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**Texas board urges reversal
of FMB Ruschlikon decision**

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board should restore funds it cut from the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, according to the Texas Baptist Executive Board.

And if the Foreign Mission Board does not vote at its Dec. 5-6 meeting to rescind the defunding action, the Texas board has asked its administrative committee to explore ways to provide financial support to the seminary.

At its Dec. 3 meeting in Dallas, the Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas overwhelmingly approved the motion regarding funding for the Ruschlikon seminary, introduced by Charles McLaughlin, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sweetwater, Texas.

The motion came in response to an Oct. 9 action of the Foreign Mission Board in which trustees voted, 35-28, to withdraw \$365,000 of funds from the 1992 budget earmarked for the Ruschlikon seminary.

In part, McLaughlin asked that the Texas board "communicate our concern to the trustees of the Foreign Mission Board regarding their decision to break their commitment to support the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon."

Curt Dodd, pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church, Houston, unsuccessfully sought to table the measure, but the motion to table failed with fewer than a dozen members of the 193-person board voting in favor of it.

Bill Blackburn, pastor of First Baptist Church, Kerrville, spoke in favor of McLaughlin's motion, citing European Baptists' need for training opportunities and terming the FMB action "ill-advised."

Bill Bruster, pastor of First Baptist Church, Abilene, also urged passage of the motion, saying Texas Baptists need to support Eastern European Baptists with whom the Texans are entering into missions partnerships.

Earlier in the meeting, the board had voted to accept an invitation from the Foreign Mission Board to enter a three-year partnership with the Baptist Unions in Estonia and Romania, effective Jan. 1, 1993. The BGCT currently is involved in a partnership with the European Baptist Convention that ends on Dec. 31, 1992.

In other business, the board elected as new officers: chairman, Levi Price Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, El Paso; and vice chairman, Bo Crawford, layman at Calvary Baptist Church, Beaumont.

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FMB eyes Bold Mission Thrust goals,
expands candidate consultant force By Donald D. Martin

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board hopes to clear a bottleneck in appointing missionaries by expanding its missionary candidate consultant force.

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A recent study of the board's personnel selection department's workload found the six candidate consultants could not supply enough missionary candidates each year to reach the Bold Mission Thrust goal of having 5,000 missionaries overseas by the year 2000.

"We recognized there was no way a staff of six candidate consultants can do the job that was needed," said department director Lloyd Atkinson.

The personnel selection department processes career and associate missionary applications. Those interested in a missions career work closely with one of the candidate consultants.

Soon after the study was completed, Atkinson asked Jerry DeOliveira, director of the board's ethnic church relations, to join the department as the new candidate consultant. Another consultant may be added later.

DeOliveira will work with candidates from the Dallas-Fort Worth area, including Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Although the region is small in square miles -- limited to the two cities and surrounding counties -- it is the richest vein for missionary candidates in the Southern Baptist Convention. In 1990 the Foreign Mission Board worked with 260 potential candidates from the Dallas-Fort Worth area, more than from the top two candidate-producing states (after Texas) combined.

"A large majority of Jerry's candidates will be seminary students, who have to finish seminary and go on to get experience after graduation," Atkinson said. "So he'll have a heavy role in encouraging their long-term interests in missions. And Jerry is quite an encourager."

During the four years DeOliveira worked in ethnic church relations, the number of foreign missionaries with ethnic backgrounds climbed from 27 to 114.

Before joining the board's staff in 1988, DeOliveira was a pastor in several churches in California and the executive director of the San Francisco Peninsula Southern Baptist Association.

DeOliveira, a native of Brazil, received the bachelor of arts degree from California Baptist College and the master of arts degree from the University of California, both in Riverside, Calif. He also received the master of divinity, master of religious education and doctor of ministry degrees from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

The department also has reorganized by redrawing its candidate consultant map, adjusting the regions of the United States assigned to some of the consultants. In creating a region for DeOliveira, the candidate office reworked consultant Jim Riddell's region. He is now responsible for the rest of Texas, New Mexico and Colorado, with additional states to be added later.

Riddell, from Laurel, Miss., will be the first consultant who will not work with a seminary. "The majority of the people I'll work with will be much closer to the actual time of appointment, as opposed to working with people, say in a seminary setting, who are in the early stages of deciding on a life in foreign missions," Riddell said. "I'm looking forward to dealing with people ready to make that final decision. However, there's a lot of grief for me in this change. Since 1982, I've made monthly trips to Southwestern (seminary). I'm going to miss working with a lot of good people."

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The face of the candidate consultant office will change even more at the beginning of 1992. Don Reavis will leave his role as consultant for Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., and several mid-and southwestern states. Reavis, from High Island, Texas, has become director of missions ministries administration in the board's public affairs office.

The candidate consultant office wants to replace Reavis quickly, said Atkinson. A recent series of turnovers in the office has affected the number of missionaries the board will appoint in 1991, he conceded. In 1990 the board appointed or reappointed 236 career and associate missionaries. Projections indicate the board may appoint only 209 career and associate missionaries this year.

"The loss of just one candidate consultant is devastating for our office," Atkinson said. "It takes a full year to learn the process as a new consultant and really it takes two years to be up to speed."

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Kurds join Texas Baptists
for real Thanksgiving meal

By Ken Camp

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DALLAS (BP)--Just as Native Americans provided for Pilgrims fleeing from oppression 370 years ago, about two dozen volunteers from Midway Road Baptist Church, Dallas, reached out to a persecuted people this Thanksgiving, serving a meal to more than 350 Kurds.

The predominantly Moslem Kurds -- most of whom came to North Texas from Iraq by way of Turkish refugee camps -- gathered with their Baptist benefactors on Nov. 28 to give thanks for newfound freedom.

"It was beautiful. There was a smile on the face of each and every Kurd as they realized how and why Christian people were helping them," said Mafa Barzani, a leader of the established Dallas Kurdish community.

"It is like from here to the sky the difference in life under Saddam Hussein in Iraq and life here where there are American Christians who care for them."

More than 300 Kurds have been resettled in Dallas and Tarrant Counties in the last three months, and another 100 are expected to arrive in January. They are among 3,000 Kurds who have been granted asylum by the U.S. State Department.

The Thanksgiving meal of venison, turkey, dressing and all the trimmings served as a reunion for many Kurdish families who have been resettled in different parts of the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

"As many of them got off the buses, they wept and embraced one another. It was their first time back together since they arrived in the United States," said Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men and a member of Midway Road Baptist Church.

The Midway Road congregation began its relationship with the Kurdish people in April when Dixon spearheaded an effort to send blankets to Kurdish refugees fleeing Iraq. Texas Baptists directly supplied \$45,000 worth of blankets to Kurdish refugees and opened the door for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to send seven trailer-loads of additional blankets valued at \$121,000.

Texas Baptist volunteers also were involved in medical relief ministries, the establishment of mobile field kitchens and the digging of water wells for the Kurds in northern Iraq, southern Turkey and western Iran.

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At the Thanksgiving dinner, Dixon talked about the Thanksgiving of 1623, drawing parallels between the plight of the Kurdish refugees and the Pilgrims, and pointing to ways in which God provided for both groups with His blessings.

Dixon also told the Kurds how God had blessed him personally, saying, "The greatest blessing was when I received the new birth, being born into the family of God through faith and trust in Jesus Christ."

Since Kurdish refugees began resettling in Dallas and Tarrant Counties in mid-September, more than three dozen Texas Baptist churches have donated furniture, food and clothing. At least three churches in the area also have agreed to sponsor individual families as an on-going ministry.

Far to the southeast of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, members of Calvary Baptist Church, Beaumont, Texas, learned about the needs of the Kurdish refugees from guest preacher John LaNoue, director of Texas Baptist Young Men. Members donated 36 blankets, including one from a man who gave his prized school band letter blanket.

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Research shows 92 percent of SBC churches minister to needs By Jim Newton and Sarah Zimmerman

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ATLANTA (BP)--Ninety-two percent of Southern Baptist churches are involved in some type of ministry to needy people, new research conducted by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board reveals.

Results indicate Southern Baptists, without realizing it, have already exceeded the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust goal of 75 percent of Southern Baptist Convention churches involved in ministry projects by AD 2000.

Beverly Hammack, HMB director of missions ministries, said the Bold Mission Thrust goal was based on incomplete data from the SBC Uniform Church Letter, a lengthy questionnaire sent to clerks of all SBC churches.

"Based on the data available, the goal was challenging, but realistic. Based on the new data, the goal is out of date," Hammack said.

Hammack said she was surprised and elated at the 92 percent involvement level.

"It is time for us to say 'thank you' to SBC churches for all they are doing to minister to the needs of people who are hurting," Hammack told state directors of missions meeting in Atlanta.

Results of the research were presented to state missions leaders by Hammack and Clay Price, HMB director of the program research.

"For the first time, this research gives us accurate data on what SBC churches are doing in the area of ministry," Price said.

The Uniform Church Letter included a brief question in 1988 and again in 1990 which indicated 57 and 55 percent of SBC churches have "special ministries to meet the needs of people in your community," explained Price.

The new research is based on a stratified, random sample of 1,500 SBC churches and mailed to the pastor rather than to the church clerk. Usable responses were received from 637 churches, representing a 42 percent return, said Price

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Although there is some possibility of response bias, the research is statistically reliable and represents the best available data on SBC churches with community ministries, said Price.

The percentage of churches with ministries, and the number of ministries offered, increase as the size of the church increases, explained Price.

Virtually all SBC churches with more than 300 members have at least one community ministry, and the typical large church has nine different ministries. Most churches with less than 100 members provide three types of ministries.

Although the research did not show any correlation between the number of ministries offered and baptisms, almost two-thirds of the pastors reported professions of faith as a result of the ministries.

Based on survey responses, about 3,000 church-type missions have been started through community ministries. Nine percent of SBC churches have used ministries to needy people to start new congregations, Price said.

The average SBC church offers six ministries. The research indicated that 68 percent of SBC churches offer financial assistance, 63 percent provide a food pantry, 54 percent have nursing home ministries, 40 percent participate in a clothing closet and 37 percent provide transportation assistance.

More than 10 percent of the responding churches offered, in order of responses, jail or prison ministries, disaster relief, children's clubs, emergency shelter, home delivery of meals, parents' day out, exercise class or teen clubs.

The questionnaire included 52 ministries, with blanks for pastors to list "other ministries." Respondents wrote in 78 ministries that were not on the check list.

Hammack expressed concern about the relatively small percentage of SBC churches which are providing ministries to meet such social problems as drug and alcohol abuse, child and spouse abuse, AIDS ministries, medical needs, and shelters for homeless people.

During an address to the state missions directors, HMB President Larry Lewis emphasized the need for churches to develop "break out" ministries that minister to nonchurch members.

"Baptists are keenly concerned about ministry, but so much of it is self-centered," Lewis observed. "We minister to the sick in our church family and to the needy in our church family.

"We will never minister to the needs of America until we come out of the church buildings and share our witness and ministry," Lewis said. "We must not forfeit that responsibility or that privilege."

In a series of five presentations, Willis Bennett of Louisville, Ky., listed at least 15 critical ethical and social issues which Southern Baptists need to address.

Bennett, retired provost and senior professor of church and community at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said the church needs to deal with the critical issues of personal lifestyle; equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender or economic status; social justice; quality of life; abortion; AIDS; health care; gambling; homosexuality; materialism; war and peace; drug and alcohol abuse; crime and punishment; genetic engineering and homelessness.

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In a separate session on homelessness, Willis suggested nine ways for Christians to become involved in ministries to the homeless. He suggested encouraging government policies and programs for the homeless, supporting local shelters, providing food and clothing, providing religious services, creating a climate of understanding about homelessness based on facts rather than myths, offering job training, providing housing or shelter, sponsoring medical clinics, and making homelessness a public issues forum.

The annual conference for state missions directors was sponsored by the SBC Home Mission Board.

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New manual available
for truck stop ministries

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ATLANTA (BP)--"Truck Stop Ministry Manual," a new guide to help churches and associations develop effective ministries at truck stops, is available from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Truck stops offer excellent opportunities to "witness and minister to people passing through communities who might otherwise be untouched by the gospel," according to the free manual.

The 84-page publication suggests 14 steps in developing truck stop ministries and eight pages of ministry ideas.

The manual was written by Sam and Betty Anne Schlegel of St. Augustine, Fla. In addition to developing ministries to people who live and work on the waterfront, the Schlegels have been involved in a number of creative ministries.

To order the manual, call the Home Mission Board toll-free customer service number, (800) 634-2462.

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Angel Tree inspires
father, son reunion

By Kelly Capers

Baptist Press
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ATLANTA (BP)--Christmas is a time for angels, and that's what Chip Pohl and his family have become to a federal prisoner.

Last year the Pohls, members of Eastside Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., were sick and tired of the hype that Christmas has come wrapped up in lately, says Pohl. As a family, they looked for a ministry that would typify Christianity and give a special meaning to the holiday.

Inspired by messages their pastor Clark Hutchinson delivered on getting out of the pew and involved in ministry, the Pohls decided to participate in Angel Tree. A ministry sponsored by Prison Fellowship, Angel Tree provides Christmas gifts for prisoners' children.

The Pohls delivered a game and Ranger Rick magazine subscription to 6-year-old Adam Meacham whose father, Jon, was in Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary.

A bright man with a military intelligence background, Meacham landed in Leavenworth after unemployment and debt led him to drug abuse and a series of related crimes. Divorced and imprisoned, Meacham committed his life to Christ. Hearing of Angel Tree, Meacham filled out an application for his son.

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In January, the Pohls sent a letter to Meacham which established an instant bond of friendship, says Pohl. The correspondence continued, and Pohl decided to drive to Kansas to visit Meacham.

Like a snowball, Pohl's idea grew to a surprise reunion.

In March, Pohl and his son Andy drove Adam to Leavenworth for Meacham's birthday. Father and son had been separated for 18 months.

The visit, says Pohl, was a chance for Adam to experience first hand the love and care of his father and to see the change in his life.

One year after participating in Angel Tree, Pohl says, "It's a ministry that we are in for the long term." The ministry will keep unfolding as the relationship between the Pohls and Meacham grows.

Meacham has been transferred to Jesup, Ga., to serve the remainder of his sentence, where the Pohls have visited him recently. Pohl says his family hopes to take Adam to visit his father before Christmas.

Ministering to the Meacham's, says Pohl, "has been a great way for our family to reach out and touch other lives. It's really ministered to us in return."

In 1990, 140,000 children received gifts from Angel Tree ministry. This year the goal is 200,000. For information call (800) 762-2551.