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February 23, 1990

90-27

SBC faces 'clear alternative'  
on religious liberty voice

By Marv Knox

N-60

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists will face a "clear alternative" regarding their religious liberty voice when they gather for their annual meeting this summer in New Orleans.

They will be asked to vote on two items -- a new budget and a change in a program assignment -- that would move the Southern Baptist Convention's primary religious liberty/First Amendment platform from the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs to the Christian Life Commission.

The proposals were approved by the SBC Executive Committee during its winter meeting Feb. 19-20 in Nashville.

The financial recommendation contains a \$341,796 reduction in SBC budget funds allocated to the Baptist Joint Committee, a nine-denomination religious liberty organization in Washington. The proposal would drop the convention's contribution to the BJC from \$391,796 to \$50,000, an 87.24 percent reduction.

It also includes a \$365,328 increase in funding for the Christian Life Commission, the convention's Nashville-based moral concerns agency, which has a Washington office. The CLC would get \$1,262,836, a 40.70 percent gain from the current \$897,508. The increase is comprised of the 1.89 percent growth in the overall SBC budget, plus funds that would be transferred from the BJC.

The budget proposal will be paired with a recommendation that would change the CLC's program assignment, allowing it to address religious liberty issues as well as Christian social ethics.

The combined proposals represent "the clearest alternative ... concerning how we will do our religious liberty work," said David E. Hankins, chairman of the Executive Committee's business and finance subcommittee and pastor from Lake Charles, La.

The BJC has been a point of contention within the convention for most of the past decade.

Detractors have said the BJC is too liberal, faulting it for not supporting school-prayer and anti-abortion amendments, as well as not siding with them on several legislative issues. They also have said it is not as accountable to the SBC as it should be and that the SBC provides a disproportionate share of BJC funding.

Supporters have said the BJC strictly upholds the historic Baptist belief in church-state separation and cannot get involved in moral concerns except as they involve religious liberty. They have said it is accountable to the SBC through its trustees, more than one-third Southern Baptist, and that the SBC's level of financial support is fair because of the comparative sizes of the SBC and the eight other Baptist denominations.

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The alternatives have been less than clear, Executive Committee members noted. Three special committees have studied the BJC since 1986, and messengers to SBC annual meetings have turned back efforts to defund the BJC. The Executive Committee has proposed and rescinded plans for creating an SBC Religious Liberty Commission. At the winter meeting, the Executive Committee defeated a plan to more than quadruple the budget of the SBC Public Affairs Committee -- the 18-member committee through which the convention relates to the BJC -- which would have given PAC members a more active role in addressing religious liberty.

The latest alternative -- increased funding and an expanded program assignment for the CLC; decreased funding for the BJC -- will take effect when the convention's fiscal year begins next October, if a majority of messengers to the New Orleans annual meeting agree. Longtime observers predicted BJC defenders will have an uphill battle, since an Executive Committee budget proposal has not been overturned in decades.

Southern Baptists will get to study the issue themselves before they vote. The Executive Committee decided to publish an eight-page statement drafted by its officers that gives a rationale for making the change. They later agreed to allow publication of a minority report that is to defend sustaining the level of BJC support.

The statements will be published in the May issue of The Baptist Program, the Executive Committee's magazine; in the "Book of Reports" and "Daily Bulletin," which will be given to messengers to the New Orleans meeting; and in a brochure, which will be available upon request from the Executive Committee, 901 Commerce, Nashville, Tenn. 37203.

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Religious liberty discussion  
features variety of motions

By Marv Knox

N-10

Baptist Press  
2/23/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Executive Committee considered 17 motions, amendments or substitutions during its three-and-one-half-hour discussion of the religious liberty issue Feb. 20.

The debate revolved around how to direct funds and program assignments for religious liberty and First Amendment issues to the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, the convention's moral concerns agency; the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a nine-denomination religious liberty organization in Washington; and the Southern Baptist Public Affairs Committee, an 18-member group through which the convention relates to the Baptist Joint Committee.

The committee first considered a Christian Life Commission program statement revision, along with recommendations to delete the Public Affairs Committee's program statement and to assign it five "operational guidelines."

Ann M. Smith, a layperson from Greensboro, N.C., opposed the changes. "The Baptist Joint Committee has earned its money," she said, noting the BJC's efforts to ease the tax burden on missionaries has saved the SBC \$10 million during the past eight years.

The changes also would "duplicate the programs, offices and personnel that already are functioning well in Washington," said Wallace E. Jones, a pastor from Bridgeton, Mo. He offered a substitute motion that would send the matter back to the Executive Committee's program and budget subcommittee with instructions for the BJC and the PAC to work out their problems.

Terry L. Davis, a pastor from Berlin, Md., said the proposed program changes would cost too much. "We're going to create three entities doing primarily the same thing," he noted. "It is a waste of money to try to resolve this by creating entities that will cost more money."

Fred H. Wolfe, the committee's secretary and a pastor from Mobile, Ala., disagreed. "We're just bringing our funding in line," he said, noting the new money shared between the three entities is only a 1.89 percent gain, the same as the rest of the convention's 1990-91 Cooperative Program unified budget allocations.

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"The Christian Life Commission will accept its new role," he added. "We have not been satisfied by the representation we have gotten from the Baptist Joint Committee."

Jones' substitute failed 53-18, and the original motion passed 53-17.

The Executive Committee next considered the 1990-91 Cooperative Program allocation budget, the formula for distributing the convention's unified budget among its agencies and institutions. The proposed budget goal is \$137,332,523.

James C. Wideman, a pastor from Portsmouth, N.H., moved to amend the budget, transferring \$72,600 of the PAC's proposed \$96,600 allocation to the CLC. "If we are going to begin the process of moving the First Amendment responsibility to the Christian Life Commission, I see no need to move money to the Public Affairs Committee," he said. The PAC currently gets \$23,704.

James T. Roach, an attorney from Albuquerque, N.M., agreed. "We should present (the budget and the religious liberty issue) clearly to the SBC so we can have a vote whether we should be involved with the Baptist Joint Committee or should have an alternative," he said. "The way the proposal has come out now, we not only have one alternative, we have two. We're proposing the PAC for one alternative and the CLC for another."

R. Kenny Spain, a pastor from Cadillac, Mich., supported the original proposal. "We would make a redundancy out of the operating guidelines we just approved," he said. "I am not opposed to having three entities in Washington. Most issues have more than one voice speaking for them."

Wideman's amendment failed on a 35-35 vote, with committee Chairman Sam W. Pace, an associational director of missions from Lawton, Okla., noting he had voted, since the tally was conducted by secret ballot.

Jones then moved to amend the proposed allocation budget by giving the three organizations each a 1.89 percent increase. That would give the PAC \$24,125, the BJC \$399,205 and the CLC \$914,479.

He offered five reasons for his proposal: sensitivity to state conventions and Southern Baptists who support the BJC; concern about more "division, hostility and confrontation" in the SBC; a feeling the "full story" of the relationship between the PAC and the BJC has not been told; belief his amendment was in keeping with the spirit by which SBC executives proposed the current budgeting procedure; and a need to "demonstrate that our bond as fellow Baptists is stronger than our biases" and to "demand that the BJC and the PAC clarify their working relationship through transparent and accurate reporting."

Richard M. Cagle, a pastor from Gadsden, Ala., countered that the budget subcommittee had "struggled for hours with this." He noted the SBC agency leaders had presented their cases to the subcommittee. And he cited displeasure with the BJC's performance on school prayer, abortion and legislation that could force religious institutions to hire employees whose beliefs are contrary to the institutions'.

Jones' amendment failed and the overall budget proposal passed on uncounted hand votes.

During the budget debate, Smith had asked about the source of an eight-page document detailing the rationale for the proposed budget, citing the Executive Committee. Following the vote, Wolfe responded that the officers felt "clear, understandable reasons for our decision" would be in order. "It (the document) is not binding on anybody," he said.

Don Whitt, a pastor from Milan, Tenn., proposed that the document be placed in the records of the Executive Committee. The motion passed 55-15.

J. Stephen Brumbelow, a pastor from Poca, W.Va., moved that the document be printed and distributed in The Baptist Program, the Executive Committee's magazine; the "Book of Reports" and "Daily Bulletin," which are distributed to messengers to the convention's annual meeting; and in a brochure.

Martin Bradley, the convention's recording secretary and a layman from Nashville, opposed the measure, citing the document's lack of balance. "There's not much positive in this document, and we know why, because it's intended to support the action we have taken," he said. "There is no mention of the decades of service" of the Baptist Joint Committee.

Wolfe responded: "It (support for the BJC) has been printed on the other side through the state papers and the Baptist Press. They've never printed our side."

At that point, more than one-half hour past time for adjournment, James M. Morton Jr., a pastor from Livermore, Calif., moved to table the issue. Paul Pressler, the committee's vice chairman and a layman from Houston, moved to adjourn, and the committee agreed.

Following dinner, David E. Hankins, chairman of the committee's business and finance subcommittee and a pastor from Lake Charles, La., moved to table Brumbelow's motion in order to reconsider the vote on the budget.

Pressler urged defeat of Hankins' proposal and further consideration of Brumbelow's motion. The motion to table failed, 31-32.

Carl E. Compton, a pastor from Myrtle Beach, S.C., offered an amendment that would have removed a section of the document that discusses "various problems with the BJC," saying that section of the report is negative and deals with personality issues.

Pressler countered, "Too frequently we have let the press set the agenda" for discussion of the BJC, noting the Executive Committee needs to "say why we're concerned." He also said the document does not deal with personalities and that the only proper name mentioned is in a direct quote.

James F. Yates, a pastor from Yazoo City, Miss., said, "It sounds like a personal vendetta against one man" and asked: "Can everything in this be validated? We're going to look pretty foolish if it contains errors."

William F. Harrell, chairman of the committee's program and budget subcommittee and a pastor from Martinez, Ga., noted, "To cut this out is going to cut the guts out of the argument" for the budget proposal.

The vote on Compton's amendment failed 19-53.

Terry L. Davis, a pastor from Berlin, Md., opposed the publication. "We are doing what I would call a propaganda ploy," he said. "We are giving one side of the issue. ... If we're going to bring peace and unity to the convention, we ought not be instigators of this division."

Eldridge L. Miller, a pastor from Sallisaw, Okla., noted, "If we do not publish this, our constituency will never know" how the committee decided to make its proposal.

Stan D. Coffey, a pastor from Amarillo, Texas, said people had been asking him for rationale for the committee's decisions and that such a document would help him respond. Also, the document would not cause division, since the convention already is divided over the issue, he added.

William K. Hall, a layman from San Clemente, Calif., objected to the document's use of "we, the Executive Committee" instead of "we, the officers of the Executive Committee" since the officers wrote it but the full committee did not formally adopt it.

Kenneth R. Barnett, a pastor from Lakewood, Colo., supported publication. "I believe our officers have given us complete, accurate, informed information," he said.

The motion to publish the document passed 39-20:

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James E. Jones, a pastor from Campbellsville, Ky., proposed that a minority report "be given the same exposure as this document. Pressler offered a substitute that would encourage a minority report "signed by those individuals who are in agreement with the minority report."

Pressler's substitute carried with one dissenting vote.

Roach proposed that the majority report be signed by its supporters. He noted that while he supported the budget proposal, he did not agree with all the rationale in the majority report.

Pressler countered that a member can register dissent from any vote but that "a signing of the action of the Executive Committee would weaken the action of the Executive Committee."

Roach's motion failed on an uncounted show-of-hands vote.

(The next day, 14 committee members met to discuss development of the minority report. They named a drafting committee comprised of Yates, Wallace Jones, Bradley and Frank Lady, an attorney from Jonesboro, Ark.)

Hankins then moved to reconsider the budget, which had been approved by the committee before the dinner break. "I have had second thoughts on funding the Public Affairs Committee at this level," he said.

"I am one Southern Baptist who is ready for a change, an alternative in the way we've been doing religious liberty," he said. "I do believe we may not have given the clearest alternative to the Southern Baptist Convention concerning how we will do our religious liberty work."

The vote to reconsider passed 36-26.

Hankins then moved to decrease the PAC's proposed allocation from \$96,600 to \$25,000, with the \$71,600 balance going to the CLC.

Miller opposed the action, noting the Executive Committee had adopted operational guidelines for the PAC. "I believe it is absolutely impossible for them to do their work for \$25,000," he said.

Walter S. Tomme Jr., a pastor from Arlington, Va., said a PAC member had told him the PAC would be "our primary voice in Washington on matters of religious liberty." He asked for a clarification of that issue.

Chairman Pace said, "The chair does not share that opinion."

"For us to be effective in Washington, we need to have a clear voice, not a diluted voice," Tomme said.

The budget amendment passed 44-25, and the new budget proposal passed 46-13.

Following the vote, SBC President Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., and an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee, noted that he did not vote on matters relative to the budget, so that he can preside at the SBC annual meeting without conflict of interest.

The committee then approved a motion by Pressler that allowed the committee's officers to change the majority report to reflect the accurate figures in the new budget proposal.

Virginia Baptists meet  
SBC liaison committee

By Dan Martin

N-10

NASHVILLE (BP)--Virginia Baptists and members of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee liaison committee met for more than four hours Feb. 19 before deciding another meeting is needed to further discuss issues of concern.

The dialogue session stemmed from a "Memorial from the Messengers of the 1988 Baptist General Association of Virginia to the Messengers of the 1989 Southern Baptist Convention," which expressed five issues for SBC consideration and response.

During the 1989 annual meeting of the SBC, the memorial was referred to the Executive Committee, which established an eight-member liaison committee to receive "any and all such communications for consideration . . . ."

In its September 1989 meeting, the liaison committee adopted a statement, prepared by its chairman, Julian Motley, pastor of Gorman Baptist Church in Durham, N.C., which set out parameters of its work, but did not, during that meeting, meet with the Virginia representatives.

In the February meeting, the 10 members of the Virginia denominational crisis committee, plus two state denominational workers, met with the eight-member liaison committee to discuss the five points of concern, as well as the parameters established by the liaison committee in September.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Motley reported to the Executive Committee: "The committee engaged in substantial dialogue in an open, forthright and conciliatory atmosphere and shared mutual expressions of appreciation at the close of the meeting for the spirit and manner in which the discussions were held.

"It was the consensus of the joint group that further dialogue should be scheduled and plans were initiated to arrange another meeting . . . . The liaison committee, in a subsequent meeting, took steps toward the preparation of a substantive response to the issues raised . . . ."

"The committee feels that significant progress was made in this first joint session with the Virginia committee and is fully committed to continuing the dialogue."

Neal Jones, pastor of Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church, Va., and chairman of the Virginia committee, thanked the liaison committee and the Executive Committee "for helping us carry our concerns to the Southern Baptist Convention."

"You received us graciously . . . and raised our expectations. We urge you to add tangible evidence to our expectations," Jones said. "The liaison committee has our report in hand. We have sought to be straightforward, succinct and courteous. Please consider our concerns with an eye to the future as well as faithfulness to our heritage."

After polling the members of the two committees, the two groups will convene another dialogue session either May 14-15 in Nashville, or immediately prior to the 1990 annual meeting of the SBC, on June 9, in New Orleans.

Although the members of the liaison committee considered the dialogue session to be conducted under the background rules of the Executive Committee, which prevent quotation or direct attribution, members of the Virginia delegation wanted their remarks to be open and on the record and gave Baptist Press permission to quote freely from their part of the discussion.

In the discussion, Jones read a paper that set forth the Virginia Baptists' position, and noted: "We come as official representatives of the BGAV. Our mandate from the BGAV was voted by an overwhelming majority in the 1988 annual meeting . . . ."

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"The overarching reason for sending the memorial to the SBC was to present formally and straightforwardly some concerns which are negatively affecting the success of the Cooperative Program.

"This is what we desire," he said. "First, direct, mutual consultations regarding a range of issues that are affecting our joint efforts ... in cooperative ministries," and, second, the assistance of the SBC liaison committee to develop and initiate appropriate recommendations to the SBC Executive Committee and the Southern Baptist Convention which will address these concerns."

He added: "Important as the current issues are, we want to put forth another significant dimension of our joint deliberations. We want to search for solutions that will look to the future. ... Our committee believes that the time is right to examine and adjust some of our approaches and methods in order to forge a new consensus that will propel us into a new advance of cooperative missions and evangelism."

In the paper, Jones listed the five issues of concern to Virginia Baptists. They are:

-- "The maintenance of our historic relationship with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

-- "The possibility of allowing some form of flexibility whereby a church may, on conscience grounds, choose to omit from its Cooperative Program (the SBC unified giving plan) gifts selected SBC budget items through a carefully developed plan.

-- "The continuation of quality theological education at our seminaries.

-- "The appointment of persons nominated by the BGAV as Virginia members of the SBC Committee on Committees.

-- "The development of a new style of relating based on the partnership principle."

In the paper, Jones also spelled out six "principles which we believe are foundational to our cooperative relationship." They are:

-- Autonomy. "Baptist bodies are self-governing under the Lordship of Christ."

-- Voluntary connectionalism. "Voluntary connectionalism is God's glue by which we are joined with others of like faith and order and like commitment in missionary enterprise called the SBC. Voluntary connectionalism should not be confused with presbyterial polity. Without connectionalism, Baptists would be strict independents."

-- Freedom of dissent within the embrace of fellowship. "A proper balance between freedom and cooperation is necessary for the continuation of Baptist life. If uniformity replaces liberty as the basis of cooperation, our identity as Baptists will be jeopardized."

-- Representative participation. "Mutuality exists between and among Baptist bodies. The principle of autonomy must be balanced alongside the principle of mutuality and interdependence."

-- Mutual consultation. "An intentional communication about plans, programs and cooperative ministries is related to assure widespread grassroots ownership and participation."

-- Mutual accountability. "An intentional communication between partners helps each partner evaluate its progress toward achieving mutual expectations, goals and objectives. The purpose of mutual accountability is to foster better performance by all of the partners."

Jones told the liaison committee the Virginians "record our intention to fulfill our assignment from the BGAV to voice these concerns to all Southern Baptists."

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The Virginia Baptists were told the SBC liaison committee intended to enter into dialogue with those who, like Virginia, had concerns, but it had adopted parameters which, while not intended to limit free discussion, had limited the committee response to cooperative ministries that relate to the Cooperative Program.

While the SBC committee apparently feels the funding of the BJC, theological education and the presidential appointment of state representatives to the Committee on Committees was outside the parameters, Jones said Virginians believe all of the five issues have a direct impact on Cooperative Program giving.

However, when the groups meet again, each of the five concerns listed by the BGAV in its memorial will be addressed.

One big item left unaddressed, according to James Slatton, pastor of River Road Baptist Church in Richmond, is the issue of presenting the concerns directly to messengers of the SBC.

"One of the things this (liaison) committee could do would be to recommend that the convention hear us outright," he said, pointing out the memorial was addressed from the messengers of Virginia to the messengers of the SBC.

"This committee has listened to us. We will look to see what you choose to do as to whether you heard us," he added.

Jones likened the meeting to a football kickoff. "We are waiting for the other team to respond," he said.

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Executive Committee proposes  
\$137 million allocation budget

By Marv Knox

N-10

Baptist Press  
2/23/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Executive Committee has proposed a \$137 million unified budget for the convention's 1990-91 fiscal year.

The \$137,332,523 Cooperative Program allocation budget will be presented to messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans this summer. If approved, it will go into effect Oct. 1.

The Executive Committee ratified the proposal during its winter meeting in Nashville Feb. 19-20.

The proposed Cooperative Program allocation budget goal is 1.89 percent larger than the current \$134,787,543 goal. The new goal is based on actual Cooperative Program receipts for the latest fiscal year completed, which ended last Sept. 30.

The Cooperative Program is disbursed to three boards, six seminaries, one foundation and seven commissions. Five other organizations receive funds through the convention's operating budget, which is funded by the Cooperative Program.

All but four of the recipients are to receive 1.89 percent increases.

Three exceptions involve changes in the way the Executive Committee proposes to finance the convention's efforts on behalf of religious liberty. The budget includes an increase of \$1,296, or 5.47 percent, to the SBC Public Affairs Committee, bringing the allocation to \$25,000; a decrease of \$341,796, or 87.24 percent, to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, lowering its total to \$50,000; and an increase of \$365,328, or 40.70 percent, to the SBC Christian Life Commission, raising its allocation to \$1,262,836.

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The other exception is Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. It is to receive a \$48,872 -- or 1.76 percent -- increase, which will bring its allocation to \$2,833,413. Golden Gate's base increase is 1.89 percent, but it did not get an increase on the \$200,000-per-year special allocation it is to get for five years.

Except for the discussion on the budget and some program assignment changes involved with the religious liberty issue, the Executive Committee approved 29 items in 35 minutes. They included:

-- A three-part recommendation on the SBC's 150th anniversary in 1995.

It acknowledged the enlistment of Catherine Allen of Birmingham, Ala., to coordinate events in Atlanta and Augusta, Ga., in June 1995. Committee members also agreed to recommend to this year's SBC annual meeting that a 150th anniversary celebration be held Monday, June 19, 1995, preceding that year's SBC annual meeting, and to recommend that the '95 SBC annual meeting close at noon Thursday, June 22, to allow messengers to attend an evening celebration in Augusta, birthplace of the convention.

-- Acknowledgment of a Missouri Baptist Convention resolution of support for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and declaration that the Executive Committee had considered the resolution while making its program and budget recommendations.

The Missouri resolution stated that messengers to that convention's latest annual meeting expressed "our strong reservations about any attempt to reduce or terminate the Southern Baptist Convention's cooperation with" the Baptist Joint Committee.

In a subcommittee meeting where the resolution was handled, an Executive Committee member said the Executive Committee was saying it had considered the resolution when indeed it had not. Other members of the subcommittee responded by saying they had received the resolution, considered it and decided to disagree with its recommendation.

-- Approval of the Baptist Convention of New York -- with 25,838 members, 206 churches and 100 church-type missions -- for full representation on SBC entities; and approval of the Hawaii Baptist Convention -- with 15,384 members in 55 churches and 26 church-type missions -- for representation on the Executive Committee and "other appropriate committees" of the SBC.

-- Receipt of information that the Executive Committee will sign a contract with C. Barry McCarty, president of Cincinnati (Ohio) Bible College and Seminary, to be parliamentarian for SBC President Jerry Vines at the SBC annual meeting this summer. McCarty is to receive \$960 per day and \$120 per hour for pre- or post-convention consultations, plus expenses. In 1989, he was paid \$14,555 by the SBC.

-- Election of two people to fill vacancies caused by resignations from the 1989-90 SBC Committee on Nominations.

They are J.V. Davis, pastor of Rice Memorial Baptist Church in Northboro, Mass., replacing Carlos Pas, pastor of Island Palm Baptist Church in Hampstead, N.H.; and Patrick Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Johnson City, Ill., replacing L. Sid West, pastor of First Baptist Church of West Frankfort, Ill.

-- Election of six members of the Baptist World Alliance youth committee for the 1990-95 term.

They are Helen Wood, associate director of the SBC Foreign Mission Board's international service department; Dean Finley, national youth evangelism consultant for the SBC Home Mission Board; Charles H. Johnson, director of the SBC Sunday School Board's student ministries department; Russell B. Griffin, director of the SBC Brotherhood Commission's children and youth division; Georgia Hill, Baptist Young Women consultant for the SBC Woman's Missionary Union; and Jerry Merriman, director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention's student ministry department.

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-- Support for the SBC resolution designating 1990 as the International Year of Bible Reading. The committee also voted to encourage all Southern Baptists to participate by reading the entire Bible during the year.

-- Acknowledgment of the "significant role of local and/or at-large trustees for some of the SBC entities"; recognition that the need for such trustees "may not be as great today as in the past"; and a request that "each such entity ... study the concept for a possible recommended amendment to its charter to discontinue or reduce local and/or at-large trustees," with the reductions to be made by attrition.

-- A bylaws workgroup decision to decline to recommend an amendment to the SBC constitution or its bylaws "to provide for the removal of a trustee of a board, institution or commission, or a member of the Executive Committee."

-- A report to the SBC annual meeting this summer "that the Executive Committee does not believe it to be wise to plan to conduct the annual meeting of the SBC during a weekend ... since a survey of convention constituency indicates that 74 percent of the pastors and 44 percent of the laypersons prefer the days Tuesday through Thursday" for annual meetings.

-- Resolutions of appreciation for Timothy A. Hedquist, the committee's former vice president for business and finance, who resigned to become assistant pastor and staff administrator of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., and for A. Earl Potts, executive director-treasurer of the Alabama Baptist Convention, who will retire Sept. 1.

-- Election of six members of the SBC Public Relations Advisory Committee.

They are Charles Chaney, vice president for extension at the Home Mission Board; Kenny Rains, director of world missions conferences and associational relations for the Brotherhood Commission; Susan Todd, news and information specialist for the Woman's Missionary Union; William W. Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention; R. Albert Mohler Jr., editor of the Christian Index, Georgia Baptists' weekly newsjournal; and Greg Hancock, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's communications division.

The Executive Committee also heard its last report from SBC President Vines, who said each church should be built on the foundation of Christ.

"If you try to build a church on anything else but Jesus Christ, it will fail," he said. "If you try to build it on a pastor, it will be only as secure as that pastor and will last only as long as the ministry of that pastor."

Laboring with Jesus Christ to build his church is one of the most exciting things there is, Vines said.

"God performs the miracle of forgiveness," he said. "You and I proclaim the message of forgiveness."

Vines, who will complete his second one-year term as SBC president this summer, said it is time for him to go home and devote himself to being pastor of his church.

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Also contributing to this story was Kathy Palen, of the Baptist Press Washington bureau.

Court rejects dispute  
over Hubbard biography

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press  
2/23/90

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to review a copyright dispute involving a biography of L. Ron Hubbard, founder of the Church of Scientology.

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The justices left standing a decision by the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals that quotations from letters, diaries and other documents used in the book "Bare-Faced Messiah" constituted copyright infringement. The appeals panel, however, refused to stop distribution of the biography because of the Church of Scientology's "unreasonable and inexcusable delay" in filing suit.

In writing the biography, author Russell Miller used unpublished letters, memoranda, applications and diaries by Hubbard. Many of the documents were obtained from the federal government under the Freedom of Information Act.

The work includes quotations from Hubbard's application to the Veteran's Administration that contains false benefit claims; a letter to the FBI in which Hubbard calls his wife a spy; a letter in which he proposes converting Scientology into a "religion" for business reasons; and a letter in which he falsely tells his daughter that he is not her father, according to a brief filed with the Supreme Court by the book's publisher, Henry Holt and Co.

"The quotations from these and other works are the factual evidence of the falsehoods, character defects and psychopathologies that Miller ascribes to Hubbard," the brief said, adding that use of the quotations is therefore essential.

But attorneys for New Era Publications, a Church of Scientology-affiliated publisher, described the dispute as "an unexceptional case of copyright infringement through extensive quotation of unpublished works."

The Church of Scientology holds the copyright to the Hubbard materials. That copyright lasts until 2036 -- 50 years after Hubbard's death.

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Ugandan Baptist pastors  
untouched as battle rages

By Craig Bird

N-FMB

Baptist Press  
2/23/90

SOROTI, Uganda (BP)--A surprise rebel attack on an army base in eastern Uganda in late January sparked fighting within 50 yards of grass huts where 132 Ugandan Baptist pastors and church leaders were sleeping.

After hours of combat so ferocious it could be heard more than seven miles away, government forces repulsed the rebels and then came to check on the civilians, who had gathered for a training conference.

"You people are all living miracles; I cannot believe no one was even injured here," said the base commander when he found them unhurt.

Government policy forbids acknowledgment of casualty figures, but John Echeru, pastor of Soroti Baptist Church and leader of the training session, said both sides sustained numerous casualties.

Echeru was not present when rebels launched the attack. The night before he had traveled 23 miles to Soroti from the conference in Tiriri to pick up more Bibles. As he returned the next morning, government soldiers at a roadblock seven miles from Tiriri urged him not to continue toward the obviously heavy fighting.

"I have to," Echeru replied. "I've got pastors and Sunday school teachers there who are probably shot. I've got to get them to a hospital."

But he arrived to find the Baptist men shouting and singing: "God has made a great miracle. God has made a great miracle!"

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Cholera outbreak affects  
Baptist work in Zambia

By Franklin Kilpatrick

N-FMB

LUSAKA, Zambia (BP)--A cholera outbreak in Lusaka, Zambia, has forced missionaries and Baptists in the city of 1.2 million people to cancel church services and other public meetings.

The outbreak, which began in early February, has claimed more than 70 lives and hospitalized at least 200 people in the Zambian capital.

Missionaries have requested disaster relief funds from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to assist local authorities in stopping the spread of the disease. The money would be used mainly for medical and sterilization supplies.

Cholera, uncommon in the south-central African country, has spread quickly to many parts of Lusaka despite rapid response by Zambian health officials. Missionaries and others working with health officials apparently are in no immediate danger of contracting the disease if they follow normal precautionary procedures.

Officials have closed most schools and banned public meetings, including funerals and religious gatherings. Special clinics have been set up in affected areas to detect and treat new cases promptly.

Lusaka's International Baptist Church will not meet for worship until the government ban is lifted, said Southern Baptist missionary pastor Joe Barbour of Poplar Bluff, Mo. Worship services were being held for missionaries and workers at the Baptist mission housing complex and for seminary faculty and students at the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zambia.

The seminary has not been closed, since all students live on campus, but staff workers have been asked to remain at home. Missionary David Parker of Millen, Ga., seminary principal, announced an adjusted class schedule for the duration of the crisis.

Southern Baptist student work volunteers Richard and Carol Hawkins of Birmingham, Ala., will continue to operate the Baptist Student Center near the University of Zambia, which also remains open.

Work at the Baptist building in Lusaka, including Bible correspondence courses, printing, publishing and mission administration, continues since the government ban excludes work places.

Baptist work outside Lusaka has not been affected, although roadblocks have been set up outside the city to advise travelers they are entering an area affected by cholera.

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Franklin Kilpatrick is a Southern Baptist missionary based in Lusaka, Zambia.