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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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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11/3/92

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NOTE TO EDITORS: The full texts of the letters from Foreign Mission board interim president Don Kammerdiener and trustee chairman John Jackson reported on in the stories below are available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Interim FMB president says  
it's time to 'move ahead'

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press  
11/3/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--In the wake of a year of turmoil at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Don Kammerdiener moved quickly during his first work day as interim president to reassure missionaries and board employees.

"Our calling is to live by our faith and not by our fears," he wrote an anxious mission force. "The time has come to move forward."

Kammerdiener met twice with board staff Nov. 2 and released a letter to 3,900 missionaries around the world. He promised the board will continue to change as global developments demand, but will stick to its main evangelistic mission and listen carefully to the voices of missionaries and staff members without penalizing them for speaking out.

"Changes in major leadership positions at the Foreign Mission Board and news releases charging major deviations from our missionary heritage have caused many questions to be raised in the minds of our missionaries," Kammerdiener wrote in his letter.

"I regret more than I can say the distress many of you are feeling," he said. "No simple words of assurance will fully answer the questions."

Kammerdiener, a 30-year missions veteran, assumes the interim presidency with the daunting task of rebuilding public confidence in the board -- and its confidence in itself.

In less than a year the board has weathered constant debate about its direction under conservative trustee control, a wave of resignations by unhappy missionaries, the early retirements of two vice presidents in protest of trustee policies and -- perhaps most painful of all -- the reluctant retirement Oct. 31 of its president, Keith Parks.

Parks closed out his tenure with a letter to missionaries insisting things indeed have changed for the worse at the board, despite protestations by trustees to the contrary. The changes, he said, include decisions shaped by "ultra-conservative" theology rather than tested mission principles; an atmosphere of "suspicion, distrust, criticism and intimidation;" enforced conformity; a decline in career missionary appointments and increased emphasis on volunteers that is "bringing an imbalance overseas;" trustee involvement in day-to-day administration; pressure on the board's news office "to report only 'positive' news;" and the asking of prospective staff members "for expressions of loyalty toward trustees and/or the 'conservative resurgence.'"

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Kammerdiener, 56, a former missionary in Latin America, has administered day-to-day operations as executive vice president since January 1990. He is among the candidates being considered by the trustee presidential search committee, according to unconfirmed reports about the committee's deliberations.

In the meantime, Kammerdiener will be "fully empowered" to act as president, FMB trustee chairman John Jackson told Baptist Press Nov. 2. That includes the go-ahead to recommend people for election to high-level vacancies at the board, Jackson said.

Not only the last year but the last decade "has been a time of turmoil as our president struggled to move us into major innovations and as trustees and constituents have struggled to participate," Kammerdiener wrote missionaries.

Good people "can and do differ greatly in their perspectives as to missionary methods," he added. Difficult decisions have been made in a context of open and frank interchange of ideas. I pledge to you that that same openness to diversity and minority opinions will continue unabated."

Moving to specifics, Kammerdiener also said:

-- No "substantive change in the (missionary) appointment process" has occurred, "nor is there any review of the process under way or contemplated. The Baptist Faith and Message is the only theological statement referenced in interviews or in written materials."

-- "Serious studies" continue on the best use of short-term volunteers overseas as the flood of interest in such service continues to rise among churches. As the discussion proceeds, however, "I affirm ... the primary role of God-called and Spirit-gifted career missionaries."

-- "I affirm without reservation the need for a professionally credible and free news policy carried out by Baptists who are committed to the cause of world missions."

-- Missionaries and staff should and will be held accountable to their colleagues and by trustees. "By the same token the work of trustees is and must be subject to the evaluation and criticism of Southern Baptists. No missionary will be penalized for participation in such evaluation."

In a Nov. 2 morning chapel session with board staff members, Kammerdiener said he wants to "unleash" their creativity and give workers at every level an opportunity to say, "This is what I think."

"Vigorous debate isn't a sign of division; it's a sign of health," he stressed.

But he appealed for open communication through proper channels, not whispers and rumors. "If you choose to live by rumors, you will also suffer by rumors," he said. "If you have questions, come and ask me."

The same rule should apply to board trustees, he stated. They should direct their inquiries and concerns to him or trustee committee chairmen and top board administrators, not buttonhole individual employees. "If trustees go around the system, let me know," he said. Nor should employees not in a liaison role to trustee committees go directly to trustees, he added.

Later, trustee chairman Jackson joined Kammerdiener for a lunchtime question-and-answer session with staff. They were asked about continuing complaints of trustees' rudeness toward middle- and lower-level employees and whether employees will be "interrogated" by trustees or asked to swear allegiance to the "conservative resurgence."

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"I have never been asked to identify with the 'conservative resurgence,'" Kammerdiener answered. "Thus far, on each occasion when I've been interviewed (for a board position), I have not been asked that kind of question. ... I'm on the side of foreign missions. I believe that's where the vast majority of trustees and staff want to be. ... The issue is not: are you with the 'conservative resurgence' or against it? The issue is: are you in favor with all of your heart and soul with the evangelization of this world? That is our calling and that is our intention."

Jackson said the trustees "have the highest confidence in the staff of the Foreign Mission Board and especially the new acting president. ... We haven't tried to impose any demands on him or say, 'Here's a list of things we want you to do.' It's the opposite of that: I want to be a servant to him and ask, 'How can we help you, make you successful in the position that you have?' And I would say the same thing goes for staff."

"That doesn't mean that when I think you are off-base, I wouldn't tell you I think you're off-base," Jackson added. "And if I'm off-base, I don't have any hesitation for you to tell me you think I'm off-base. That doesn't bother me at all. ... But I do not believe there's any room -- ever -- for us to be discourteous or unkind, nor do I want any trustee to come to you and demand of you things which he or she has no right to demand. If that is brought to my attention, I will go privately to those trustees."

Asked if the board would work with the mission arm of the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Kammerdiener said he wants good relationships with all "Great Commission" or evangelistic Christians. "It would be hollow to say we want that with Great Commission Christians but not include other Baptists," he said. "I'm not predicting a merger or anything of the sort. I am saying that this board does not have time to do battle with other Christians, whoever they may be."

The board certainly will change in the years to come, he acknowledged, and must do so to address great challenges such as the worldwide growth of Islam. But he promised to strive for balance and resist the "siren voices" calling for concentration on any one mission ministry or approach.

Expanding on his views of open news reporting of board activities, Kammerdiener said Baptists and "anybody else work best when they have full and unbiased and free information passing through all the channels of communication. I think that the (press) representatives of this board ought to be Baptists committed to the purposes of this board. I think they ought to be professionals who will do their work in the best possible fashion, and I think they should be free to do that work without interference from the administration or the trustees."

To non-FMB reporters, he asked for occasional reporting on mission issues beyond staff or trustee disputes. "I have the strongest kind of feeling that there is something about the Foreign Mission Board that is worth telling other than controversial matters that have happened among us," he said. As possibilities, he mentioned efforts to feed the starving of Somalia or spread the gospel in places where there is a "massive turning to Christ."

"I don't think that we are simply a political kind of entity that is struggling over political questions or who's going to be elected or any other such things," he said. "We are about something far bigger than that."

Jackson acknowledged some of the board's writers had "gotten bashed" by trustees frustrated with their stories, but added he thinks the press is doing a "pretty fair job" in their reporting overall. "We don't want in any way to curtail the press," he said. "We just want to have a fair accounting of accurate facts with the way they were reported. Frankly, I don't see any basic changes."

Asked for his main prayer request, Kammerdiener recalled his days as a mission field representative in an Argentina wracked by civil strife.

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"We went to sleep each night to the sound of machine guns and bombs blowing off in our city," he said. And it became very evident to me that in those kinds of times, I needed to have and to be perceived as having joy in service. And so I got some folks to pray with me in those times that the Lord would give me joy in being able to serve God there. I would ask that same prayer during these times."

He made one more request: "If you want to pray for me, pray for wisdom -- wisdom to do the right thing, in the right way and at the right time and be willing to take the consequences for the decisions that are made."

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FMB trustee chairman registers  
disagreement with Parks' letter

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press  
11/3/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustee chairman John Jackson wrote 3,900 Southern Baptist missionaries Nov. 3 expressing strong disagreement with a letter sent to them by R. Keith Parks before Parks retired Oct. 30 as Foreign Mission Board president.

Parks' letter sought to clarify his reasons for retiring three years earlier than he had planned. It listed 10 changes he said have taken place at the Foreign Mission Board with which he disagrees philosophically.

Jackson, a California pastor, said his letter was not meant to give a point-by-point refutation of Parks' letter but was written mainly to express support and appreciation for the missionaries and to defend trustees. He sent copies of his letter, as did Parks, to FMB staff and trustees, state Baptist executive directors and editors, Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press.

The FMB chairman expressed admiration for Parks and his accomplishments in foreign missions but said he was "shocked that a president of the FMB, in the waning hours of his administration, would send shock waves throughout the mission field and the SBC."

"I have to believe his letter was not intended to harm missions," Jackson said. "However, most, if not all, of the trustees view it as harmful to relationships between staff, missionaries and trustees. They see it as pitting the trustees against the staff and missionaries. This distresses the trustees who have attempted over and over again to refute some of the allegations made in Dr. Parks' letter."

Although Jackson did not respond point by point, his letter did comment on Parks' assertion that "some trustees without the time, expertise, knowledge or experience to make administrative decisions are increasingly doing staff work instead of fulfilling the role of trustees ... ."

Replied Jackson: "I do not believe the vast majority of trustees have become involved in administrative affairs at the board, nor do they desire to do so. This does not mean they are not desirous to be responsible and interested trustees. This may at times be interpreted as being too involved in administrative matters."

Jackson noted "some trustees may have violated their role and requested or even demanded staff to do something. When this has been brought to my attention, I have reminded the trustees that this is not their responsibility.

"It is not my intent to say that trustees are without blame," Jackson wrote. "We have made mistakes, and we will err in the future. These errors have been made by God-fearing men and women who are attempting to follow God's leadership."

Don Kammerdiener addressed a similar issue in his first work day as FMB interim president. Kammerdiener said in meetings with staff Nov. 2 he urges both employees and trustees to follow proper administrative channels in relating to each other.

Jackson also responded to Parks' assertion "freedom to disagree (at the Foreign Mission Board) has been replaced by expectation of conformity. When issues or problems cannot be discussed honestly, they cannot be dealt with productively or solved."

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"This statement by Dr. Parks exemplifies the problem," Jackson wrote, repeating statements he released to the press earlier. "Most of the statements made by Dr. Parks were never discussed with trustees. In addition, when discussion did take place, any negative view was exploited or labeled as the (Southern Baptist political) 'controversy' weaving its way into board affairs.

"Missionaries and Southern Baptists are not told of individual disagreements within the Global Strategy Group (the board's top executive staff decision-making body), but if one trustee voices a negative opinion, in or outside of committee meetings, it is trumpeted as if all trustees have voted. It is my desire, and the desire of the trustees, to have room to disagree without being 'disagreeable.' We believe this can and will be the future working relationships with staff."

At various times Jackson and other trustees have disagreed with other points Parks reiterated in his letter -- decisions shaped by "ultra-conservative" theology rather than tested mission principles; an atmosphere of "suspicion, distrust, criticism and intimidation"; a decline in career missionary appointments and increased emphasis on volunteers that is "bringing an imbalance overseas"; pressure on the board's news office "to report only 'positive' news"; and the asking of prospective staff members "for expressions of loyalty toward trustees and/or the 'conservative resurgence.'"

Jackson told missionaries he "cannot recall a policy change enacted by the trustees which has changed the role of a missionary," other than the 70/30 plan, recommended by staff, which has sought to focus more missionary attention on evangelism and starting of churches.

"You will be the judge and jury as to the motives and intentions of trustees," he said. "We have no intention to threaten your position or hamper your mission. Rather, we are elated that you have not allowed rifts and disagreements to disrupt your mission efforts. God called you, and it encourages us to see you fulfilling your mission so faithfully."

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Baptists to close  
Gaza nursing school

By Marty Groll

Baptist Press  
11/3/92

GAZA (BP)--Southern Baptists will close their nursing school in the Israeli-occupied territory of Gaza next spring after fighting for years to keep it operating amid growing difficulties.

They are discussing possibly allowing a United Nations relief agency to use the facility to start its own nursing school.

Since 1987, when Palestinian Arabs began their uprising against Israeli military occupation, each year has brought growing uncertainty for the school.

Forced to depend heavily on short-term workers, Southern Baptist representatives have questioned at the end of each school term whether teachers would be found for the next. More recently they began wondering if it's wise to invite someone to work in such a traumatic place.

Other circumstances have made it difficult to teach nursing. Curfews have been imposed by military forces and strikes have been called by Arab groups to damage the Israeli economy. Books are hard to come by and travel often is impossible for days at a time. Still, 14 students will graduate with the last class next March.

"This has been coming so long," said Nancie Wingo, an English teacher at the school who arrived in Gaza about the time the Palestinian uprising was born. "Since I came, (Southern Baptist workers) have been leaving. And not enough new ones have come."

Wingo, from Fort Worth, Texas, was among Southern Baptist workers in Lebanon stripped by the U.S. government of their passport rights in 1987 as kidnapping of Americans escalated. When their repeated appeals to stay in Lebanon failed, workers who evacuated the troubled nation spoke about the grief they felt in leaving.

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But Wingo sees the nursing school's closing in a different light. While she and others in Gaza are sorry to close such a significant ministry, they feel it is in God's timing. "We've had many things change in Gaza in the last five years that have made it harder to work here," she said.

By this time next year, as few as five Southern Baptist workers could be assigned to Gaza -- down from 22 in 1985.

As an English teacher, Wingo could have other opportunities besides teaching in the nursing school. Although she has not decided her future yet, she said she might pursue teaching English through the Center of Culture and Light, Southern Baptists' reading room library in Gaza. After more than two years of trying, Southern Baptists won government approval to offer English classes there just two months ago.

Another teacher from the school plans to stay and work in a nurses' continuing education program, said Dale Thorne, who directs Southern Baptist work in the Middle East.

"I think we feel very positive about this, that God is closing this opportunity but he will open other opportunities," Wingo said. "God is leading in all of this."

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Baptists continue to minister  
to victims of Chernobyl tragedy

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press  
11/3/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--"Nobody needs us anymore, nobody wants us, nobody is taking care of us."

That's the desperate cry of about 430 cancer-stricken men from Minsk, capital of Byelorussia, according to Karl-Heinz Walter, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation and regional secretary of the Baptist World Alliance who visited Byelorussia, Oct. 8-15.

The cancer victims are former soldiers and others who risked their lives when they worked to clear away the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

However, Baptists of Byelorussia are helping. "Ivan Bugati, president of the Baptist Union of Byelorussia, is the only one who has taken care of some of them," Walter said.

With the help of EBF, Walter said, Bugati and other Baptists ministering in difficult situations to Chernobyl victims hope to do more.

While Walter and EBF office assistant Karin Schaffrik visited Byelorussia to prepare for EBF's Chernobyl children's project for 1993, they also met many adult victims of Chernobyl and heard of the devastation of Byelorussia.

"We have a wonderful country," one man told Walter on his way from the airport. "We could have many mushrooms at this time of year. The forests are full and they are much bigger than in former years, but now we cannot pick them anymore. We are a dying people and the numbers of newly born handicapped children are growing."

"This was a very sad and shocking experience," said Walter of the four representatives he met of the approximately 430 "invalids of Chernobyl."

"Those men before me all had cancer of the eyes, stomach and other cancer. The youngest was 32," Walter said.

Walter heard their tragic stories of broken marriages and lack of food and clothes for their families. Earlier help from the R d Cross has dried up and each man carries an identity card with red letters branding him a victim of Chernobyl.

While not active Christians, the cancer victims who visited Walter had noticed the believers among their group, and this led them to ask for help from Baptists.

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"We spoke about the help living with Jesus could bring them," Walter said. "I had a mixed feeling of fear and joy counseling with them. 'You have given us a little hope,' the men said, and when they left the room, I was praying in my heart not to disappoint them."

Walter recounted various visits with Baptists ministering to Chernobyl victims such as nurse Vera Iwanowna, member of a Baptist church who works with the children in the oncology department of one of the hospitals in Byelorussia.

"Sister Vera" as she is known works at the hospital and in other places as a counselor to the children and their parents, mostly single mothers. "Many fathers leave their families when they learn a child has cancer," Walter said.

Walter also reported on the neglect of the hospitals in which the children are housed, especially the lack of instruments to control the effects of radiation in the children.

"One would think that special emphasis would be given to these places after Chernobyl," Walter said, "but this is not the case."

"Sister Vera has become an angel of these places," Walter noted. "The children and mothers love her very much."

Coming from an Orthodox background, Sister Vera, herself an atheist, became a Christian in 1989 when she began to visit the Baptist church. Through the ministry of Alexander Firisiuk of Baptists' former All-Union Council in the former Soviet Union, she became a Christian and was baptized. Through her witness, her brothers and sisters living in other places have become Baptists.

Walter spoke of the need for antibiotics, vitamins, toys and Bibles for children with whom Sister Vera works. He reported one particular clinic had no contact with any international information system on children's cancer.

While the hospital authorities had no statistics as to whether cancer in children was increasing because of Chernobyl, the authorities believed it is. Thyroid cancer, for example, has increased 20 percent.

Having himself lost a son to leukemia, Walter shared his faith in Christ and it helped him through that time with some of the mothers who were staying with their children.

Walter also saw how children who had participated in the EBF and other Chernobyl children's programs had been helped. In Gomel, for example, Walter reported children who had participated in a program in Bremerhaven, Germany, were less tired than before. One school also reported tests that showed lower radiation levels in the children.

Walter said the parents and grandparents of the children who had participated in the program were "full of admiration" for the families in Western countries who had taken the children into their homes.

"We cannot write to all, but tell them how grateful we are," Walter quoted them as saying.

While it is difficult, Baptists are still trying to plant churches, Walter reported, but transportation costs make it difficult for other churches to plant new ones. The fear of radiation also makes travel and church planting in these radiated areas very difficult.

"Even if people want to leave to live in other parts of the country, they have little chance," Walter said. "More and more, other people don't want to have contact with them. 'You are radiated ... so go away and leave,' they are told, and this happens everywhere."

"Some families go back to their homes because they have given up hope. Nobody wants them," Walter said.

But Pavel Tupschik, superintendent of the Baptist churches in Mogilov and pastor of the local church, still continues to share the hope inherent in his faith.

Tupschik serves 16 churches and mission stations in Mogilov, one of the 10 most-polluted places in the Commonwealth of Independent States because of its chemical industry. Walter said people there still did not really know what happened at Chernobyl, and only noticed the reaction some time later.

Because of the food shortage and high costs, Walter said the people of Mogilov, including the Christians, do not much care whether the food they eat is radiated or not. "We live by faith according to Mark 16:19," he quoted Baptists as telling him.

In spite of this, Walter visited the site of a proposed new building of the Mogilov church and preached to a capacity crowd in the old wooden church building.

While in Mogilov, Walter visited a pediatric clinic caring for victims of both Chernobyl and the high pollution of the area. "Again, it is admirable what they try to do under the circumstances," Walter noted.

Walter found the same story of need and hope in Gomel where he visited a 600-bed hospital and learned of the voluntary work of 10 women of the Gomel Baptist church. The women teach the children Sunday school and show Christian films to the adults.

Walter said the hospital manager gave him the impression the hospital was indeed using these Baptist women as "unpaid, but super nurses, doing with love what those who are paid should do, but don't."

At Gomel, Walter met Alwin Raschkowski, superintendent of the Baptist churches in Gomel who showed him the new building of the 700-member Gomel Baptist church. They had waited eight years for permission to build and the members had built the new church in two years.

"I left Byelorussia with a heavy heart," Walter said. "Chernobyl is more than an accident, and the question consistently on my mind is one asked by two 15-year old boys, "And what will you do for us?"

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BWA condemns killing  
of nuns in Liberia

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press  
11/3/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist World Alliance has joined with others in the Christian community condemning the death of five American nuns, shot near their convent outside Monrovia, capital of war-torn Liberia.

"We deplore the killing of the nuns," said Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary, "and we call on Baptists in every country to demand of their governments to work through the United Nations to bring peace to Liberia."

The American nuns reportedly were killed in heavy fighting between the forces of rebel leader Charles Taylor and other rebel forces.

"The brutal slaying of the five nuns symbolizes the tragedy that has come to Liberia," Lotz said.

"During the past three years, the civil war has completely destroyed the nation. There is no longer a government able to protect the lives of any people."

Based on many reports from Baptist leaders and others, Lotz noted that the infrastructure of Liberia has been devastated and thousands of children roam the streets with no supervision and often are involved in major slayings.

Several Baptist leaders have visited with Taylor, the most recent being former President Jimmy Carter last September, who gained the release of hostages from the seven African nation peacekeeping force, ECOWAS.

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John Peterson, a BWA vice president and senior pastor of Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., also has visited Taylor in a peacemaking attempt.

Conscious of its historic ties to Liberian Baptists (President William Tolbert who was toppled and killed by Sergeant Doe in 1980 served as BWA president from 1965-1970), the BWA has for the past three years maintained constant contact with Liberian Baptists who have requested spiritual and material help. BWAid currently is seeking \$100,000 to assist Liberian Baptists.

According to press reports, most of Liberia is under the control of Charles Taylor and Monrovia is about to fall.

It is also reported that the recent fighting has killed hundreds of civilians and countless thousands have been displaced, with most of the city in ruins.

Already several Baptist leaders and their families have been killed in the three-year war and the BWA has heard firsthand accounts of the suffering of Baptists.

With the latest round of civil war that started Oct. 15, the New York Times reports, " ... were it not for the efforts of the United Nations ... and other foreign aid agencies, there would be no electricity, running water or food for Monrovia's 500,000 residents."

The BWA is again appealing to Baptist churches and conventions to send their financial support to Baptist World Aid, its relief and development division.

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Dakotas oppose gambling, abortion;  
boost Cooperative Program percentage

Baptist Press  
11/3/92

RAPID CITY, S.D. (BP)--Resolutions opposing gambling and abortion on demand were adopted by the Dakota Baptist Convention during its Oct. 22-24 annual meeting at Rapid City's Calvary Baptist Church.

Messengers also increased the two-state convention's giving to Southern Baptist national and international missions and ministries funded by the Cooperative Program by one-half percent -- to 14.5 percent of their budget 1993 budget of \$810,825.

The 1993 budget is a 3 percent increase above the convention's 1992 budget.

James Shackelford, pastor of the Burlington (N.D.) Baptist Church, was elected convention president on a first ballot with four candidates. Shackelford has been chairman of the convention's executive board the past year.

A total of 115 messengers represented the 85 churches and missions in the convention, with membership at 9,400.

The Dakota resolution opposing gambling is aimed at problems resulting from legalized casino gambling in Deadwood, S.D., and bingo and other forms of gambling in various communities and on Indian reservations in the two states, said Dewey Hickey, the convention's executive director.

The resolution notes: " ... we believe that the Scripture teaches that all able men should work honestly to provide for their own means" and that gambling is "sin and places one's hope in games of chance."

The resolution urges Baptists in the Dakotas to "appeal to our state legislatures to oppose and reverse laws allowing all forms of gambling."

The resolution opposing abortion notes: "... the Scriptures teach and Christ exemplified the value and sanctity of human life from conception."

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Dakota Baptists again appealed to their state legislatures "to reverse laws which support and legalize abortion on demand and to support legislation which will promote the sanctity of human life from conception until death."

In other ballots, messengers elected Bill Martin, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wolsey, S.D., as vice president and re-elected Carrie Jones of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Brookings, S.C., recording secretary.

The convention's 1993 meeting will be Oct. 21-23 at First Baptist Church in Sioux Falls, S.D.

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Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptists  
honor retiring Wunningham

Baptist Press  
11/3/92

ROCHESTER, Minn. (BP)--Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptists honored their retiring executive director, Otha Wunningham, at a banquet during the two-state convention's annual meeting Oct. 29-31 at Rochester's Emmanuel Baptist Church.

Messengers also commissioned Wunningham to write the 40-year history of Southern Baptist work in Minnesota-Wisconsin.

A 1993 budget of \$1,711,305 was adopted, a 1.25 percent increase over 1992. Of this, 26 percent is again earmarked for national Southern Baptist Convention causes.

Resolutions adopted by the messengers included one affirming "the biblical prohibition against taking of unborn human life." Another asked members to "maintain personal purity in memberships in voluntary associations, refraining from participating in organizations with teaching, oaths, or mystical knowledge which are contrary to the Bible."

A resolution on child evangelism encourages churches to give priority to reaching children for Christ. Another asks members to "uphold the biblical standards of human sexuality and the institution of marriage."

Bob Barrett, a layman from First Baptist Church of Wausau, Wis., was elected president; Grant Hignight, pastor of Brown Deer Baptist Church in Milwaukee, first vice president; and Clyde McClain, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn., second vice president.

Becky Dodson of First Baptist Church in Wausau, is the new recording secretary and David Sundeen, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Marshall, Minn., is assistant recording secretary.

There were 141 messengers and 72 visitors from 65 churches/missions plus 33 visitors from outside the convention for a total of 246 in attendance.

The 1993 meeting will be Nov. 4-6 at Temple Baptist Church in Kenosha, Wis.

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Annuity Board's new program  
for prescriptions starts Jan. 1

Baptist Press  
11/3/92

DALLAS (BP)--A new managed prescription drug program combining the Southern Baptist Annuity Board's current mail order service with a national network of retail pharmacies will go into effect Jan. 1, 1993, for all participants in the board's comprehensive medical plans.

"Twenty years ago, prescription drugs represented only 4 percent of health benefit costs, compared to 10 to 15 percent today," said Joel Mathis, senior vice president of the board's insurance division. "We believe this new program will help to curb rising medical costs and offer better service to our participants."

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Health Care Services (HCS) of Bensalem, Pa., will continue to provide mail order prescription drugs. The only change in January is that participants will pay 20 percent of the cost of the medication rather than a flat fee. The minimum cost of a prescription will be \$5 and the maximum cost will not exceed \$100 for up to a three-month supply. Prepayment will not be required.

PCS Health Systems, based in Scottsdale, Ariz., will participate in the acute care retail portion of the prescription drug program. Each participant will receive a PCS identification card in December that can be presented beginning Jan. 1 at more than 50,000 participating pharmacies in the United States.

The card entitles participants to a preferred price for a prescription. The participant will pay the negotiated cost of the prescription and a dispensing fee at the pharmacy and then file a claim with Prudential for reimbursement.

Use of the card is voluntary. If the participant does not use the prescription card or goes to a non-participating pharmacy, he will pay the prescription price set by that pharmacy before filing a claim. In either case, reimbursement will be at 80 percent after the appropriate deductible has been met.

"We believe use of the prescription card for acute care drugs and HCS for long-term maintenance drugs combine to offer our participants the best price available. This means savings for our participants and for the Annuity Board's medical plans," Mathis said.

Another benefit of the new managed prescription drug program is a computerized drug monitoring service. This service, linking HCS and PCS, analyzes each prescription for certain potential problems and, if one is detected, transmits a message to the pharmacist.

Jerry Finkelstein, registered pharmacist and HCS executive vice president, said, "HCS and PCS will be working hand-in-hand to provide total prescription drug needs and assist each patient by detecting potential problems for drug interactions with other medications the patient has purchased. This is especially important to patients under treatment by more than one physician. When the patient, pharmacist and physician are well informed about drug therapies the treatment outcome is optimized."