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NATIONAL OFFICE  
SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
(615) 244-2355

**BUREAUS**

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522  
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas, 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5100  
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 Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

October 11, 1990

90-139

HMB trustees adopt budget,  
respond to SBC motions

By Mark Wingfield

*N-NMB*

ATLANTA (BP)--Adopting a \$78.87 million budget and responding to motions from the 1990 Southern Baptist Convention topped the agenda for the fall meeting of Southern Baptist Home Mission Board trustees.

Trustees also heard that receipts for the 1990 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering have reached \$34.6 million, an increase of 8.5 percent over the same date last year.

The approved 1991 budget of \$78.87 million is an increase of 1.6 percent over the current year's budget of \$77.65 million.

The budget anticipates \$27.4 million in income from the Cooperative Program unified budget and \$34.5 million from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Additional funds will come from sources such as designated gifts, earnings on investments and retained income.

Trustees responded to three motions referred to the HMB by messengers to the denomination's 1990 meeting in New Orleans.

The first concerns involvement of agency personnel in convention politics. The unanimously adopted response states: "The directors of the Home Mission Board are unequivocally opposed to the use of the agency, its resources or personnel in support of or in opposition to political activities within the Southern Baptist Convention."

Trustee Walter Carpenter of Houston asked whether the admonition on convention politics also referred to trustees. Chairman Ralph Smith responded that it did not.

Carpenter also suggested the statement's parameters of political activity should not prohibit HMB President Larry Lewis or others from speaking out in support of the Cooperative Program. Smith affirmed that was his understanding of the statement.

Another motion referred from New Orleans asked the HMB to reverse its policy of not providing financial support to churches with female pastors. With three opposing votes, trustees voted that no action be taken on the motion.

The third referred motion requested the HMB to send copies of The Soul Winners New Testament to churches recording no baptisms in one year. Trustees responded that the HMB evangelism section already has undertaken this project.

In other action, trustees:

-- Approved structural changes in the extension section, naming J.B. Graham associate vice president and continuing the position of assistant vice president held by David Bunch. The assistant vice president position was to be deleted at year-end as part of the 1989 staff reduction. Graham's previous position of assistant vice president for missions development was deleted in the transaction.

-- Created a new position of director of missions development and named Irvin Dawson to the post. Dawson's previous position of assistant director of missions development was deleted.

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-- Eliminated the two division director positions in the evangelism section. Ken Carter, director of the evangelism development division, was named to a new post of associate vice president in the evangelism section. Bobby Sunderland, director of the direct evangelism division, was named to a new post as special assistant for promotion and project development in the evangelism section.

-- Named a church loan fund in honor of Robert Kilgore, who is retiring as director of the church loans division. The initial source of income for the fund will be high risk loan funds to be provided through the SBC capital needs budget.

-- Adopted a new model for cooperative agreements between the HMB and state conventions.

-- Amended HMB bylaws to allow nine members on the SBC Chaplains Commission instead of the maximum of seven currently permitted.

-- Dropped the interest rate for church loan funds from 11.5 percent to 11.38 percent, effective Oct. 10.

-- Increased the limit on construction loans through the church loans division from \$750,000 to \$1 million.

-- Elected David Palmer as associate director of field servicing in the new church extension division. Palmer has been a pastor and church starter in Oregon, Missouri and Florida. Currently he is church extension director for the Northwest Baptist Convention.

-- Received the resignations of trustees Troy Morrison of Alabama and Sam Hammons of Oklahoma. Morrison recently was elected executive director of the Alabama Baptist Convention. Hammons resigned because he also is serving as a trustee of Oklahoma Baptist University.

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Alternative funding plans  
could destroy SBC: Lewis

By Mark Wingfield

*N-NMB*

Baptist Press  
10/11/90

ATLANTA (BP)--Unless stopped, alternate missions funding plans "will likely destroy the Southern Baptist Convention as we have known it," Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis told his agency's trustees.

Repeating a frequent theme of previous speeches in the past three months, Lewis affirmed the Cooperative Program unified budget as the "preferred method" of support for world missions.

The Cooperative Program is a national channel for mission gifts from Southern Baptist churches nationwide. Its \$137 million annual budget supports home and foreign mission boards, in addition to six seminaries and other ministries.

Since the establishment of an alternative missions funding mechanism in August and proposed changes in at least two state convention budgets, the future of the Cooperative Program has become a central topic anywhere Southern Baptist leaders gather.

Lewis said he believes it is important for SBC agency heads "to voice their strong support for the Cooperative Program as the preferred method of support for world missions."

However, Lewis said he will "affirm the right of any church or any state convention to support missions in whatever way they feel most appropriate."

Those who are dissatisfied with current SBC leadership should learn to exercise more trust, he added. "We need a renewed trust in the democratic process we employ as a convention. When the votes are taken and counted, let's trust that God's will has been done. Let's stand behind those elected leaders, whether or not they were of our choosing."

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Lewis listed five other reasons he opposes alternative funding plans: (1) alternative plans are "divisive and will further polarize our denomination"; (2) diverted funds will cause needy agencies to suffer; (3) wide acceptance of alternative plans will destroy the Cooperative Program; (4) erosion of the Cooperative Program will force a return to the societal method of mission support; (5) with multiple methods of funding, budgeting and bookkeeping at most agencies will become burdensome.

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FMB and HMB commission  
missionaries simultaneously

By Mark Wingfield

N-NMB

Baptist Press  
10/11/90

ATLANTA (BP)--Foreign and home missions overlapped for about an hour Oct. 9, yet still were separated by 500 miles.

Due to a coincidence, Southern Baptists set apart 65 home missionaries and 48 foreign missionaries at the same time -- in different locations.

The Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board have held joint commissioning ceremonies before, but this could be a first for simultaneous ceremonies in different locations.

While the home missionaries were walking across the platform at Atlanta's First Baptist Church to receive certificates from HMB President Larry Lewis, the new foreign missionaries were receiving congratulations from FMB President Keith Parks at Derbyshire Baptist Church in Richmond.

The 48 individuals appointed as foreign mission personnel included 38 new missionaries and 10 representatives of Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist aid organization. The foreign workers, from 23 states, will minister in 19 countries or regions.

The 65 home missionaries will work in 27 states in the areas of black church extension, church and community ministries, evangelism, language church extension, associational missions and new church extension.

One of the couples commissioned to home mission service previously worked as foreign missionaries. Leon and Sarah White, former missionaries to Argentina, were appointed to Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

In a testimony during the service, White described how people from around the world have descended upon southern Florida. Broward County is home to people from 100 countries, he said. Eight of every 10 residents are unchurched.

Lewis told the home missionaries their success will not be measured by budgets, big numbers or buildings. "Success will be measured in the life of that person who is willing to lay his life at Jesus' feet," he declared.

Parks admonished the foreign missionaries to build strong networks of prayer support. "The intercessory prayers of other people will help sustain you, strengthen you and make you productive," he said. "You will need them, and God will bless."

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Donald Martin contributed to this story.

Mission giving increase urged;  
'enlarging the tent' questioned

By Art Toalston

N-FMB

Baptist Press  
10/11/90

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman is "praying and trusting God" for the greatest foreign missions offering in Southern Baptist history.

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Chapman expressed his hope for an upsurge in missions giving during an Oct. 9 overview of the evangelistic and church-planting aims of the convention's Foreign Mission Board, attended by 41 pastors out of about 100 invited from across the Southern Baptist spectrum.

FMB trustees and staff said they hope the session, which met in conjunction with the board's October meeting, will help stimulate mission giving.

But, Chapman added, "it's impossible ... evidently" for Southern Baptists to talk about foreign missions, one of the Southern Baptist Convention's cornerstones, without denominational strife entering the conversation.

Chapman's assessment, in which he also further elaborated on his earlier promise to "enlarge the tent" of participation in SBC leadership, followed a dialogue time set aside for pastors who attended the session.

Several pastors raised fears about directions the Foreign Mission Board may take under conservatives now in control of the SBC. Board President Keith Parks and several of the board's 90 trustees responded to the concerns.

Scott Walker, pastor of First Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C., said he was uncertain if he could be appointed as a missionary "because I might have a slight difference of opinion with other brothers and sisters in our convention over certain interpretations" such as the biblical book of Genesis. He is a former summer missionary to Liberia and grew up in the Philippines as the son of missionaries.

Walker posed his question after hearing reports by board administrators on the 1.3 billion people in the world who live where Christian witness is virtually nonexistent and on advances being made by Southern Baptist workers in Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

In response, Parks said, "We have not changed the qualifications for mission appointment. Our approach, for as long as I've known anything about missions, has been ... that any authentic Southern Baptist who loves the Lord, is called of God, who wants to be a part of reaching this world for Christ is eligible for appointment as a missionary."

Targeting rumors that the board is seeking only preachers, Parks noted that a doctor, a veterinarian and a music promoter were among 48 people scheduled for appointment that evening.

Parks also denied rumors that the board will not appoint any doctoral graduates of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., which has long been a target of conservatives' criticism. He again noted that one such graduate was to be appointed that evening.

The idea for highlighting Southern Baptist work overseas to stimulate missions giving was initiated by Foreign Mission Board trustee chairman Bill Hancock, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville.

In an interview, Hancock said there was "no real design" to the list of pastors invited. It included about 70 pastors he knows from across the country and others suggested by Parks and Foreign Mission Board staff.

Hancock said he hopes Southern Baptist churches will aim for a 10-percent increase in their giving this year to the denomination's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, which accounts for more than 40 percent of the funds the board needs each year to support and expand its mission force. This year's Lottie Moon goal is \$86 million. Last year Southern Baptists gave \$80.2 million to support overseas missions.

Hancock said his church in Louisville will aim for a 10-percent increase over its Lottie Moon offering of \$50,500 last year. Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, said his congregation also has adopted the 10-percent-increase goal to top the \$56,614 it raised last year.

At the end of the four-hour session, Hancock called for an offering among staff, trustees and visiting pastors in the meeting to start moving toward the Lottie Moon goal. More than \$11,500 was collected, plus \$2,700 in pledges.

Chapman said he had not planned to address the theological controversy that has divided Southern Baptists since 1979. "But in spite of all of our idealism," he said, "it's impossible for us to just talk missions, evidently, (without) some of the struggles we're facing seeping into the conversation."

Some good can result nevertheless, he said, "to know each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and to communicate."

Chapman addressed doubts expressed by several pastors about the pledge of conservative leaders to "enlarge the tent," or broaden the spectrum of people appointed as trustees of Southern Baptist institutions.

Session participant Gary Parker compared the situation in the SBC to what might happen in a local church if it had 55-45 percent votes in business meetings "over and over and over again" and if the minority were barred from participating in the church committees. Before too long, he said, "there will be a new church in town."

"The minority will not cooperate when the minority feels like it is ... subjugation that they're being asked to follow," said Parker, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Mo..

Chapman acknowledged he has "promised to enlarge the tent, but you need to hear very carefully that, again and again, I have also indicated the parameters of that tent.

"I have a deep and abiding conviction about the holy Word of God. I do, unapologetically, with all of my heart, believe this Bible to be the inspired, infallible, inerrant word of God. ... It is not, with me, a matter of theological debate. It is a matter that I serve a perfect God. And the only way I can reason in my faith ... is that a perfect God could have done no less than deposit a perfect word on this earth."

Chapman promised to be a leader "committed to listening and learning and praying" as he interacts with those who disagree with him. "While I hold to my convictions, I can assure you that my desire is to lead this convention beyond the perceptions or reality of political coalitions."

If Southern Baptists remain in divisive coalitions, he said, "we will self-destruct. We will dishonor God."

Anyone preoccupied with who controls the Southern Baptist Convention, Chapman suggested, is preoccupied with the wrong issue.

"I don't care who believes (the SBC) is in their hands. It's in the hands of God. And God can do with it what he wants. I appeal to you that the issue cannot be who has power." Rather, he said, the issue must be "what God wants. And if we have to separate ourselves from the political aspects of the convention to hear a clear voice and see a clear vision, then God help us to do it. We must pray for the power of God to fall. Our problem ... is that we now believe that to be too simplistic to bring a solution to our problems."

In his address, Chapman said he has asked the Foreign Mission Board to consider scheduling a volunteer project for a different country each year, enlisting pastors and lay people from across the country. It would be similar to a four-week campaign in Kenya last summer, he said. About 540 Southern Baptist volunteers from 16 states worked alongside 60 Southern Baptist missionaries and many Kenyan Baptists, recording more than 56,000 professions of Christian faith in a heavily Muslim region of the African country.

Chapman said he would not want the national volunteer effort to be counterproductive to the work of Southern Baptist missionaries, or compete with partnerships already existing between state Baptist conventions and overseas Baptist conventions.

"But I believe Southern Baptists need ... to put feet to the mission emphasis which is a part of our heart and soul," he said. Parks said the board will begin exploring the possibility.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

CORRECTION: In the first line of (BP) story released 10/9/90 headlined "Retiring missionaries reflect on service, urge others to go," please change "31-year" to "27-year." The sentence should read:

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Bob and Margie Wakefield's 27-year missionary career ended with a question they could not answer.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

FMB trustees elect new  
Africa vice president

By Donald D. Martin

N-FMB

Baptist Press  
10/11/90

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Billy Bullington was elected regional vice president for Africa Oct. 10 by trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The former missionary will succeed Davis Saunders after Saunders retires from the board at the end of December and joins the faculty of the Baptist College at Charleston (S.C.).

Bullington, 55, from Charleston, Ark., will oversee mission work in sub-Saharan Africa, where nearly 1,000 Southern Baptist missionaries work in 35 countries. He also will work with the Global Strategy Group, a long-range planning body composed of top FMB administrators and planners.

In his current position as area director for west Africa, Bullington works with missionaries in 17 countries from his home base in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. He has been area director since April 1987. Before that he had been associate area director for 10 mostly French-speaking countries in west Africa since 1977, following a decade as a missionary in Togo.

Bullington's work in west Africa has won praise from both sides of the Atlantic.

"There was strong affirmation from missionaries in west Africa when he was named area director in 1987," Saunders said. "The same is true for staff members who are his peers. He has been especially successful in leading the missions to engage in ministry among unreached people groups within his area."

Bullington and his wife, Evelyn, from San Antonio, Texas, were appointed missionaries in 1966. After language study in France, he worked as an evangelist in Togo, and later as the principal and a teacher at a Baptist pastors' school in Lome, Togo. He also was the mission organization chairman and treasurer at various times in Togo.

Before missionary appointment, Bullington was pastor of several churches in Missouri and Arkansas. During his college years at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., where he received a bachelor of arts degree, he worked as associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Bearden, Ark.

While attending Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., he was pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Halfrock, Mo., and later Mt. Moriah Baptist Church in Clarkdale, Mo. After graduation with a master of divinity degree, Bullington became pastor of Leeds Baptist Church in Kansas City. Later he received the master of theology degree and doctor of ministry degrees from Midwestern Seminary.

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The Bullingtons have two sons, Kirk, 30, and Bryan, 27. Both work on the staff of Ash Creek Baptist Church in Azle, Texas.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

FMB's \$182 million budget  
for '91 based on past support

By Marty Croll

N-FMB

Baptist Press  
10/11/90

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board agreed on a \$182.76 million budget for 1991 based on the same structure of giving that has supported foreign missions for years -- despite fears that some Southern Baptists might withhold or alter foreign mission funding.

The budget approved by trustees Oct. 10 represents a \$7.9 million, or 4.5 percent, increase over 1990.

It includes an increase of \$2 million to support more than 3,800 missionaries working in 120 countries. The increase includes a missionary salary raise and is based on an expectation that the number of missionaries will rise in 1991.

The budget also anticipates a 35 percent jump in money for capital expenditures overseas, from \$11 million in 1990 to \$15 million in 1991. The money will finance such things as automobiles, office equipment, church building loan funds and missionary residences overseas.

Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks told trustees the budget reflects his belief that Southern Baptists will continue to give cooperatively, as they always have, amid talk of alternate funding programs.

"We pray that no one would withhold or divert dollars for world missions because of problems with our preferred channels of support," he said.

Parks chose the trustee meeting to send a message to all Southern Baptists that missions is a cause they can rally around, he said in an interview. "The budget reveals our commitment to Southern Baptists," he said. "We're keeping steady on our course. We haven't changed the way we're doing missions."

Southern Baptists can be reassured that the Foreign Mission Board "will continue to appoint all God-called, biblically sound, evangelistically committed and otherwise qualified" missionaries "while ignoring partisan political identity and avoiding creedal shibboleths," Parks told trustees.

The board remains the best channel to meet "all of the legitimate foreign mission concerns for all Southern Baptists," he added. The budget "should challenge Southern Baptists who disagree about other things to be able to agree on this need and increase support of our foreign mission effort. ..."

Parks strongly encouraged Southern Baptists to continue using principles of cooperative support. "Southern Baptists who have given primary support to unilaterally initiated independent foreign missions projects or institutions (should) evaluate carefully the advantages of the cooperative mission effort of Southern Baptists and make (the Foreign Mission Board) their major investment in foreign missions," he urged.

"I would challenge those who have concerns to continue joint participation in reaching the world," he said, urging them to give "nonrestrictively" to the Foreign Mission Board. Mission planners fear that if too much money comes in designated only for certain uses, priority programs will be left unfunded.

But Parks stressed in an interview that if money does come in from alternate sources, "we certainly aren't going to reject it."

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He told trustees, "We must not be legalistic in our requirements on the specific method of giving, for we realize each church is autonomous, and 'coerced cooperation' is a contradiction in terms."

To accommodate the mentality of a newer generation of givers who want to direct more specifically where their money goes, Parks said the board might have to adjust the budget in future years. "If it comes to that option or not receiving money, I'd opt for receiving it," he stated.

The possible effects of alternate giving formulas proposed by Southern Baptists who feel disenfranchised by the Southern Baptist Convention might begin to be seen after the first quarter of next year, Parks said. Until then, it will be hard to determine whether the portion of Southern Baptists' giving that finds its way from churches to the Foreign Mission Board will rise or drop.

Projected foreign mission receipts for 1991 indicate a continued widening of the gap between funding from the denomination's unified Cooperative Program and receipts from the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Most of the increase in next year's budget is based on a projected \$5 million increase in Lottie Moon receipts. In contrast, receipts from the Cooperative Program are expected to increase by about \$1.9 million.

Until 1961 the Cooperative Program supplied more money to foreign missions than the Lottie Moon offering. Since then, Lottie Moon giving has surpassed receipts from the Cooperative Program. This year the gap widened from a previous all-time high of about \$6 million to \$13.5 million. Next year the gap is projected to total about \$16.6 million.

The board projects that \$7 million, or 3.8 percent of its budget, will come from gifts for hunger and relief ministries, all of which is spent for this purpose. It expects \$13 million, or 7.1 percent, to come from investments and \$2.8 million from designated contributions.

Gifts for human needs ministries are used entirely for hunger and relief projects. Domestic administrative expenses related to relief efforts come from general board funds.

The domestic budget for home office salaries, administration and promotion is about \$22.4 million, or 12 percent of the budget.

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Religious liberties act opens door  
for Baptist Seminary in Moscow

Baptist Press  
10/11/90

N-CO SEBTS

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--The first theological seminary in the history of Russian Baptists has been established in Moscow. Classes are scheduled to begin in January 1991.

Lewis A. Drummond, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Wake Forest, N.C., returned recently from the Soviet Union and reported the historic news to the seminary.

A committee of five educators, appointed by Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, will serve as a consultation committee to aid in the development of the new work in Moscow. The committee is composed of chairman Andrew MacRae, principle of the Acadia Divinity School in Nova Scotia; John David Hopper, president of Rueschlikon Seminary in Switzerland; Larry McSwain, dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; Wiard Popkes, dean of the Baptist Seminary in Hamburg, Germany; and Drummond.

The group met in the Moscow Baptist Church the day Soviet Parliament passed the revolutionary new religious liberty act granting full religious liberty to all groups.

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Baptists face evangelistic  
challenge in Muslim stronghold

By Sarah Zimmerman

F-NMB

DETROIT (BP)--If black flags represent people groups which have not heard the gospel, an enormous black flag could be raised over Detroit.

In parades of flags representing places where Southern Baptists have foreign missionaries, solid black flags are often used to represent countries or people groups which limit the presentation of a Christian message.

Muslims are among the people groups represented by black flags. Though mission work is stifled in countries which are Muslim strongholds, Muslims can be reached on the home mission field, says Doc Lindsey, director of missions for Greater Detroit Baptist Association.

Islam is one of the fastest growing religious groups in Michigan. The conservative estimate of 250,000 Muslims in Michigan is a 43 percent increase since 1980. Ten mosques have opened in the Detroit area since 1986. The growth is attributed to immigration, births and conversions.

Dearborn, a western suburb of Detroit, has become the mecca for Muslims in North America. Valerie Kaniarz, member of Detroit's First Spanish Baptist Church, can see the homes of five Muslim families from her Dearborn home.

In August, Kaniarz hosted a Backyard Bible Club and hardly expected any of her Muslim neighbors to attend. She was pleasantly surprised when half of the 40 children were from Muslim homes. Some Muslim parents also attended, including one mother who whispered "Allah" to her child as a substitute for Jesus' name each time it was mentioned.

One of the students asked for a Bible at the end of the week. Others asked questions that convinced Kaniarz they were struggling with the issues of Christianity.

One Backyard Bible Club activity was to make bracelets with different colored beads representing man's sin, Jesus' death on the cross, God's forgiveness and the promises of abundant and eternal life. Several weeks after the Bible club, one neighborhood child told Kaniarz he still had his bracelet, but he kept it hidden in a drawer.

"The kids are wide open to learning about Christianity because they see the discrepancy between the bondage of their religion and the freedom around them," Kaniarz says.

Rochelle Davis, pastor of Temple of Faith Baptist Church located two miles north of Dearborn, says the church is surrounded by Muslim-owned businesses.

Church members are trained to dialogue with Muslims they meet as they shop or work in the neighborhood. Davis says it's essential to know how to talk intelligently with a Muslim about his faith.

Davis has learned that Muslims try to please God with their own virtues. In talking to a Muslim, he might ask, "Is Allah satisfied with your righteousness? If he is not satisfied today, do you think he'll be satisfied tomorrow?"

"The missing dimension in Islamic faith is that Jesus is the one to bridge the gap to make people right with God," Davis says.

In April, Davis led a Muslim to cross that bridge and give his life to Christ. "What helped him was to realize Jesus Christ did for him what no one else could do, not even Muhammad."

Leading Muslims to Christ is a slow process that requires cultivating relationships, Davis explains. "We're not reaching them by the thousands, but we do have a process."

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At nearby Wayne State University, 1,700 of the 32,000 students are international students. Beverly Barclay, Baptist campus minister, does not know how many of the international students are Muslims, but she says the largest religious gathering on campus is the Islamic prayer meeting.

Barclay's ministry consists primarily in talking individually with students and sharing her faith. She makes a point of keeping Bibles in various languages in her office. Students often will pick up a copy just to read something in their native language.

Another avenue to open doors with international students is leading conversational English classes. Barclay, a Mission Service Corps volunteer, also attends a weekly coffee hour to meet international students.

Wayne State University is part of the Muslim World Project, a program initiated by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Southern Baptist Sunday School Board to train Christian students to witness to their Muslim peers.

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Guidelines suggested  
for witnessing to Muslims

By Sarah Zimmerman

R-NMB

Baptist Press  
10/11/90

ATLANTA (BP)--Witnessing to the estimated 4 to 6 million Muslims in the United States requires a knowledge of the Islamic faith and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, according to the interfaith witness department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Maurice Smith, associate director of the interfaith witness department, makes the following suggestions about witnessing to Muslims:

-- Recognize that Islam teaches some ideas with which Christians can agree, such as God is one, God is creator and he is sovereign. Affirm that God reveals himself and his will and that he wants people to respond to him in faith and submission.

-- Show respect for the worship, fasting and almsgiving of Muslims and their sense of peoplehood and unity.

-- Point out contradictions between Islam and Christianity, such as the roles of Jesus and Muhammad, the role of the Qur'an and the sufficiency of God's revelation in Jesus.

-- Deal graciously with Muslim's objections to Christianity and help clarify any of their misunderstandings about Christianity.

-- Introduce Muslims to the Bible and help them become familiar with it. Let the Holy Spirit validate the Bible as it is left in the hands of an inquiring Muslim.

The interfaith witness department has published a pamphlet on Islam in its series of Belief Bulletins.

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FBC of Fort Worth closer  
to membership with association

By Toby Druin

N-~~CO~~ CO  
(Texas)

Baptist Press  
10/11/90

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--First Baptist Church of Fort Worth cleared one hurdle on its way back to Southern Baptist ranks Oct. 8 when it was accepted "under watchcare" by Tarrant Baptist Association messengers in their annual meeting.

The former church of the late fundamentalist pastor J. Frank Norris will have a year to establish Southern Baptist relationships before it will be considered for full membership in the association.

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Several provisions were laid down for the church to follow before the 1991 annual meeting. They include a study by the church of its constitution and bylaws concerning the authority of the pastor, a study of the 1963 Statement on Baptist Faith and Message and invitations by the church to a "number" of Southern Baptist pastors over the next year for times of fellowship and inspiration.

The committee specified that one of the Southern Baptists to be invited to the church is to be Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Russell H. Dilday Jr.

The provisions give the association opportunity to look at the church and the church to look at the association for a year, a spokesman said. "We have not said, 'No, you can't be part of the fellowship,'" he said.

Before the church can be considered again for membership it must file another petition to join. The church will be considered in light of the provisions and a recommendation made to the 1991 annual meeting.

Three other churches also were placed under watchcare by the association: Judea Missionary Baptist Church, Mount Moriah Baptist Church and North Park Baptist Church. The North Park Church has been associated with the Baptist Missionary Association.

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CLC opposes  
end of 'X' rating

By Louis Moore

Baptist Press  
10/11/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has expressed strong objections to the new motion picture rating system which will replace the "X" designation with a new "NC-17" rating.

The commission's executive director Richard D. Land said the new rating "waters down the 'X' rating and opens the way for material that is objectionable and pornographic to work its way into neighborhood theaters."

Land joined representatives of other national religious bodies including the United States Catholic Conference and the National Council of Churches in calling upon the Motion Picture Association to rescind its action taken in late September and reinstate the old "X" rating. He said the public is familiar with the "X" designation and knows what it means when a film is rated "X."

"The NC-17 rating is not nearly as appropriate a rating as the 'X,'" he said. "The change has all the appearances of watering down an effective wall that helped people stay away from pornographic materials."

By accepting the new rating code, the Motion Picture Association of America has bowed to the pressures and demands of the pornography industry, Land said.

Land said he endorses the following joint statement on the issue released earlier by representatives for the Catholic Conference and the National Council of Churches:

"In replacing its 'X' category with the designation of NC-17, the Motion Picture Association of America has caved in to the commercial interests of those who are attempting to get sexually exploitative material into general theatrical release.

"We call upon the MPAA to reconsider its action. It is an arrogant and ill-advised decision which deeply affects the public good. It was made in isolation, without public consultation. The change is neither in the public interest nor in the best interest of the industry.

"We call upon members of the National Association of Theater Owners to refuse to book NC-17 movies, and upon newspapers and others to refuse to accept advertising for them. Changing the name of the 'X' category does not change the nature of the material.

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"The MPAA's action will be used by those who already are calling for government regulation of the media. That is unfortunate because a voluntary system of self-regulation that skirts Constitutional concerns, yet affords at least a minimum of protection to the public, is workable.

"With the likelihood of the screening of sexually explicit movies in local theaters looming, enforcement of the age restrictions in the rating system becomes even more important than before. Consequently, we call upon local congregations and others within the community to monitor closely the enforcement of those restrictions by their theaters, not only for the newly contrived NC-17 rating but for all other categories as well."

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Supreme Court upholds  
religious access case

By Bob Allen

*N-DC*

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has let stand a lower court ruling that a Pennsylvania school district cannot exclude religious groups from after-hours access to school buildings available to other organizations.

The court declined Oct. 9 to review a decision by the Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that a Centennial, Pa., school district policy allowing school facilities to be rented to a wide variety of civic organizations but excluding their use for religious activities violates the free speech clause of the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment.

The school district had denied a request by a Campus Crusade for Christ group to rent a local high school for a performance by a magician who concludes the show with a Christian testimony and invitation. The district denied permission because of a policy prohibiting the use of school buildings for religious services, instruction or activities.

At the time of the request, the school district had allowed more than 65 other groups access to school buildings, including the county board of elections, labor unions, adult education and college classes as well as commercial dramatic and musical performances.

By allowing the other groups to use its buildings, the school district had created a "limited open forum," in which both religious discussion and worship are protected as free speech, ruled the appellate court in the case *Gregoire v. Centennial School District*.

The ruling has important church/state ramifications, said J. Brent Walker, associate general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Washington religious liberty watchdog agency representing nine national Baptist bodies including the Southern Baptist Convention.

Walker hailed the decision as "a logical extension of the equal access concept that the Baptist Joint Committee has advocated for years."

The case "makes clear that religious speech and worship may not be discriminated against, even in public school buildings," he said. "We hope this decision will make school districts less inclined to knee-jerk a 'no' to religious speech out of a near-paranoid fear of violating the establishment clause" of the First Amendment.

The case is also "particularly important" for small churches and missions which meet in rented school facilities until they are able to secure buildings of their own, Walker said. The ruling from a prestigious circuit appeals court would serve as "strong precedent" in any legal challenge to that practice, he said.

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