

# (BP)

## BAPTIST PRESS

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FMB, CBF reps air concerns,  
but reach few conclusions

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press  
10/16/92

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)--After five hours of airing concerns and grievances, representatives from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship left an Oct. 15 meeting with most of their original opinions unchanged.

The meeting's atmosphere ranged from tense and frank to friendly and conciliatory. Yet like an estranged couple meeting after a breakup, both sides left resolved to go their own ways.

Reporters from Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press attended under the condition they not directly quote participants' statements made during the session.

The one-day meeting came at the request of Woman's Missionary Union leaders who asked Foreign Mission Board trustee chairman John Jackson to arrange a dialogue between the board and the fellowship.

WMU leaders asked the two groups to discuss mutual concerns about missions and the board's openness toward appointing missionary candidates who come from churches affiliated with the fellowship.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship was formally organized in 1991 by moderate Southern Baptists opposing the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Topics discussed at the meeting included: reasons for FMB President R. Keith Parks' retirement, the morale of the board's staff and mission force, the board's balance of resources between church planting and other ministries such as medical and agricultural missions, the board's funding from the fellowship, and the conservative-vs.-moderate mix of the board's trustees.

Most of the participants agreed the talks were useful, yet many of the issues discussed at the meeting were beyond the control or responsibility of one or both groups.

"I didn't come with any grand ideas that we would be able to convince them of our opinions, but I did want to at least create another alternative in their minds about what may and may not be true (about the board)," Jackson said after the meeting. "At least we began a dialogue. Someone needs to begin if there's ever going to be a true meeting of the minds."

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John Hewett, immediate past moderator of the fellowship, indicated such a meeting is a long way off.

"What you clearly have here is two radically different interpretations of what is going on in the SBC and two radically different interpretations about what's going on at the Foreign Mission Board," Hewett said.

Fellowship leaders expressed frustration at not having any moderate Southern Baptists on the board's current slate of trustees. FMB leaders disagreed with that assessment, saying that although the majority of the 87 trustees are conservative, there are moderate voices among them.

Either way, current board staff and trustees can do little about the selection of new trustees. That power rests with the Southern Baptist Convention's Committee on Nominations, named each year by the SBC president and approved at the annual convention.

The two groups did find points of agreement. Board officials committed themselves to working in "harmony and without conflict with missionaries of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship," according to a written statement prepared by the board's representatives.

The fellowship supports eight missionaries in Europe who have left the board. Fellowship leaders expect their mission force to grow to more than 20 in 1993. But fellowship representatives at the meeting insisted they have not tried -- and will not try -- to recruit currently appointed FMB missionaries.

The two sides also agreed not to use disrespectful language when speaking or writing about one another.

While discussing the events leading to Parks' retirement announcement, fellowship representatives described it as a forced resignation, not a retirement. Parks' decision to step down came as a result of conflict with the trustees and not simply reaching age 65, they said.

Board representatives agreed Parks' leadership style often conflicted with many trustees, who wanted to take more active roles in leadership of the board. But few trustees wanted Parks to step down, they stressed. That decision, they said, came at a spiritual retreat in Dallas, where Parks said his departure was God's will.

The mission board group came prepared to discuss the missionary appointment process in detail. Many moderates believe the board no longer appoints single women or missionaries with specialized skills other than evangelism and church starting.

The Foreign Mission Board continues to appoint single missionaries, the representatives said, and about 30 percent of appointments in 1992 have filled specialist positions on the mission field. The board also does not keep a list of churches affiliated with the fellowship, they added, nor would a missionary candidate's affiliation with the fellowship affect the board's decision about appointing that person to missionary service.

"There has been a lot of rhetoric and misconceptions about our appointment process," Jackson said. "I want to share that we do not have a political agenda. I personally don't have one and I don't think the board has one."

Fellowship leaders responded that their concerns with the mission board don't stem from a lack of knowledge about the way the board appoints missionaries, but rather from lack of representation within the trustee body.

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Five representatives from the fellowship and five from the board attended the meeting at a Charlotte, N.C., hotel. Besides Hewett, the fellowship representatives were: Patricia Ayres, fellowship moderator; Jean Bond, co-chairwoman of the missions ministry committee; Cecil Sherman, coordinator; and Jim Slatton, co-chairman of the group's personnel committee.

Board representatives included three trustees and two staff members. Trustee participants were chairman Jackson; Phyllis Randall, chairwoman of the mission personnel committee; and Pat Bullock, vice chairman of the same committee. Staff members at the meeting were interim president-elect Don Kammerdiener and Harlan Spurgeon, vice president for mission personnel.

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Southern trustees fund  
new ethics professorship

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
10/16/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees voted to fund a new Christian ethics teaching position at the school but released no information regarding the fate of an embattled ethicist now teaching at the Louisville, Ky., seminary.

In an Oct. 14 meeting with faculty and administrative staff, Southern Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt announced that trustees had allocated funds to hire the additional professor by next fall. The action was taken during a two-hour executive session Oct. 12 which began at a point on the agenda where trustees were to hear a report concerning ethics professor Paul D. Simmons. An eight-member trustee committee has been investigating charges against Simmons related to his views on abortion.

The funding of an additional ethics professorship was the only information trustees agreed to release from the executive session, Honeycutt said.

In other actions, trustees gave final approval to a seminary charter change which stipulates the seminary will automatically accept trustees that are elected by the Southern Baptist Convention. Previously, the charter provided that all new trustees must also be elected by the board. The revised charter had earlier been approved by a vote of the SBC.

Trustees also approved areas to be studied by the seminary's 21st Century Mission Statement Task Force and endorsed the school's 1992-97 Institutional Plan. In addition, they elected Charles Barnes, executive vice president of First Kentucky National Corp. in Louisville, to serve on the board until the 1993 session of the SBC. The vacancy was created by the resignation of Joe D. Cross of Louisville.

During discussion on the charter change, trustee David Miller of Arkansas raised a question about the article on "Election" in the Abstract of Principles, the seminary's statement of faith since its founding in 1859. "Do we really believe what this article says?" he asked. The Abstract of Principles says in part: "Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life -- not because of foreseen merit in them, but of his mere mercy in Christ ... ."

Miller claimed the founders of the seminary believed in "unconditional election," which means salvation for individuals is based solely on God's choice and does not hinge on a response of the human will. While noting he also supports that view, he said it's a doctrine that "most Baptists aren't aware of or don't agree with."

"I have a little problem being that austere with it," said trustee first vice chairman Larry Adams of Oklahoma, who was presiding during the discussion.

Asked for a response, Honeycutt said all faculty members "affirm" the abstract's article on election. Honeycutt said he believes God "chooses" persons for salvation. "I don't think it is a rigid choice of some to the exclusion of others," he said.

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There is currently a "resurgence of commitment" to the doctrine of unconditional election, said Miller. "Intellectual honesty demands that we look at this."

Despite the discussion, the charter change was approved unanimously.

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Survivors testify of war's  
horrors in Yugoslavia

By Mike Creswell

Baptist Press  
10/16/92

ZAGREB, Croatia (BP)--Christian sources in Croatia and Serbia have confirmed widely publicized stories of war atrocities committed in the splintering pieces of Yugoslavia.

Eyewitness accounts of murders and concentration camps have been released by the Christian Information Service in Zagreb, Croatia. The service is directed by a Baptist, Boris Peterlin.

A Christian worker in Belgrade, Serbia, who asked not to be identified, confirmed that the stories sound consistent with similar reports he has heard from refugees and other sources there. But the worker pointed out atrocities have been committed by all sides.

The reports reflect the religious roots of the vicious conflict. Their stories of neighbor turned against neighbor suggest the hatred and killing will not stop soon.

Croatians are heavily Roman Catholic, while Serbians are predominantly Eastern Orthodox. In the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where heavy fighting has occurred in recent months, the population includes 44 percent Muslims, 31 percent Serbians and 17 percent Croats. Slovenia, once the northernmost region of Yugoslavia bordering Austria and Italy, also has become an independent state.

Roman Catholic leaders have accused the Serbians of targeting Catholic church buildings and Muslim mosques. Hundreds of church buildings and mosques of all kinds have been destroyed in the fighting.

Croatia and Serbia fought for nine months before borders between the two sides stabilized. About 10,000 people died in the war. Now the fighting has largely shifted to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbs, based in what once was eastern Yugoslavia, have been accused of trying to eliminate the Muslim minority in Bosnia-Herzegovina through a process called "ethnic cleansing."

Refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina who have taken refuge in Croatia reported mass killings. In one eyewitness account reported by the Christian Information Service, a Bosnian schoolboy told of seeing 14 people from two villages near the city of Tuzla shot down by the "chetniks" -- non-military citizens turned guerrilla fighters. The villagers were fleeing as chetniks arrived in the area. As the villagers ran towards a forest, another chetnik intercepted them and opened fire, the boy reported.

"I lay down on the ground and threw myself from the path, down a steep slope," the boy testified. "A burst of fire came forth, but luckily I hadn't been hit. Hiding myself in a stream, I started to break through, getting across branches. Gunfire continually was going on and I was continually running."

After hiding out in the forest overnight, the boy eventually made his way back to another village and safety. He identified six of the gunmen by name and said they were his neighbors before the conflict broke out. They looted his village and burned down about 60 houses, he said.

Shock was evident in the boy's statement, because those neighbors had once lived in peace with them. "We didn't expect such things," he said.

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Members of a village defense group later found the bodies of the victims, unburied and in a state of decomposition.

Another witness testified he had been held in a Serbian concentration camp set up in a technical school in Karakaj. About 700 prisoners were held in the camp, all from Muslim villages, he said.

"We were under insupportable repression all the time, accommodated in small rooms without enough air and water," the man said. "A number of people died due to suffocation. We were beaten with fists and rifle butts. People were covered with blood and many did not get up after that."

The number of people in the camp diminished as group after group were carried away in trucks, supposedly to be sent home through a prisoner exchange program.

"But as soon as they would take out those people we could hear rifle fire, screams and cries," he said.

One day he and eight others were taken outside. "They forced us against the wall and started shooting immediately," he said. "It was a miracle that I stayed alive." He lay among his slain neighbors, pretending to be dead. When the troops left to get the next victims, he crawled away.

Some 400 people were killed in the camp and the other 300 were subjected to "many stages of torments," the man testified. Like the boy, he named two gunmen who were formerly his neighbors. One of them is a former town assembly member, he said.

Baptists are among the 1 percent Protestant minority in former Yugoslavia and have members both in Croatia and Serbia. Baptist leaders in Zagreb reported that a Baptist pastor in Sarajevo, the besieged Bosnian capital, tried to get out of the area during the recent fighting but was turned back at the border. His pregnant wife and their children were allowed to leave, however, the leaders said.

Baptists in Croatia and Serbia have set up relief ministries. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board authorized \$225,000 for Baptist feeding programs in seven areas of Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia. An estimated 600,000 to 700,000 war refugees are in Croatia alone. Many refugees are housed in tents, and relief workers fear they will face disease or death this winter unless proper housing can be provided.

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Nevada editor's daughter  
dies from toxic reaction

Baptist Press  
10/16/92

RENO, Nev. (BP)--The nine-year-old daughter of Mike McCullough, editor of the Nevada Baptist newsjournal, died Oct. 16 in a Reno hospital.

Nevada Baptist Convention officials said "Maggie" McCullough had entered the hospital Oct. 10 following a toxic reaction to medication for recurring seizures. Throughout the week doctors had been unable to stabilize her condition. Life support devices were discontinued early Oct. 16 and she died at 8:55 a.m. (PDT).

A convention spokesman said the a memorial service would be held Oct. 18 at Fellowship Southern Baptist Church, Reno, at 3 p.m. Burial will be in Bryan, Texas, at date yet to be decided.

In lieu of flowers, remembrances can be sent to the Nevada Baptist Foundation in her memory.

McCullough is a native of Texas and has been on the staff of the Nevada Baptist Convention since 1982 and editor since mid-1983.

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McCullough and his wife, Sarah, also have a son, Jackson, who is seven.

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Billy Graham reveals  
new 'vision for Russia'

Baptist Press  
10/16/92

MOSCOW (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham revealed his new "vision for Russia" in a press conference held Oct. 15 at the Foreign Ministry Press Center, the site where the abortive coup of 1991 to topple then-President Gorbachev was announced.

"I think the greatest need in the world today is for spiritual renewal and revival," he said. "I believe that the Russian people are more prepared to lead that than anyone I know.

"You have been a religious nation," he continued. "Your roots are very deep in religion. It seems to me that you have something to share with the rest of the world. You could have a new beginning now, not only economic and political but also spiritual."

Graham is in Moscow to hold his first-ever crusade in the former Soviet Union to be held at the Olympic Stadium Oct. 23-25. The meetings have been organized by VOZROZHDENIYE '92 (Renewal '92), a year-long program of training and outreach supported by 150 churches of many denominations in the Moscow region and 3,000 in all of the republics.

Drawing a parallel between the current situation in the former Soviet Union and the period following the American Civil War, Graham said it is his prayer that understanding and peace will prevail, and different ethnic groups will be able to live peaceably.

However, the Southern Baptist evangelist said, the real key to moral and spiritual renewal lies with individuals, saying, "Our basic problems are not just political or economic. Our basic problem is the human heart, and only God can bring lasting change to our hearts as we open our lives to him."

On Oct. 14, Graham met church leaders from all over the former Soviet Union who had helped organize his mission to Moscow.

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One man cries for mercy  
for Yugoslavia's crimes

Baptist Press  
10/16/92

BELGRADE, Serbia (BP)--"Those whose bones from pits were lifted were of my kin, and those who threw them. Those that were killed were of my kin, and those that killed."

"I bear the suffering of the first, the guilt of the latter."

Such is the pain of many people in the killing field that once was Yugoslavia. It is expressed in a poem by Dusan Pajin, a writer and translator in Serbia.

He wrote it in response to the ethnic war now destroying the land. But the first words actually refer to an earlier atrocity.

"In 1989, a cave in Croatia was discovered filled with the bones of thousands of murdered victims," said Southern Baptist representative Bill Steele, who works in Serbia. "The killings were traced back to World War II, when genocide had been practiced in Yugoslavia. This was one of the sparks which ignited the present-day conflict."

Pajin cries out: "If only I could say -- 'They did it, not I. The atrocities were done by others, not by me. They are evildoers, I belong only to the victims' side.'"

But he knows such a claim is false, an excuse for revenge and more killing.

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"I know, God, You have nothing to do with that," he admits. "Big is your estate, with various kindreds. The world you created once, then came again, and again, to ease the sins. From your side, more than enough."

But Pajin wonders if God will forgive the river of blood shed in Yugoslavia.

"Are not our sins beyond forgiveness, are we not unreachable for mercy?" he asks.

"This poem reflects the genuine repentance of one man for crimes he did not commit yet feels very much responsible for in his past," Steele said. "It highlights the cry of thousands of people to a God they know little about, a God they would like to know more about."

"It is in this ministry setting that we continue to work despite the threat of war, the fear of the unknown and the frustration of the embargoes."

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CORRECTION: In the seventh paragraph, last sentence, of (BP) story titled, "FMB trustee chairman denounces charges of resigning missionaries," dated 10/15/92, please end the sentence after the word "Switzerland." Delete the phrase, "and with his departure the board will close its mission in Switzerland since it has no other personnel there." This is not accurate since another FMB missionary couple continues to work in Switzerland.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

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