one veteran worker, raising the number of Foreign Mission Board personnel to 3,854 in 114 countries. They also heard a report on the recent gathering of 300 world mission leaders in Singapore, accompanied by assurances that participation in such meetings need not blur Southern Baptist distinctives.

The exchange of affirmations evolved from comments Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks made to trustees last October. Parks said at the time that the controversy had spawned misperceptions and rumors, causing Southern Baptists to mistrust missionaries, board staff and trustees.

Trustee chairman Corts, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., urged trustees to underscore the mutual affirmations in their home states and throughout Southern Baptist life.

"We need to respond to denominational disaffection" and such trends as "negative designated giving," Corts said.

In North Carolina alone, Corts explained after the meeting, he has heard of 15 or more churches that have decided against full participation in the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified plan for funding missions and other denominational programs. These churches have decided to pick which Southern Baptist agencies they will support, Corts said.

"In the long run, (negative designated giving) is going to harm our whole convention," Corts told trustees.

Trustees need to be "more active in broadcasting some good news about Baptists and some good news about foreign missions" to fellow Baptists, Corts said. "Tell them the Foreign Mission Board is not going to pot. We are not spending all of our time up here fighting with the staff.

"The mission enterprise of Southern Baptists is going forward," he added. "In my nine years on this board, I cannot remember a time when there was greater unanimity of purpose."

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Parks and nine board vice presidents commended the trustees for actions that "maintain Southern Baptist basic foreign missions philosophy and reinforce our commitment to Bold Mission Thrust," the 25-year emphasis on sharing the gospel with all unevangelized people by the year 2000.

The administrators also expressed gratitude for "the strong Cooperative Program support" of the trustees' churches.

A survey by L.H. McCollough of fellow trustees reports that their churches devote an average of 12.3 percent of their budgets to the Cooperative Program, compared to the 8.5 percent average for all Southern Baptist churches. McCollough is pastor of First Baptist Church in Bastrop, La.

McCollough's survey includes all but five of the board's 87 trustees. Sixty-four of their churches devote 10 percent or more of their budgets to the Cooperative Program, he said. The range among the churches is 1.4 to 25 percent.

A report on the Global Consultation on World Evangelization by AD 2000 and Beyond, held Jan. 5-8 in Singapore, was presented to trustees by Parks and Bill O'Brien, the board's executive vice president. Some 300 mission leaders from 50 countries, half of them in the Third World, unanimously adopted a "Great Commission Manifesto" during the consultation pledging cooperative efforts in sharing the gospel with all unevangelized peoples by the year 2000.

"Never in recorded church history," O'Brien said, "have so many believers from the entire world been so aware of the church's responsibility to evangelize the whole world."

By the end of 1991, similar consultations may be held in 100 or more countries to formulate local evangelization plans, he said.

Parks stressed cooperative ventures with other Christians, such as the Singapore meeting, are not intended to submerge Southern Baptists' independence or their distinct approach to missions.

"Are we moving towards some kind of organizational identity? The answer is no," he said. "Are we moving toward blurring our own distinctives? The answer is no. Are we going to fund them or are they to fund us? No."

Parks said he believes Christianity's various segments have "spiritual giftedness" just as individuals have. "God has gifted different ones of us to emphasize certain truths of the Scripture and others of us to emphasize other truths -- equal truth, but different emphasis. It takes all of us, with our own particular personality and understanding ... to get closer to understanding who God really is."

If Southern Baptists and other Christians were to forsake their different gifts, it would "rob the body (of Christ) of its distinctive, balanced, comprehensive contribution to the world," he said.

The new International Service Corps will enhance the board's ability to respond "more strategically and quickly" to short-term personnel needs overseas, said Tim Brendle, associate vice president for mission personnel.

Six screening conferences each year will be utilized in creating an International Service Corps "human resource pool" of Baptists prepared to work overseas from four months to two years, with possible extensions of up to one year. International Service Corps personnel will be asked to raise as much of their own support as possible, but the Foreign Mission Board will provide partial or full stipends as necessary, Brendle said.

Persons selected for International Service Corps will undergo orientation at the board's Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va., to prepare them for working in a new culture.

Unlike the board's requirements for career missionaries, International Service Corps guidelines contain provisions under which divorced persons can apply. They will have to provide all of their own support funds, however. The provision for divorced applicants reflects no change in previous policy for short-term personnel, board officials said.

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International Service Corps will retain a two-year "journeyman option" paralleling the former Journeyman Program for recent college graduates, with a separate orientation session scheduled once a year.

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Business, ministry are one,
Elder tells SSB trustees

By Linda Lawson

N-SSB

Baptist Press
2/16/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--The ministry and the business of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board are one, President Lloyd Elder told trustees during their semi-annual meeting in Nashville Feb. 13-15.

Among ministries of the education and publishing board, Elder cited Christian conversions which have come about through including the plan of salvation quarterly in Sunday school literature.

On the business side, he said a recent change to tie in the board's computerized editing and design functions with typesetting will save the board about \$480,000 per year.

"This change has been made possible through the efforts of a large number of deeply committed laypersons who are professional and technical employees of this board," said Elder.

In another matter, he said since April 1987 the special ministries department, in cooperation with the Home Mission Board, has been making available to chaplains obsolete copies of literature produced by the board.

To date, 153 chaplains have distributed 141,000 pieces of literature through military ministries and to prisons, hospitals and other institutions, said Elder.

"This is a way for us to multiply the ministry of this board," he said. "Our concern is not simply the business enterprise of the Sunday School Board but breakthrough growth in the local churches."

However, he expressed concern that 1988 denominational statistics released Feb. 14 point to a slowdown rather than an acceleration of growth. Southern Baptists reported gains in eight of 10 key reporting areas but registered the smallest church membership increase since 1930 and a decline in Sunday school enrollment.

"Southern Baptists are still experiencing growth in at least some areas of its life. The fact that the growth rate has slowed or plateaued is a matter of truth and concern," said Elder.

"Still, the prayer and strategy is breakthrough growth," he added. "We will work at it diligently."

During a dialogue session, a trustee asked whether the Sunday school average attendance figure of 3.8 million was a more accurate description of the number of persons involved in Bible study than the enrollment of 7.9 million.

Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school division, said both figures are important and both are included on the annual Uniform Church Letter.

"The fact is that we are ministering to most of those 7.9 million people," said Piland. He noted that about 75 percent of people enrolled in Sunday school attend with some degree of regularity.

Also, "if Sunday school teachers are doing their jobs, they are ministering to everyone whether they come to Sunday school or not. That is our objective."

Elder challenged trustees -- whether dealing with personal, professional or spiritual problems -- to turn problems into opportunities.

"Spiritually, we have the kind of gospel that is not just for easy days. It prepares us for difficult times but also thrusts us into days of grand opportunity."

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Combine leadership and servanthood, Mosley says

N-CO
(SWBTS)

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Strong leadership and servanthood belong together in pastoral leadership, Ernest Mosley told scholars, faculty and students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Feb. 14-15.

Mosley, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, was guest lecturer for the Jesse and Fannie Northcutt Lectures on Preaching and Pastoral Ministry. The lectures were part of the annual Scholars in Ministry Week at Southwestern.

"Southern Baptists often project a dichotomy between the strong leader concept and the servant style concept, as though pastoral leaders must be characterized as one or the other," Mosley said. Instead, the two concepts need to be combined "as it was in the strong leadership and servant style of Jesus Christ."

Mosley said ministers need to trade the traditional symbols of leadership such as the gavel, titles and position, for a towel like Jesus used to wash his disciples feet.

"If you can accept the towel as the symbol of the style of your leadership ministry, then perhaps you can accept the cross as the symbol of the extent of your commitment to serving others in Jesus' name," Mosley said.

Mosley's four ways to "lead with a towel" are: wiping the dirt from someone's feet (a caring touch, encouragement), wiping the tear from someone's eye (being sensitive to the sorrows of others), wiping the egg from someone's face (helping others overcome mistakes, humiliation), and deciding not to throw in the towel (continuing in ministry despite obstacles).

Mosley said pastors are called to lead churches to discover their true mission. While God's truths are unchanging, the world is always in a state of transformation and the church must respond to that change, he said.

"People are kept from knowing the simple truth from God and led into devotion and loyalty to obligations that may be Baptist tradition, but not necessarily biblical truth," Mosley said. "When that truth from God is distorted by laws, rituals, customs, traditions, dogmas or creeds, regardless of how spiritual they may sound or how effective they may be in reaching human goals, the mission of the church is distorted."

Rather than fighting over which tradition or custom or dogma will prevail, Mosley said pastors should help their church "focus on that which is of God, then the mission to which Jesus gave himself and with which the church is commissioned, will be the mission that anchors and challenges the church."

The Scholars in Ministry Week is designed for persons with advanced theological degrees from Southwestern.

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Trustees approve Sunday school study, church training program name change

By Linda Lawson

N-SSB

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Recommendations to implement a four-year study to strengthen Sunday school materials and change the name of the denomination's church training program to discipleship training were adopted without opposition by trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board during their semi-annual meeting Feb. 13-15.

Greater emphasis on the Bible, ease of use, more art and color, and greater emphasis on evangelism and application, including nurture, are the four primary benefits of improvements in Sunday school materials to be introduced in October 1991, according to Harry Piland, director of the board's Sunday school division.

Recommendations included the deletion of 11 products, the addition of nine products and changes in editorial and design specifications of most of the 96 dated periodicals to be available in October 1991.

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"I have a dream in my heart," Piland told the trustees. "I see from the depths of my soul the dream of breakthrough growth in Southern Baptist life through Southern Baptist churches. We can help the churches achieve breakthrough. That is what this is all about."

After the presentation, Bill Anderson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church of Clearwater, Fla., termed the study "one of the most exciting things we've done at the Sunday School Board in recent history." He said the changes "will tell our people at the grass roots we have heard them."

Recommendations included discontinuing age-group leadership magazines and adding leadership articles to teachers' periodicals. Also, large- and smaller-church editions of "Sunday School Leadership" magazine will be published and include helps for general officers along with age-group sections.

Three lines of Sunday school curriculum will continue to be published with the Convention Uniform Series designed primarily for churches with fewer than 150 enrolled in Sunday school. The Life and Work Series will be primarily for larger churches and the Bible Book Series will be for all churches.

Piland noted that 22,000 of Southern Baptists' 37,567 churches have 150 or fewer enrolled.

"We're going to get out there and talk to the smaller churches. We're going to talk to the larger churches. We are going to meet their needs," he said.

Implementing the literature improvements -- especially additional pages for Bible content and more color and art -- would result in a projected price increase of approximately 12 percent, officials said. However, increases will be phased in over a period of two or three years so that no one-year hike would likely exceed 6 percent in addition to normal inflationary increases.

Gary Cook, vice president for church program organizations, emphasized that while the product and specifications recommendations were final, cost figures were projections that would be finalized through regular budget planning schedules.

Despite the increases, Sunday school materials produced by the board continue to be much less expensive than those of eight other publishers, according to the report given to the trustees.

Board officials took a 1987-88 Sunday school literature price comparison study of nine publishers compiled by Foundations magazine, escalated all prices 15 percent as a projection of 1991 costs and further escalated Sunday School Board materials for new specifications. Average prices were based on a class of 10 pupils and including teacher's book, pupil's book, take-home book or leaflet (if any) and resource kit.

Results showed board Bible study materials would cost an average of \$2.39 per pupil per quarter, the lowest of the publishers. At the same time, Scripture Press Sunday school materials would cost an average \$3.89 per pupil per quarter and David C. Cook Sunday school materials, \$5.72 per quarter.

In other business, a decision to change the names of the church training program, the board's church training department and the monthly church training magazine to discipleship training, effective Oct. 1, 1989, was adopted without discussion.

Changing the name of the program will require approval of the SBC Executive Committee and messengers to the 1989 Southern Baptist Convention.

Roy Edgemon, director of the church training department, told Baptist Press the term "discipleship training" is a warm, biblical concept that better describes the tasks of the program.

For example, the name of the program's administration book is "Discipleship Training: A Church Training Manual." And DiscipleALL is the 1990-95 theme for the program, Edgemon said.

"It is a natural name that has emerged over a period of years. We have been saying church training is discipleship training," he added.

In a related matter, a family of products for use with preschoolers in church training was approved for release beginning in October 1991. "Preschoolers at Church" will include a teacher's guide, resource kit and take-home leaflet.

Presently, preschool church training materials are included in with Sunday school periodicals.

Also, effective October 1990, preschool and children's Bible study materials in Spanish and adult materials in Korean will be written in those languages rather than translated and adapted from English, according to recommendations adopted by trustees.

Trustees also approved a 1989-90 average literature price increase of 7 percent, effective with April 1990 issues.

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SBC missions day camp
provided for children

By James Warren

Baptist Press
2/16/89

N-CO
(B'hood)

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--While parents are tending to convention business, singing, praying, listening, and standing in lines at the Southern Baptist Convention in Las Vegas, Nev., their children can be involved in the SBC Missions Day Camp.

Missions Day Camp, sponsored by the children and youth division of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, is for boys and girls who have completed grades 1-6 whose parents are attending the annual meeting.

James H. Smith, Brotherhood Commission president, said: "Missions Day Camp certainly meets a real need. I am excited that the Brotherhood Commission staff and volunteers have this opportunity to serve in this role at our annual meeting."

Missions Day Camp provides a missions education program for children of messengers during all daytime sessions of the convention as follows: Tuesday 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Wednesday 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., and Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.

The cost is \$7 per day per child or \$20 for three days, and includes lunch Tuesday and Thursday and refreshments all days.

Registration may be done at the Missions Day Camp Booth near the messenger registration area in the Las Vegas Convention Center Monday from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., and during daytime convention sessions Tuesday-Thursday.

Day camp facilities will be at First Baptist Church, Las Vegas, 300 South Ninth Street. Transportation is provided to and from the convention center. Campers will leave each day at 8:30 a.m. from the Missions Day Camp Booth.

Children in the seventh grade and older are eligible to be assistant counselors for the day camp. Interested persons are asked to contact Karl Bozeman at the Brotherhood Commission or at the Missions Day Camp Booth on Monday before the convention.

The day campers should dress comfortably. All activities will be inside because of the intense heat expected during June in Las Vegas.

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