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Young will appoint task
force to 'look' at SBC

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
9/11/92

HOUSTON (BP)--A task force to examine "where we've been, where we need to be" will be named by Southern Baptist Convention President H. Edwin Young Sept. 23 so that "we can come together as a denomination."

Although many details will await a news conference immediately following the Sept. 21-23 Executive Committee meeting in Nashville, Young told Baptist Press he will appoint 9 special study groups with 11 members in each and 2 "co-chairmen" for each group. The 18 "co-chairmen" then will come together as the special task force to make suggestions and recommendations to the denomination.

Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, said he would give the task force the challenge to come up with "where we (the SBC) ought to be (as a denomination)."

"I will present the concept to the Executive Committee, not for approval or disapproval, but to share it with them," Young said. "After the Executive Committee meeting is over, at about lunch on Sept. 23, I will hold a news conference and name the study groups and the co-chairmen."

"They will look at everything in their parameters," Young said, indicating he also would have job descriptions for the study groups and task force at the news conference.

Young said it may be possible the task force could give a preliminary report of its progress at the February 1993 meeting of the Executive Committee in Nashville and was hopeful for some structure, recommendations, suggestions, etc. from the task force in about March or April.

The nine study groups Young will appoint, not in any priority order nor necessarily the final title of the groups, are: (1) Reaching the World with the Gospel, (2) Reaching America with the Gospel, (3) Cooperative Program and Special Offerings, (4) Women's Ministries, (5) Multi-ethnic ministries, (6) "Lengthening our cords and strengthening our stakes," (7) Theological, (8) Family, and (9) Teenagers and Children.

Young, alluding to controversies plaguing the SBC, said one of the reasons for establishing the task force was because there are "lots of barriers we need to break down. It is part of my dream for our denomination, my vision, that we would do that which are worthy kingdom goals."

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Complimenting the SBC's agencies and institutions for doing a "good job," Young nevertheless said "maybe it's time for the leadership in the convention, in the churches as well, to step up and give leadership (to the denomination)."

"My understanding is that the denominational structure -- agencies and institutions -- are servants of the churches," Young said. "The denomination and the churches need to get together for the Lord."

Young said representatives from the agencies and institutions would be represented on the study groups; i.e, representatives from the Woman's Missionary Union will be part of the Women's Ministries study group and seminary representatives on the Theological study group.

Young emphasized he would ask for no convention funding for the task force.

"I'm going to ask the co-chairmen to find the best, most convenient times and places to meet. Maybe some members would have to be involved over the phone, getting tapes of the meetings and then writing down their thoughts and sending them to the groups," Young said.

The appointments will encompass a broad perspective of Southern Baptists, Young said, with the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement as the guidepost. Young said he felt 99 percent of Southern Baptists accept the statement.

Young, a member of the 1985 SBC Peace Committee, said he felt some of the recommendations of that committee, its report approved by the SBC in 1987, and which have never been implemented, needed to be taken into consideration. He did not elaborate.

Although there could be many different study areas, Young said the nine were critical for Southern Baptists.

"The last one, for instance, (Teenagers and Children) is critical," Young said. "We have done the poorest job in our history of reaching teenagers and our children. Our baptism rates for these groups are the worst in our history."

Young, 55, was elected president of the SBC in June at the annual meeting in Indianapolis. The Laurel, Miss., native said at the Indianapolis meeting "we (SBC) need to put a kingdom goal out there and say to all who can rally around that, 'come on Southern Baptists, we're ready to move forward.'"

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A.B. church medical rates:
no change for 1993 six months

Baptist Press
9/11/92

DALLAS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Annuity Board will make no rate changes in the Church Comprehensive Medical Plan or the Seminarian Comprehensive Medical Plan for the first six months of 1993.

An improvement in recent claims experience helped the board avoid a rate change, according to Joel Mathis, senior vice president for insurance administration. He also credited the plan's managed-care and preferred-provider features with contributing to the avoidance of a rate increase.

Churches wishing to know rates now have accurate budget planning information for the first six months of 1993, Mathis said. However, he cautioned church budget planners to keep in mind factors that could increase participant's rates, such as a birthday that could move a participant into a higher age bracket, or the addition of a dependent.

In the six-month rating period that begins in July 1993, Mathis said, some participants again may not see a change. However, depending on where they live, some participants could see their rates change in July, he said.

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On Aug. 4, the board announced it will base pricing of the church and seminarian medical plans on the claims experience of participants in each state "... to bring more fairness to the rate structure and to protect against shifting losses from one state to another. ... "

It is too early to say which states' participants will or will not benefit by the change, Mathis said. The board will know rates for the second half of 1993 in the spring, he said.

Mathis urged participants who feel they can't afford the comprehensive plan to consider enrolling in or switching coverage to one of the two new lower-rate "catastrophic" plans available in January 1993.

"Our participants have asked for choices, and we are going to be able to offer some, beginning in 1993," Mathis said.

The two plans will be available at reduced rates compared to church and seminarian comprehensive. The proposed plans will feature higher deductibles and limited benefits.

A \$25,00 deductible plan -- Catastrophic 2500 -- will cost 40 percent less each month than comprehensive. Catastrophic 1000, with a \$1,000 deductible, will cost 30 percent less per month.

Mathis also said a benefit change effective immediately will simplify some participants' lives. The plans will pay maximum benefits for eligible elective surgeries without a second opinion.

"Some participants told us that getting a second opinion is a hassle," Mathis said. "We looked closely at this requirement. We found that we could end the requirement without hurting the plans."

Mathis explained the plans will pay regular benefits for a second surgical opinion if a participant chooses to have one.

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German Baptist youth decry
discrimination and violence

Baptist Press
9/11/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--German Baptist youth leader registered their shock and dismay against the firebombing of houses of foreigners in the Baltic seaport of Rostock by neo-Nazi youths.

"We are shocked at the events in Rostock, and we hope that young Christians in youth groups and churches in Germany will have the strength and courage of their convictions to stand on the side of the weak and helpless in this situation," said a statement sent to the Baptist World Alliance from the youth department of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany.

According to the statement, the violence was carried out "mainly by organized groups of young Nazi supporters from Eastern and Western Germany."

Neo-Nazis have been described as people "who generally revere Hitler and deny the existence of Nazi death camps."

Their actions in Rostock have been supported by Rostock residents, but polls show 86 percent of all Germans are against the violence.

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In a special appeal to Christian youth, the youth leaders blamed the violence by German youth on "a vacuum of values and aims which many young people experience." The leaders urged youth to be filled anew through guidance from the Bible, the Sermon on the Mount and living according to the Ten Commandments.

"Youth groups and churches should spread the power of the Gospel" the youth leaders said. "We wish that the hope which comes from a life with Jesus Christ will always be enthusiastically lived out."

"God wants to show through us that He is the Savior and Helper of all people."

The youth leaders said the Rostock incidents should also encourage youth and church groups to look for opportunities for international exchange "to learn to live together with different cultures."

While German politicians have blamed the violence on the large number of foreigners seeking asylum in Germany and the problems from the reunification of East and West Germany, the Baptist youth leaders said the conflict "is placed on the shoulders of people who have fled to our land in search of help, but who have been made scapegoats."

According to the German Baptist youth leaders, not enough has been done to find a socially acceptable solution to the refugee problems and they urged the German government not to turn away, but rather continue to take in foreigners in need.

"This statement by German Baptist Youth leaders reflects the concern of the Baptist World Alliance for racism around the world," said Denton Lotz, general secretary of the BWA. "Rostock is a prime example of why the Baptists Against Racism Commission was formed."

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N.C. college plans
school of divinity

Baptist Press
9/11/92

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. (BP)--Calling it a natural, maybe inevitable, growth process, trustee leaders of Gardner-Webb College added a school of divinity during an Aug. 27 meeting on campus.

Robert L. Lamb, long-time faculty member and former chair in the department of religious studies and philosophies, was named dean of the new school by Gardner-Webb President M. Christopher White.

"The entrance of this institution into theological education at the graduate level is a natural, maybe inevitable, growth process," White said. "We have been in theological education for decades," the president observed, noting Gardner-Webb has had several thousand graduates in Christian ministry.

"And, we have built a faculty widely recognized for excellence -- in both academics and Christian commitment," White said. Gardner-Webb is an institution of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

"In addition, Gardner-Webb boasts a library facility and collection that is to date superior to that offered by many seminaries. The school's location is ideal as well, situated in a rural setting yet near the metropolitan areas of Charlotte and Asheville, N.C., and Greenville, S.C.," White said.

Lamb, a professor of religious education and religion, is a graduate of Stephen F. Austin State College in Texas. He holds a master of arts degree in religious education and an educational doctorate from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

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He has also studied at Westminster Choir College, Baylor University, North Carolina State University and Appalachian State University.

The offering of a master of divinity degree at Gardner-Webb follows a recent move by the college to introduce a master of arts in Christian ministry.

The response to the master of arts in Christian ministry, which will begin January 1993, has been overwhelming, according to White.

The master of arts in Christian ministry is a 42-hour degree designed to meet the needs of ministers with limited time schedules. Maximum class load for the degree will be six hours per semester. Also, an undergraduate degree in religion/religious education or 18 hours of undergraduate study in religion is required for admission to the degree.

The master of divinity is a three-year (about 90 semester hours) basic professional degree. It will be comparable to similar degrees in theological seminaries and divinity schools. Students will be permitted to take a heavier class load and this degree does not require an undergraduate degree in religion as an admission prerequisite.

White said, "Gardner-Webb is not offering the higher theological degree as a means of competition, but to meet the needs of the community.

"This institution is not a part of any controversy, nor does it seek to be ... but to be above that controversy."

With the approval of the full board of trustees, expected in October, Lamb and the department of religious studies will begin developing curriculum, policies and guidelines.

According to college officials, the divinity school will automatically be accredited by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges and will seek accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools.

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Bahamas gets \$5,000
BWA hurricane aid

Baptist Press
9/11/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist World Alliance has sent \$5,000 to Baptists in the Bahamas to aid in their relief efforts following Hurricane Andrew.

Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid, through which the money was sent, said that, immediately after the hurricane hit, the BWA asked about the needs for relief in the Bahamas, and assured Baptists there of the prayer and support of their worldwide family.

BWAid also sent \$5,000 to the Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention to aid Hurricane Andrew's victims in South Florida and Louisiana.

"The situation in Eleuthera is catastrophic," says C.W. Saunders, president of the Bahamas National Baptist Missionary and Education Convention.

Saunders said that the islands of Bimini, Cat Cay and Berry also suffered great damage and loss of life.

The BNBMEC had already collected food, water and clothes but "the greatest needs are now food and building supplies," said Saunders.

Saunders said Bahamian churches have been challenged to give at least \$1,000 each to a fund for purchasing food and building supplies and the BWA donation as well as any money received would support this fund.

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Baptists who want to assist relief in the Bahamas should send donations to the Baptist World Alliance, 6733 Curran Street, McLean, VA 22101-6005, USA.

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Evangelism emphasized, leaders
elected at NABWU meeting

Baptist Press
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PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--More than 500 Baptist women leaders from 20 Baptist denominations in the United States, Canada and the West Indies heard the challenge to make evangelism their focus of ministry when the North American Baptist Women's Union (NABWU) met on its 40th anniversary here Sept. 3-7.

Meeting at the Pointe Hilton on South Mountain Hotel around the theme, "In Times Like These," NABWU speakers overwhelmingly concentrated on the urgency of evangelism in the world today, as well as the need to recruit and involve younger women to their ranks.

"From my observation, the two characteristics of vital and growing women's groups are an evangelistic focus and handing over leadership to women while they are young" said Catherine Allen, president of the Women's Department of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

"Our greatest barrier to evangelizing is the church, because we hide inside instead of penetrating culture," said featured speaker Esther Burroughs, assistant director of the Lay Evangelism Department of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"In times like these, we need to go out of our way to tell others about the good news of Jesus," said Burroughs, who gave personal examples of sharing her faith. "When we know the story, we have a responsibility to tell it" said Burroughs.

Southern Baptist speaker, Barbara Joiner, author of "Count It All Joy" told the women "the most exciting experience one can have is to tell the good news of Jesus Christ, but it is difficult, and few of us accept the responsibility to share the gospel."

"I cannot afford to keep quiet" said Aduke Akinola of Nigeria, secretary-treasurer of the Women's Department of the BWA. "I have to tell the world that Jesus is real to me."

"What a difference it would make to the world if women of the world will unite together for the gospel of our Lord Jesus" said Denton Lotz, general secretary of the BWA who also addressed NABWU.

Lotz emphasized the suffering of women all over the world. "It is to this world of suffering that we are called to minister," Lotz said, and he praised the women for their emphasis on an evangelization strategy that takes into account the suffering of women in the world.

The NABWU meeting also marked a change in leadership as Dorothy Sample, president for the past five years and a Southern Baptist handed over leadership to Jennifer Sudderth, an ordained American Baptist minister and National Baptist from California.

At 40, Sudderth is the youngest NABWU president in its history.

"I want NABWU to grow by embracing younger women and by establishing an ethnic balance to include Asians, Hispanics and others" Sudderth said. "I want our projects to expand to give help to the female victims of our society, the unskilled, homeless, illiterate, unsaved."

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**State Baptist colleges ranked
in magazine's 100 'best buys'**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Four Baptist colleges are ranked in the nation's 100 "Best College Buys" in the Sept. 7 issue of Money Magazine.

Baylor University, Waco, Texas ranked 35; Samford University, Birmingham, Ala. ranked 47; Furman University, Greenville, S.C. ranked 71 and Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C. ranked 73.

Although all four schools have been related to their respective state conventions in the past, ownership of Baylor University by Texas Baptists and Furman University by South Carolina Baptists has been severed in the past year while Wake Forest has a "fraternal" relationship with North Carolina Baptists.

The annual "Money Guide to Colleges" issue of the magazine analyzed more than 1,000 colleges and universities to identify the best 100 best values, schools that "deliver the most for your money."

The magazine used 16 factors to rank the schools, including tuition, average college entrance exam scores, student-faculty ratio, retention and graduation rates, library resources, faculty strength and others, according to a Samford University spokesman.

"The public has a hard time differentiating among the 3,500 institutions of post-secondary education," Samford President Thomas E. Corts said. "Analyses such as Money's are very influential and beneficial to the public."

It is the second major recognition for Samford within the past month. In August, Samford was listed in Peterson's Competitive Colleges 1992-93, in the nation's top 10 percent of universities consistently attracting the brightest students.

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**Bushes worship at
Kentucky Baptist church**

By Marv Knox

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9/11/92**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--If churches gave prizes for outreach, Rebecca Jackson and Ralph Orms would be in serious medal contention.

They might not have invited the most people to Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., but they certainly brought the most famous -- George and Barbara Bush.

The Bushes, both Episcopalians, worshiped at the church Sept. 6, during a weekend trip to Louisville.

They came at the invitation of Jackson and Orms, who independently contacted the White House to ask them to church, reported Pastor Bill Hancock, immediate past chairman of trustees for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Jackson is Jefferson County court clerk and the county's highest-ranking Republican official. Orms, a local police sergeant, is the national secretary of the Fraternal Order of Police and an active leader in the war on drugs.

On Thursday before the Sunday service, Highview Church leaders learned their congregation was on the short list for a possible presidential visit. "But we literally found out at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning that the president would attend our church," Hancock said.

The pastor praised Secret Service and White House staff for keeping the presidential visit as unobtrusive as possible.

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"They were adamant that they wanted a worship experience," he said, noting the president's security staff kept their presence in the church sanctuary to a minimum.

Secret Service and other security personnel arrived at the southeast Louisville church about an hour before the 9:30 a.m. service. They mapped out the president and first lady's route to their seats, but they did not set up high-profile metal detectors or other security devices.

Once in worship, the Bushes and Highview members all heard a sermon on "Faith to Wait." Hancock preached from Psalm 27 and Isaiah 40, focusing on "some of the things the psalmist faced during difficult times."

Knowing the president might visit, Hancock studied sermon materials he had collected on patriotism and Christians in government. "But I decided to preach a pastoral, encouraging sermon that would apply as well if the president were not there," he said. The president and Mrs. Bush did not address their fellow worshippers. However, the congregation gave them a standing ovation when Hancock expressed appreciation for their visit.

"We want him to know, and Mrs. Bush, that he has our prayers, not as a candidate for president, but as our leader," the Louisville Courier-Journal quoted Hancock as saying. The pastor and president had about seven or eight minutes to visit during the trip. "We talked about things in general -- the worship experience and mutual concerns," Hancock reported.

The quick trip to church did not draw a lot of outside attention, he added, noting no protesters showed up.

Highview Church was fortunate to receive a presidential visit, but it's not unique, Hancock said.

"I hope the community will see this as our representing all Christians in the community. Any other church could have done it equally well," he said. "We were honored, but our main concern was to worship the Lord."

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BSSB opens 'World Bridge'
publishing education center

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
9/11/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Business leaders, including people from the printing and tourism sectors of metropolitan Nashville, joined with Southern Baptists Sept. 10 for the opening of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's visitor education center, The World Bridge.

Named to reflect the worldwide ministry commitment of the board, The World Bridge is a composite historic and publishing display area in the three-story atrium connecting the board's two-year-old Centennial Tower with other buildings in the downtown complex.

The visual feature of the bridge is a wall of six 36-foot-high panels displaying flags representative of the 122 countries to which board literature is shipped.

James T. Draper Jr., president of the board, told about 150 people at the dedication and reception that the center provides "insight into the development of the world's largest publisher of religious materials, as well as showing off our most important new products."

Draper said the board is both a ministry and a business, "anxious to be a part of the business community in the South's religious publishing capital. Every year some 6-8,000 people tour our facilities. The World Bridge will become a showcase for our business to represent the worldwide scope of our history and our vision for the future."

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Included in The World Bridge are historical information and artifacts related to the 101-year-old publishing house, a display of the editorial and production process, a re-creation of the office of the board's first president, a turn-of-the century worship center and displays of current products.

The Sunday School Board provides tours of its facilities weekdays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., central standard time. Reservations for tours may be made by calling (615) 251-5048.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press.