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NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

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) 828-5232
NASHVILLE Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

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91-137

CLC board OKs Mitchell;
observers for BJC meeting

By Louis Moore

NASHVILLE (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission have unanimously approved the nomination of Ben Mitchell as the agency's director of biomedical and life issues and voted to send only a staff member as an observer to the upcoming board meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The CLC board also set up a special task force to study a recommendation made at the 1991 Southern Baptist Convention that calls for creating a division of the CLC modeled after Family Concerns, Inc., a parachurch organization in Atlanta.

In other board action, trustees awarded the agency's Distinguished Service Award to Southern Baptist theologian Carl F.H. Henry, established a new Religious Liberty Award, and adopted a 1991-92 budget of \$1,538,898.

Mitchell, 36, will assume his new duties on Feb. 1. His job responsibilities will include all those previously assigned to Robert M. Parham, who resigned from the CLC effective Sept. 1 to head the new Baptist Center for Ethics, which seeks to align with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Parham was the CLC's director of hunger and drug concerns and race relations.

Medical-ethical issues include genetic engineering, artificial insemination, fetal tissue experimentation and transplantation, abortion, the allocation of medical resources, organ donation/transplantation, AIDS, informed consent, medical confidentiality, euthanasia, advanced directives and living wills, death and dying and drug testing.

Mitchell will complete his Ph.D. course work in biomedical ethics at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in December. He will join the CLC staff in February and plans to complete his dissertation and receive his Ph.D. degree by May 1993.

After his election, Mitchell resigned from the CLC board to which he was elected in 1986. Prior to entering the University of Tennessee Ph.D. program, he was associate pastor and then pastor of Middle Valley Baptist Church in Hixson, Tenn., for five years. For the past year he was interim pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Knoxville.

He holds a bachelor of science degree from Mississippi State University and a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He is enrolled this summer in the hospital practicum in clinical medical ethics at the University of Tennessee Medical Center at Knoxville.

The decision to send a CLC staff member based in Washington, as an observer to the BJC meeting in Washington in October came after the trustees' administrative committee decided not to send any CLC trustees as trustees to the BJC board meeting because the BJC has declined to pay the customary travel costs for them.

The Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta voted to reduce to zero the amount of money given by the SBC to the BJC. The BJC is composed of various Baptist bodies in the United States.

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Even without contributions, the BJC's representation formula would allow the SBC to send trustees to BJC board meetings for another two years.

The convention in Atlanta also voted to merge the SBC trustees serving on the BJC, who were also known as the Public Affairs Committee, into the CLC's board of trustees. That action also called for the CLC board to decide what trustees to send to the BJC board meeting.

The CLC board approved allowing "any CLC commissioners who volunteer to go and who are willing to pay their own expenses" to go the BJC board meeting as observers also but not as official trustees.

In a separate action, CLC trustees voted to recommend to the SBC Executive Committee it give to the CLC a trust fund originally earmarked for a building for the BJC. The fund, authorized in 1964, is currently being held by the Southern Baptist Foundation with an initial contribution of \$300,000. Over the years the BJC has removed some of the interest from the fund and left other interest in the account. The CLC trustees asked the Executive Committee, which was empowered by the 1991 convention to look into and settle the matter, to give "those monies plus interest" to the CLC for a new CLC building in Washington.

The proposal to set up the task force resulted from another motion referred to the SBC Executive Committee by the 1991 convention. That motion asked the CLC to "consider the need to adopt and provide support for the development of a family concerns division ... with the purpose of recommending a family concerns ministry for each local church so desiring."

Family Concerns, Inc., is a non-profit organization in Atlanta which is most noted for its opposition to gay rights and feminism and its support for traditional family values. Its founder and current executive director is Nancy Schaeffer, a member of the CLC board.

The CLC board debated and discussed numerous difficulties it would encounter if it adopted the family concerns organization.

"The structure of the Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies does not accommodate this proposal unless the structure is changed," CLC Executive Director Richard D Land told trustees. "If we feel this needs to be done, we need to say to ourselves, who has the structure, the resources and the personnel to do this?"

The task force held its first meeting when the CLC board adjourned on Sept. 11. It is to report to the March board meeting.

Trustees also adopted a statement setting forth the CLC's position on medical personnel disclosing whether they are HIV-positive. That statement says the CLC supports HIV "testing for and mutual disclosure between patients and health care providers." The action also authorized the CLC staff to work for legislation that reflects the agency's policy.

The 1991-92 budget of \$1,538,898 includes a 6 percent raise for Land, a 5.18 percentage average raise for the staff, and the addition of a researcher-archivist to the staff. Land had said previously he would hire Keith Ninomiya, a research assistant at Criswell College in Dallas, to fill the position if it was approved by the board.

The board also approved extending the contract with CLC General Counsel Michael Whitehead July 1, 1992. Whitehead was hired as a full-time staff member in Washington, a year ago but had to return to Kansas City, Mo., in January after his former law partner died unexpectedly, leaving unfinished business at their former partnership. At that time, the CLC board approved a temporary arrangement whereby Whitehead works three-quarters time for the CLC and travels to Washington when his physical presence is necessary.

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Several weeks after Whitehead returned to Kansas City under the new arrangement his 13-year-old son, Jonathan, was diagnosed with leukemia. The boy's doctors have advised the family not to move Jonathan or the family to Washington until after the current round of chemotherapy ends.

The new Religious Liberty Award will continue a tradition begun by the former SBC Public Affairs Committee, which has now been merged into the CLC board. A recipient will be named each year who has distinguished himself or herself in the area of religious liberty.

A future time and place will be announced for the presentation of the Distinguished Service Award to Henry, a prolific author who was founding editor of Christianity Today.

Among the various other housekeeping matters, the board voted for its administrative committee to convene in December to work on revisions to the CLC's program assignment which would spell out in writing the agency's role as the sole religious liberty agency for the 15-million member Southern Baptist Convention.

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CLC trustees seek funds
held by SBC Foundation

By Herb Hollinger and Lewis Moore

Baptist Press
9/12/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has asked for nearly \$400,000 in funds at the Southern Baptist Foundation which the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs contends was earmarked two decades ago for its use in Washington.

Christian Life Commission trustees on Sept. 11 asked the SBC Executive Committee to allocate the money to the CLC for a new building in Washington. However, BJC General Council Oliver S. Thomas labeled the CLC request as "unethical, illegal" and a "pilfering our account."

CLC trustees maintain that a serious examination of the account will reveal the money is allocable to the CLC, not the BJC.

At stake in the dispute is an account at the Foundation which contains \$381,927 as of Aug. 1. Since 1969 the BJC has withdrawn interest amounting to \$534,951 over the years.

The account was established using a \$300,000 allocation from a capital needs budget approved by the SBC in Atlantic City in 1964. A footnote to that allocation says, "The \$300,000 allocation to Public Affairs Committee to be subject to conditions approved by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Thomas told Baptist Press he believes Southern Baptists used the words "public affairs committee" and "Baptist Joint Committee" interchangeably at the time the allocation was made. He said the Foundation has the account in the name of the BJC, for more than 25 years, and the BJC has made investment decisions about the money over the years.

CLC trustees say the reference to the public affairs committee means the money was to be held by the Southern Baptist trustees on the BJC, not the BJC itself. In recent years the SBC trustees on the BJC, a multi-denominational religious liberty organization, have been called the Public Affairs Committee.

The PAC, as the committee came to be called, was merged into the CLC trustee board last June after the 1991 SBC eliminated all contributions to the BJC. Former PAC members now on the CLC board claim the money should have come with them to the CLC.

Complicating matters further is a letter dated June 14, 1968 from former SBC Executive Committee President Porter Routh authorizing the SBC Foundation "to pay the earnings from the capital reserves held to the account of the Joint Committee in 1969." Routh further said, "It is my understanding that these earnings are paid quarterly to the agency involved."

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Based on that letter, the BJC has apparently withdrawn the interest from the account, which ranged over the years from a high of \$34,965 in 1988 to a low of \$16,891 in 1976.

CLC trustees question whether Routh authorized the withdrawal steps only in 1969 or in perpetuity, as the BJC claims.

Thomas told Baptist Press he will advise the BJC to take whatever steps necessary to see that "the money is not stolen." He said he thought it would be a public relations disaster for the SBC to give the money to someone other than the BJC.

However, Thomas said he saw "no reason to believe SBC Executive Committee members are not going to do what is right."

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Koreans baptize
2,220 soldiers

By Michael Chute

Baptist Press
9/12/91

TAEJON, South Korea (BP)--Korean Baptists baptized 2,220 soldiers during the summer in their continuing efforts to evangelize Korean military and police personnel.

Southern Baptist missionary Dan Ray reported 210 soldiers from the Korean army's 35th division were baptized at the end of July. Two weeks later 54 Baptist pastors baptized 2,010 soldiers at Nonsan Basic Training Camp.

"It was quite impressive -- the large number, the responses," Ray said of the baptism service. "A worship service involving all 2,010 men, led by (Korean Baptist pastor) Billy Kim, was held in a large auditorium before the baptism. Kim very clearly and specifically explained twice what the men were doing there. Then we went outside to bathing pools (on the military base)" for the baptisms.

The base commander, a Christian, allowed use of military facilities for the service, according to Ray. The commander and South Korea's military in general encourage religious activities.

The soldiers baptized at Nonsan camp professed their faith in Christ during that installation's three-month basic training program.

Staff members from the Korea Baptist Convention's military/police evangelism department work at a Baptist chapel located on the base. The department has ongoing work at three Korean military bases and Baptist centers are located on several installations. In addition, about 40 Baptist chaplains serve in the Korean army.

The 2,010 baptisms represent the largest number ever baptized at one time through Baptists' military evangelism program, according to Ray. The program has averaged 2,000 to 5,000 baptisms a year on bases throughout South Korea since work with the military began in 1967.

The military evangelism program has a civilian director -- like the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's chaplaincy program -- and five full-time staff members. Southern Baptist missionary Malcolm Hester co-directs the program, along with Korean Baptist Yang Hui Hyup, a former military chaplain.

"When we first started, there were no Baptist chaplains" in the military, said Ray. "We thought we'd start on the outside and witness in the camps as opportunities came. The work started simultaneously with three missionaries who worked locally" before combining their efforts into a department in 1970. "Now, our young men in the seminary are being called into chaplaincy work."

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The program may be combined with Korean Baptists' Home Mission Board as the convention's mission work develops.

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**Missouri Baptist College
trustees fire president**

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Trustees of Missouri Baptist College fired J. Edwin Hewlett Jr. as president Aug. 29 ending a two-month struggle between Hewlett and the trustees.

Hewlett was dismissed in a vote of 11-10 during an executive session of the regularly scheduled August trustee meeting. The vote came despite a report from a special presidential oversight committee which suggested taking no action.

According to Word and Way, newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention, the firing came after two months of tension at the Missouri Baptist Convention school. During that time there were two called meetings of the trustees, temporary removal of the president from office, a special presidential oversight committee and ultimately, the vote to dismiss.

Hewlett was quoted by Word and Way as seeing an "honest difference over structural problems." However, the trustee executive committee labeled it a difference of management style resulting in growing incompatibility between the president and the trustees, according to a Sept. 5 story in the Word and Way.

The dismissal vote came following several attempts to consider the motion out of order and postponing it. Critics and supporters of the president exchanged words prior to the vote. Trustees who supported Hewlett called the vote a "tremendous injustice to the institution and to the character of the president" while others called it a "painful but necessary decision."

Hewlett declined to make a statement to Word and Way following the meeting saying he didn't want to take "pot shots" at anybody.

Hewlett was elected president of Missouri Baptist College April 4 after having served as interim president since Nov. 16, 1990.

Following Hewlett's dismissal, trustees named a six-member presidential search committee with Rudy Pulido, pastor of Southwest Baptist Church in St. Louis, as chairman.

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**Florida church wins
national tournament**

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9/12/91

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Olive Baptist Church of Pensacola, Fla., defeated First Baptist Church of Bostic, N.C., 30-6 to win the fifth annual National Fellowship of Baptist Men's National Softball tournament.

Sixteen teams from 11 states participated in the two-day tournament that was delayed five hours by rain. The championship game of the double-elimination tournament began at 1 a.m. Sunday. Bartlett Baptist Church of Bartlett, Tenn., placed third.

The national softball tournament is a project of the National Fellowship of Baptists in Sports, one of 14 NFBM fellowships sponsored by the adult division of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

"The softball tournament's purpose is to encourage the growth of sports evangelism throughout the Southern Baptist Convention," said Bob Salley, NFBM director. "And through NFBS, Christians with an interest in sports have an organization for fellowship."

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A national tournament raises the caliber of play for the participating teams. For sports evangelism to be effective, a team must be highly skilled and competitive, Salley said.

"We encourage Baptist Men and Baptist Young Men's units to form teams, to become competitive, and them to enter secular tournaments where they can be a witness," Salley continued.

NFBS wants sports evangelism teams to form on the state and associational level. These teams will do sports clinics and compete against teams in prisons. Besides softball, basketball is also popular as a sports evangelism tool.

Teams participating in the tournament represented state champions. States that do not have softball tournaments sent teams approved by their state Brotherhood director.

Other teams competing in the national softball tournament were: Gate City Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C.; First Baptist Church, Norman, Okla.; Emmanuel Baptist Church, Enid, Okla.; Illinois Baptist Men; Rienzi Baptist Church, Rienzi, Miss.; Hillcrest Baptist Church, New Albany, Miss.; Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas; First Baptist Church, Mt. Olive, Ala.; Sharon Heights Baptist Church, Dora, Ala.; Oak Grove Baptist Church, Belair, Md.; Elvaton Baptist Church, Glen Burnie, Md.; Second Baptist Church, Hopkinsville, Ky.; and Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Cabot, Ark.

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EDITORS: Some state Baptist newspapers with teams competing in the final rounds will receive photographs from the Brotherhood Commission.

Chinese exploring possibility
of teaching MasterLife course

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
9/12/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--MasterLife has become the universal language in discipleship for Christians in countries spanning the world and now the Chinese are considering adopting it, a discipleship leader said.

Teaching the Christian gospel in China has not been allowed in more than 40 years, according to Avery Willis, who said the breakthrough could support a "tremendous turn to Christianity."

Before its translation into English in 1978, Indonesian was the native language of MasterLife. The discipleship training course has now been translated into more than 50 languages, according to Willis, manager of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's adult section of the discipleship training department.

Willis left for China Sept. 6 for a three-week trip to discuss with Chinese Christians the possibility of adapting MasterLife into a workable discipleship training course for their people. MasterLife already is translated into Chinese -- Christians in Hong Kong and Taiwan use it -- but cultural adaptations for the Chinese would have to be made, he said.

"It has been translated into Chinese for several years," Willis said. "There are five languages spoken in China, but they all use the same written language."

Willis said while the languages do not sound alike, they are written alike.

"We would have to contextualize it. So we are going to meet with the key leaders to talk about those kinds of possibilities," he added.

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The "key leaders" are members of the Chinese All Christian Council, a non-denominational Christian group who are "official government representatives." That group invited Willis to discuss the possibility of bringing MasterLife into the country.

An official government report estimates 3-5 million Christians reside in China, but an unofficial report puts that figure at closer to 30-50 million, Willis said. The National and International Religion Report estimates 28,000 Chinese accept Christ each day.

"When the missionaries were forced out of China by the communist government in 1949, there were approximately 750,000 Christians in the whole country. And that was over a 100-year span of having missionaries in the country," Willis said. "Now there are close to 50 million."

The sheer number of new Christians means Christian leaders are scarce, Willis said.

The Christian Council has not been allowed to train people as pastors for over 40 years, Willis said. "Almost all of their pastors are 80 years old. There is a great vacuum of leadership.

"We are talking about over one-fifth of the world's population and the potential of that with all these people who are new Christians means some people really do need to be trained in the Bible," Willis said.

Other MasterLife developments, according to Willis, include:

-- Korea celebrates its 10th anniversary of MasterLife.

-- MasterLife is being taught in Germany, Romania, Bulgaria and Estonia. "Representatives from those countries have attended MasterLife workshops in Europe and are now translating it into their language," Willis said.

-- MasterLife has been translated into 17 of the 25 African languages. It was translated into basic English (a fourth-grade reading level) for Africans in 1983.

-- Prisoners that are taught MasterLife use the basic English edition.

-- MasterLife is an accredited course in five of the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

Christians in several countries study MasterLife. Some of those include: Yugoslavia, Brazil, India, Mexico, England, Philippines, and Australia. Some translations include: Arabic, Hebrew and Spanish. Workshops in Europe have been held in countries which include France, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Poland.

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ACTS network and FamilyNet
score high marks

By Madge Hammond

Baptist Press
9/12/91

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission's two television networks -- the American Christian Television System (ACTS) and FamilyNet -- scored high marks in recent viewer surveys conducted by Arbitron and Consumer Reports magazine, RTVC trustees learned at their fall meeting Sept. 9-10.

Michael Wright, RTVC network operations vice president, told trustees preliminary analysis of data from Arbitron's May 1991 Network Weekly Circulation Report showed among all religious channels, including the Inspirational Network, Trinity Broadcasting Network, and VISN, ACTS ranked first in percentage of subscribing households who were actually watching.

"On a market-by-market basis where we are online," said Wright, "We are consistently ahead and many times have more viewers than all other religious channels combined."

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Wright saw encouraging implications in the Sept. 1991 Consumer Reports which published a survey of 200,000 of its readers rating television channels' overall program quality on a six-point scale.

"We feel there is some significance in the fact that ACTS and FamilyNet were the only religious channels included," said Wright. Readers gave ACTS and FamilyNet overall scores of 50 and 51 respectively on a scale of 100, with about one-fourth of each ranking them in the "excellent/very good" category.

Trustees adopted a \$9.9 million budget for the RTVC for the 1991-92 fiscal year. With \$5.5 million of that amount expected from Southern Baptist's Cooperative Program funds. The budget was increased slightly from the current year, with most of the changes made to accommodate a new organizational structure.

The board also made several bylaws revisions, which dealt mainly with changing the board's committee structure to conform to its more functional staff reorganization.

RTVC president Jack Johnson recognized nine employees for service to the commission ranging from 5 to 35 years, presenting each with a savings bond. Jerry Pillow, network operations, has been with the commission for 35 years, and Mildred Caplinger, print shop, has 25 years.

Johnson presented engineering staff employees with "second mile" certificates for work "beyond the call of duty" in installing more than 7.2 miles of cable and 3,204 connections in one weekend to transfer operations of FamilyNet from Lynchburg, Va., to Fort Worth. He also recognized other employees who helped with the project.

"The mood among RTVC trustees was one of enthusiasm about the fiscal health, productivity and opportunities of the RTVC," according to trustee chairman James M. "Mickey" Castleberry, pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery, Ala.

"The word is 'go and grow for the Lord Jesus," said Castleberry. "It means we will reach more people for Christ. I'm proud to be part of it (the RTVC)."

RTVC president Johnson said, "Opportunities (for the RTVC to carry out its mission) are emerging almost nonstop."