



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #7
Nashville, Tennessee 372
(615) 244-23
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30387

DALLAS Thomas J. Drannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201

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, 3606 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4228

June 11, 1990

90-77

Parks clears air
among trustees

By Robert O'Brien

N.F.M.B.

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--An air-clearing address by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks ended in prayer rather than confrontation during a meeting of the board's trustees June 9 in New Orleans.

Trustee chairman William Hancock of, Louisville, Ky., called staff and trustees to prayer after Parks spoke frankly about ill will he felt had arisen among some trustees following an open letter he wrote May 15 to Southern Baptists.

The letter urged Baptists to rise above their continuing controversy or risk losing opportunities to reach 3.5 billion people for Christ worldwide. It said the controversy was eroding missionary support and appointments, taking the focus off missions and creating an image of Southern Baptists as a people of controversy rather than evangelism and missions.

Trustees, both openly and behind the scenes, had questioned the conclusions and timing of Parks' letter, written about a month before the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 12-14 in the Louisiana Superdome.

In his address, Parks did not change his view that the 11-year-old controversy is damaging missions.

But he sought to give trustees insights into his lifelong commitment to the Bible and missions, clear up misunderstandings, and remove animosity.

"I would plead that somehow we could resolve this 'something against me' kind of feeling," he said. "I believe it is biblical. I believe it is necessary for the spirit of God to move among us and to bring us together."

Before trustees and staff prayed in groups all over the room for about 10 minutes, Hancock urged all who held animosity toward another to reconcile it "before this day is done."

Asked later if Parks' address and the prayer session ended rumored trustee action on Parks' letter, Hancock said, "As far as I'm concerned, it's history. I've been praying the Lord would give us the wisdom to bring a positive response rather than reaction."

--more--

Parks' address directly responded to views expressed by some trustees that his letter was political, that it seemed to blame them for the crisis in missions, and that it seemed to indicate he placed missions ahead of biblical teaching and correct doctrine.

He assured trustees he did not say and did not mean that the trustee board itself was to blame for the problems. "That has never been in my heart, and I want you to accept that and believe that," he said.

As for politics, Parks said: "If I'd wanted to be political, I would have done a much better job than that. I was not trying to be political. I was trying to say to Southern Baptists that missions, in my estimation, is hurting. And every time we get together and irresponsibly tear at each other until our image is again negative to the world, this hurts our witness again. And somehow, some way, Southern Baptists, let's quit doing that. That's what I'm trying to say."

Parks told trustees of his personal spiritual development, noting: "I'm putting my heart out here and letting you look at it."

He outlined his call to missions and said it has been rooted in Scripture since he was 12 years old. Everything the Foreign Mission Board does, he said, "is biblically based." The board's main purpose "is evangelism that results in churches" and it seeks missionaries committed to the Bible and evangelism, he said.

"I am as aware and committed as anyone among Southern Baptists to the fact that you cannot have strong evangelism and missions without sound biblical doctrine," he said. "Make no mistake about that. That's who I am."

But he warned that Southern Baptists must maintain both strong biblical belief and the cooperative missions approach which was the reason for the formation of the SBC in 1845.

Parks said many other Baptist bodies have sound doctrine but no commitment to a cooperative world missions program. "There are 40 Baptist denominations in the United States today. Only one of them is committed to a cooperative mission the way we as Southern Baptists are...That's us. We're the only one," he said.

"I'm coming today to say solid biblical belief and strong commitment to missions are both essential if we are going to continue to be who we have been. We cannot have only one. We must have both."

Parks said that he and board staff, missionaries and trustees are all responsible for Southern Baptists knowing those facts. Southern Baptists, he said, "have entrusted us with a sacred trust, a holy trust" of foreign missions. "And we must not damage, weaken or change directions of that cause. For, if we do, Southern Baptists are irreparably damaged."

--more--

Parks noted that some trustees felt "I was saying that everything that is wrong in the world and in foreign missions is because of the controversy. That's not so at all. I did say, and I believe very, very deeply that the controversy is hurting missions. I think it's hurting a lot of other things.

"I say that as a description of what I see happening rather than as a judgment on what I see happening," Parks continued.

He cited examples from his own experience which he said indicate that the controversy is undercutting missionary appointments and giving to missions. "I'm well aware there are other factors" that affect those things, he explained. "But 'a' factor -- not 'the' factor, not the only factor -- but a factor of significance in my judgment is that the controversy is hurting us in our mission support (and) in the number of missionaries coming at the very time of our greatest opportunity."

Parks also cited input from missionaries which indicate Southern Baptists are becoming known overseas as a people who fight. He quoted a missionary who wrote: "I didn't see how I could do anything about the controversy. I've tried to ignore it, but it makes me angry that what's going on there is making it harder to share the Gospel here."

"Somehow, some way," Parks said, "we must deal with our differences in a Christian way that will not say to the world these who are telling us that God loves us don't even love each other."

At a dinner honoring trustees completing service, Parks and C. Mark Corts, immediate past trustee chairman, joined arms in a gesture of friendship. Corts, who had responded to Parks' open letter to Southern Baptists with one of his own, said he wanted to "reaffirm to all of you my love and appreciation for Keith Parks."

Parks, who presented the Winston-Salem, N.C., pastor with a plaque for 10 years of service on the board, praised Corts for his cooperative spirit and hard work on behalf of missions.

Both appeared to be reassuring trustees and others there was nothing personal about differences expressed in the two open letters. Corts' letter questioned some of Parks' conclusions and the timing of his letter.

In farewell comments, Corts urged both trustees and staff to overcome suspicion by learning to "put yourself in other people's shoes," focus on the priority of winning the world to Christ, and share openly their feelings and convictions.

Ultimately, Corts said, "when you've done all you can do, you just have to put it in God's hands."

6/11/90

Page 4

Baptist Press

FMB adopts guidelines
on belief statements

By Art Toalston

N-2MB

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustee committee has adopted guidelines to help missionary candidates write clearer statements of belief during the application process.

The trustees' Mission Personnel Committee adopted the guidelines during the board's June 8-9 meeting at Tulane University prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in the Louisiana Superdome.

The guidelines stem from trustee action last August creating a committee to annually review the missionary appointment process. The guidelines will be listed in a cover letter to accompany a "Sharing of Christian Beliefs" questionnaire traditionally used in the Foreign Mission Board's screening of missionary candidates.

The two-page questionnaire, which has undergone periodic revision by the agency's staff in the past, has asked applicants to state their beliefs about God, Jesus, the Bible and other doctrines as well as Southern Baptist cooperative work.

Now, the guidelines will list specifics to be addressed in each section of the questionnaire.

The section on the Bible, for example, previously asked candidates to: "Describe your views of the Bible. How do you use the Bible in your personal life?" Now, the guidelines for the Bible section ask candidates to address: "Inspiration, authority, reliability, purpose, miracles, historical narratives, use in your personal life."

Regarding Jesus Christ, the new guidelines ask for comments on his nature, uniqueness, birth, life, death, resurrection, second coming and "your relationship to Him."

Trustees also expanded the questionnaire to include a separate section on cooperative Southern Baptist work, which previously was part of the section on the church. The cooperative work guidelines ask missionary candidates for their views on association, state and national conventions, Cooperative Program, and "your involvement." The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' longstanding channel for churches to fund foreign and home missions and other denominational causes.

The Mission Personnel Committee, in adopting the guidelines, "did not have a desire to fit anybody into a certain mold," said its chairman, Paul Sanders, pastor of First Baptist Church of Geyer Springs, Little Rock, Ark.

But the committee did want missionary candidates "to be more definitive in writing their beliefs," Sanders said, "so the staff and trustees know what (the candidates) believe about basic Baptist doctrines."

--more--

Sanders stated that Foreign Mission Board staff members handle most of the screening of missions applicants and that the staff often has had to seek amplification of initial written statements.

Harlan Spurgeon, Foreign Mission Board vice president for mission personnel, agreed that staff often has requested clarifications from missionary candidates.

Spurgeon noted that the proposed guidelines were drafted by staff members.

The trustee committee, before its vote to adopt the guidelines, expanded them to include the matters of creation and salvation. Spurgeon said the guidelines are neither "an adding to nor a taking from" the standards missionaries traditionally have been called to meet.

Sections on personal witnessing and the Baptist Faith and Message underwent little change. The old and new forms asked applicants to relate an encounter in which they had led someone to faith in Christ, for example, and to affirm their agreement with the statement of beliefs adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963 and reaffirmed in more recent conventions.

--30--

FMB OKs work
with Czechoslovakia

By Bob Stanley

Baptist Press
6/11/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Responding to new opportunities in Eastern Europe, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted June 9 to establish fraternal relationships with Soviet Baptists and authorized opening of work in Czechoslovakia.

The board, meeting on the Tulane University campus just before the annual Southern Baptist Convention, approved the transfer of George and Veda Rae Lozuk from South America to become fraternal representatives to the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Moscow. The Lozucs, along with six couples being sought to work in Czechoslovakia, are among 88 new, full-time workers the board is seeking to reinforce its present force of 10 now assigned to Eastern Europe ministries.

Harriet Gilbert of St. Simons Island, Ga., vice chairman of the board's Europe, Middle East and North Africa committee, said the vote was especially meaningful to her because her own son-in-law, Petr Macek, a Czech, was pastor of a Czech Baptist church for 17 years.

In other actions the trustees voted to take about \$800,000 from current cash on hand to make up the shortfall in the 1989 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, which closed May 31 at \$80,197,870.78. The full \$81 million goal had been budgeted, said Carl Johnson, vice president for finance, and transfer of the funds will enable the board to fund all overseas capital projects set up under the budget.

--more--

The board also transferred \$3 million into a global fund from which missionary housing and strategic capital projects will be funded worldwide. Johnson said the money was part of that originally budgeted for new missionaries. It became available because fewer missionaries have been appointed than anticipated when the budget was adopted.

The board's strategy committee adopted a statement affirming the importance of the role of missionary wives "in their biblical role of Christian homemakers and in their God-called responsibilities as missionaries."

The statement, approved in committee but reported to the full board, said the balance can be seen clearly in the New Testament, citing 1 Timothy 5:14, Titus 2:5, Acts 2:17-18 and Galatians 3:26-29.

"In the determination of missionary deployment," the statement said, "the Foreign Mission Board has stated, 'Adequate care and attention for children is of primary spiritual importance.' This statement will be given full weight in assisting all missionary parents, and especially mothers, in defining the use of their time."

As the board has sought to concentrate more of its missionary energies directly toward evangelism and starting of churches, some missionary wives have felt torn between the needs of their family and their desire to be more involved with their husbands in starting of new churches.

Another aspect of the role of women on the mission field was addressed in a report by Harlan Spurgeon, vice president for mission personnel. Citing the significant evangelism contributions made through the board's history by such women as Josephine Ward and Bertha Smith, Spurgeon said "the issue of women's ordination has built walls in human hearts that are harmful to Christ's mission.

"The Foreign Mission Board has repeatedly stated that ordination is not an issue in the appointment of missionaries," he said. "Yet many consecrated women do not believe that they have a place in the world mission enterprise because of the garbled messages they have heard."

He concluded: "I urge you to join with me in blowing a trumpet, with no uncertain sound, that Southern Baptists are continuing to send both women and men, married or single, to share the gospel with a lost and dying world."

The board's final session of the June meeting was to take place June 13 in the Superdome, where trustees will approve the appointment of 34 new missionaries. The group will include trustee Ray England, pastor of First Baptist Church, Winchester, Ky. He and his wife, Leslie, will be appointed missionaries to the Philippines.

6/11/90

Page 7

Baptist Press

Women in Ministry
to merge with center

By Kathy Palen & Anita Bowden

N-CO
(WIM)

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Southern Baptist Women in Ministry members approved constitutional revisions that will allow their organization to merge with the Center for Women in Ministry, based in Louisville, Ky.

Approval of the revisions -- as well as worship experiences and workshops around the theme "Welcoming the Stranger ... Sojourners in the Fellowship of God" -- took place during SBWIM's eighth annual meeting June 9 and 10 in New Orleans.

As SBWIM has changed and grown through the years, it has seen a need for more structure, said Betty McGary, outgoing president.

In addition to providing for the SBWIM-CWIM merger, the changes were designed to provide for more membership involvement on the steering committee; more continuity of leadership; increased visibility and influence of the organization; and greater clarity or consistency of language.

During its annual meeting, SBWIM recognized its new steering committee officers: Carolyn Bucy, minister to youth, Lake Shore Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, president; Cheryl Collings, minister of youth, McLean Baptist Church in McLean, Va., vice president; Pam Tanner, minister of music and worship, Williams Trace Baptist Church in Sugar Land, Texas, program chair; Cindy Johnson, minister at large, First Baptist Church of Rockville, Md., recorder; Nancy Campbell, clinical pastoral education, St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston, treasurer; and Sheila Black, church and community ministries, Mecklenburg Baptist Association in Charlotte, N.C., membership chair.

--30--

Lottie Moon gifts increase
1.79 percent but miss goal

N-CO

Baptist Press
6/11/90

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists gave about \$80.2 million to the 1989 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, which pays nearly half the cost of running the denomination's world mission program.

When financial books closed May 31, Southern Baptists had sent \$80,197,870.78 to help finance mission work throughout the world. The amount represents a 1.79 percent increase over 1988 receipts and is the highest total yet for the annual offering, which generally is given in local churches during December.

Even so, the total missed the \$81 million goal. The increase in 1989 over 1988 also failed to keep pace with the 4 to 5 percent inflation rate in the United States and even higher inflation rates in many countries where Southern Baptists missionaries live and work.

--more--

The last time the offering total reached or exceeded its goal was in 1981. Earlier projections based on a survey of various state Baptist conventions had indicated 1989 receipts would exceed the \$81 million goal by about \$300,000.

The actual 1989 tally amounted to about 99 percent of the goal. To reach the 1990 goal of \$86 million, Southern Baptists will need to increase their giving by about 7.2 percent this year.

--30--

Executive board OKs changes
in Texas convention format

By Ken Camp

*N-CO
DIXON*

Baptist Press
6/11/90

DALLAS (BP)--The Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board at its June 5 meeting in Dallas approved a new state convention format doing away with pre-convention meetings and streamlining business sessions.

The new format will be presented to messengers at the annual meeting in Houston, Nov. 13-14, for their approval on a two-year trial basis beginning in 1991.

The revised schedule was recommended to the executive board by a 29-member Convention Related Meetings Study Committee, chaired by Wayne L. Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church, Carrollton. Creation of the committee was authorized by the 1989 BGCT in Lubbock following a motion by James Pleitz, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas.

The recommended format "gives priority" to the annual BGCT business meeting and "highlights the two official missions organizations of the convention," the Woman's Missionary Union and Texas Baptist Men, Allen said.

According to the revised format, the BGCT begins on Monday at 2 p.m. and ends on Tuesday evening, and the number of business sessions is cut from five to four. Annual meetings of Texas WMU and TBM are scheduled for Tuesday afternoon during a break in the annual meeting program.

The new format allows for no pre-convention general meetings such as WMU or TBM conventions or gatherings by groups such as the Texas Baptist Pastor's Conference, which held its initial meeting in 1989. The only official pre-convention meetings are business sessions of the TBM and WMU executive boards, scheduled from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

Although some executive board members said the Monday afternoon starting time would create a hardship for small church pastors in locations distant to the convention site, the board approved the committee's recommendations by a clear majority on a voiced vote.

--more--

Reading from the preamble to his committee's recommendation, Allen said, "The Convention Related Meetings Study Committee realizes that it does not have the authority to require all groups to meet at particular times.

"It also recognizes that its recommendation, even if adopted by the executive board and the Baptist General Convention of Texas, will not require any groups other than those directly under the authority of the Baptist General Convention of Texas to meet at any specific time. Baptists can and will meet whenever they desire.

"However, the committee appeals to all individuals and groups to cooperate in a spirit of Christian love and harmony with this recommendation believing it is indeed in the best interests of the whole Texas Baptist family."

As approved by the executive board, the committee's report included a recommendation that a study be done by the executive board staff, under the supervision of the executive director, "to find ways to enhance the evangelistic impact of the convention and related meetings with the understanding that nothing be done to violate the statements or sentiment of the primary recommendation in regard to no pre-convention meetings being held, such as rallies or conferences."

The Convention Related Meetings Study Committee was appointed by the chairman of the BGCT Executive Board, chairman of the BGCT administrative committee and the BGCT president.

Committee members included Rick Scarborough, pastor of Retta Baptist Church, Burleson, and organizer of the 1989 Pastor's Conference, and Miles L. Seaborn Jr., pastor of Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth and current president of the Pastor's Conference. The committee also included presidents of Texas WMU, TBM and the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas.

Allen noted that 28 of the 29 committee members attended one or more of three meetings--two of the entire committee and one of a subcommittee. All members present at the final meeting except two--one who abstained and one who was opposed--voted to approve the proposed schedule.

--30--

America near destruction,
prayer leader Willis warns

By Terri Lackey

N.S.B.

Baptist Press
6/11/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Decadence, crime, violence, the recent onslaught of natural disasters and an ecological system that is failing are signs God has turned his back on America as a nation, a prayer leader said.

--more--

The next step is to destroy it, Avery Willis of the Southern Baptist Convention Sunday School Board's discipleship training department told a conference on prayer. Other speakers included T.W. Hunt, also of the Sunday School Board; Henry Blackaby, SBC Home Mission Board; Minette Drumwright, SBC Foreign Mission Board; and Doug Beggs, SBC Brotherhood Commission. The National Prayer Conference was held at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary June 7-9.

God "removes his wall of protection when his people are disobedient," Willis said. The former missionary to Indonesia believes God took his wall of protection away from America sometime around 1963.

"The war in Vietnam should have been a clear signal that God was not protecting us anymore," Willis said. "Until then, America had been a victor in all wars."

About the time Willis believes God removed his "wall of protection" from America, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated and rebellion against the Vietnam war pervaded the country. Also, at that time, premarital sex, teen pregnancies, child abuse, the divorce rate, crime, violence, alcohol consumption and suicides began to increase dramatically.

Willis supported his beliefs with governmental statistics that he found in the book, "America: To Pray or Not Pray," by David Barton.

For example, violent crime is up over 400 percent since 1963, child abuse is up 300 percent, federal prosecution of politicians has increased 470 percent, and the number of reported cases of AIDS is up by 6,000 percent since 1982. Even scores on college entrance exams taken by high school students have declined significantly since the early '60s.

America is in the fifth of seven stages of eventual destruction by God, Willis said. In the first stage, God convicts his people of their sins. He then warns them of sins, and in the third stage, he applies remedial judgment of sins committed.

In the fourth stage, God withdraws his presence. In the fifth, he takes away his wall of protection and allows disasters to come upon his people. Next, he gives his people over to sin, failure and depravity. Finally, he destroys his people.

Willis, Blackaby, and the other prayer leaders see prayer and corporate repentance as the only way to salvage America and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Blackaby said the Bible clearly states, "If God's people don't repent, then you will be no more."

But God is desperately trying to get the attention of his people.

--more--

6/11/90

Page 11

Baptist Press

"When God takes the initiative to call his people together for corporate confession, you better not have any other business. God is in the midst of one of the greatest calls to repentance I've ever known," he said.

The National Prayer Conference was sponsored by the Sunday School Board's National Prayer Corps department and Louisiana Baptists.

--30--