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Woman's Missionary Union OKs
historic plan to enlarge base

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
1/11/93

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--In an unprecedented vote, the executive board of Woman's Missionary Union took action Jan. 10 to enlarge its base of operations, no longer to work exclusively with Southern Baptist Convention entities.

Declaring "WMU is at a crossroad," Executive Director Dellanna W. O'Brien said the action frees up the 104-year-old organization, opens opportunities and "puts us in sync with today's woman."

Carolyn Miller, national WMU president from Huntsville, Ala., likened the action to a "giant leap, a giant step, a giant direction" in mission awareness involvement.

Following the proposals of a special committee, appointed by Miller in January 1992, the executive board took the first two days of its annual board meeting in Birmingham and Shocco Springs, Ala., to shape the final plan. Divided into three sections -- a vision statement, core values and recommendations -- the action will allow WMU to work with a variety of evangelical groups, including the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The CBF is a group of moderate Southern Baptists who are critical of the direction and conservative leadership of the SBC.

However, O'Brien and Miller, meeting with media following the final vote, said WMU would not promote the CBF's global missions offering.

"We would not be able to promote their offering ... it's a step we shouldn't take," O'Brien said. She called the CBF issue "volatile" in Southern Baptist circles and said it was "ironic that we can pray for them but not promote their offering." Officially, she said WMU has not been asked to promote the offering.

However, WMU will assist CBF with missions materials, most likely utilizing some generic materials already produced by the missions organization. O'Brien said there was an urgent need for children's missions materials for the CBF. However, she said, the CBF's 20 missionaries will not appear in the widely-used WMU Prayer Calendar which heretofore has listed only SBC-related career missionaries.

Both leaders said they hoped to continue the relationship with SBC entities, including the promotion of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, critical to the financing of Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board missionary activity. WMU receives more than \$700,000 total from the two boards each year to promote the offerings as well as some for other projects.

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Noting WMU is an auxiliary of the SBC, and auxiliary means "helper," O'Brien said she was unsure what SBC leadership would do following the WMU action. The two leaders said WMU is interpreting SBC as "Southern Baptist churches." Both were also uncertain whether there would need to be some WMU bylaw changes although there has been in the past some discussion about changing the date and place of the WMU annual meeting listed in the bylaws as coinciding with the SBC annual meeting date and place.

There was virtually no opposition to the final plan adopted by the executive board, which is composed of state convention WMU presidents, with state WMU executive directors invited by Miller to participate in the vote.

The plan begins with a "Vision Statement:" "Woman's Missionary Union exists to enable churches and believers to participate in introducing all persons in the world to Christ."

The Vision Statement is followed by eight more-detailed statements called "Core Values," titled: "Priesthood of the Believer, God's Call to Mission, Prayer for Missions, Giftedness of Women, Social and Moral Issues, Development of Leaders, Partnership with Christians Around the World and Diverse Organizational Models."

The six action statements, called "recommendations," affirm the WMU's commitment to missions, "the reason we exist," and to "relate to others who share our commitment," and they commit WMU to:

- provide prayer support and resources for any Southern Baptist group involved in missions, "at their request."
- produce and market generic missions education resources for other evangelical groups.
- promote and facilitate effective voluntarism in response to specific needs.
- identify one social issue each year for specific intervention through national projects.
- accept contributions to be used for WMU and related missions needs.

According to WMU leaders, the organization has already, in minor ways, produced generic missions materials and facilitated mission volunteers, i.e., the Acteen Activators, teen-age girls in volunteer short-term mission projects. However, Miller said WMU would not sponsor "career" missionaries such as done by the foreign and home missions boards of the SBC.

And, up until about 1960, leaders said, national WMU had been active in social issues with some special projects, so that recommendation is not unique.

National WMU already has received some unsolicited contributions for its work, although in small amounts, and though identifying it as a recommendation (action plan) leaders said WMU would not solicit funds.

Uncertainty of the changing times, decreasing readership for WMU magazines and other reasons make a "contingency fund" for WMU important, O'Brien said, although "economics is not involved in (the action taken by the WMU)." She said WMU is in a "healthy fiscal situation."

The historic action by the WMU executive board was the culmination of a year's work by the special committee which interviewed numerous Southern Baptist groups and entities. O'Brien credited membership support in prayer, "without question the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" and "a wonderful fellowship (of members) for helping make the needed changes."

"But the lordship of Christ and the desire to be involved in missions prompted us to know these changes would have had to be made anyway" in order to meet the challenges of the day, O'Brien said. Miller likened the action to "customizing our organization to fit needs in every direction, customizing missions education."

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O'Brien allowed that some changes in the organization's structure may be necessary as the process of "fleshing out" the new vision is begun. Some detail as to implementation of the recommendations is expected before the WMU board meeting ends Jan. 13, Miller said.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Baptist Press already has sent the entire Vision Statement, Core Values and Recommendations to state Baptist newspaper editors via E-Mail.

Chapman: SBC needs clarification
from WMU of its new directions By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
1/11/93

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention needs "a clarification" from the Woman's Missionary Union so the SBC can study "the decisions which we now are facing as a convention," Morris H. Chapman said after WMU's executive board voted Jan. 10 to chart an independent course in its missions programs.

Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said he is saddened by the WMU decision, having "expressed hope to the WMU leadership that nothing would change in the organizational relationship between the SBC and the WMU." The SBC-WMU's "traditional auxiliary relationship ... has served us well for 104 years," Chapman noted.

"This action will no doubt raise grave concern in the hearts and minds of most Southern Baptists, including many members of the WMU in our local churches," Chapman said.

John Jackson, a California pastor who chairs trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, voiced a similar reaction, saying WMU's new direction "necessitates a full exploration ... at the Monday (Feb. 8) session of our February board meeting. We will explore interpretations and implications of these adopted parameters and their impact on (the) FMB-WMU relationship."

Also issuing reactions to the WMU vote were Don Kammerdiener, interim FMB president; Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president; and James Williams, Brotherhood President.

Among the points of clarification Chapman posed regarding WMU:

-- "When they accept contributions, will these funds be channeled for SBC missions programs or for their own programs and for programs of other organizations?" Chapman asked, concerning a "recommendation" adopted by the WMU giving it a green light to accept funds "to be used for missions causes."

-- "When the leadership of the WMU says that they will 'promote and facilitate volunteerism,' does this mean they will support volunteers of the SBC home and foreign mission boards? Or will they have their own mission program?" Chapman asked, concerning a recommendation that WMU begin "sponsoring" volunteers.

-- "When they adopt a social project each year, will it be a SBC project or their own project?" Chapman asked, concerning a recommendation that WMU target a "social issue" each year.

Chapman commented: "Historically, the WMU's whole purpose for existence has been to serve as an auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention ... to support SBC programs. When an organization gets a program of its own, it ceases to be an auxiliary. It becomes its own entity and has its own programs."

Don Kammerdiener, interim FMB president, said, "I need time to study (what the WMU voted)," and also said he planned to talk to WMU leaders further during their Jan. 9-13 executive board meeting.

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis said, "I was not present for the meeting and do not know the full details nor the interpretation of the recommendations made by the (WMU) long-range planning committee. I intend to discuss this further with (WMU Executive-Director) Dr. (Dellanna) O'Brien and her staff.

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"I certainly affirm not only the right, but the responsibility of WMU to work with all Southern Baptist churches including those affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship," Lewis said. "However, I question the wisdom of any SBC agency or auxiliary identifying in a supportive way with any schismatic group that has set itself against SBC leaders and agencies or has established competitive agencies.

"I appeal to WMU to service all Southern Baptist churches but continue their historic stance supporting and promoting missions exclusively through the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention," Lewis said.

He said he has not yet heard anything in the recommendations that would exclude the HMB from working with the Woman's Missionary Union on the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, which raised more than \$37.5 million in 1992 to support Southern Baptist home missions.

James Williams, Brotherhood Commission president, said he hopes the men's organization will be able to continue relating to WMU, though the WMU executive board's actions "may introduce new dimensions into our joint deliberations and relationships. We will need to see how these recommendations work themselves out in the churches and denomination before we know how WMU and Brotherhood will work together to involve Southern Baptists in missions."

As to Brotherhood's direction, Williams said, "Without question, the Brotherhood Commission will continue its historic support of Southern Baptist cooperative missions approaches. We will remain in full support of the Foreign Mission Board, the Home Mission Board and other Southern Baptist Convention entities"

Williams, meanwhile, commended WMU leaders "for their willingness to deal with future directions and affirm that our focus will continue to be on encouraging every Southern Baptist believer to be involved in sharing the gospel of Christ with everybody, everywhere."

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Clinton voices thanks
to his home church

By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press
1/11/93

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--In an emotional farewell Jan. 10, Bill Clinton thanked his pastor and members of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock for standing by him during a difficult campaign for president.

The president-elect thanked his pastor, Rex M. Horne Jr., for "standing by me and my membership in this church even when some in our own Southern Baptist Convention questioned his doing so."

Clinton's positions on abortion rights and homosexuals in the military are not shared by many Southern Baptists and prompted protests and counter-protests in front of the church during the campaign.

Clinton said the Baptist belief in freedom of conscience means that religious convictions are respected but none is codified in U.S. law.

However, "that does not mean we should take our values or our principles out of politics," Clinton said. "None of us can or should do that."

He also noted the need for "great humility when bringing moral judgments to others in public life."

Clinton spoke to the congregation on the last Sunday before moving to Washington, D.C., for his Jan. 20 inauguration as president. He has been a member of the church since 1980. His wife, Hillary, is a member of a Little Rock United Methodist church.

Clinton told the congregation that their fellowship sustained him during the difficult campaign and helped prepare him for the presidency.

He thanked the congregation for "making me feel at home here even in the darkest days of my campaign."

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Were it not for the support of fellow church members, he said, "I think it is virtually impossible that I would be going to Washington next week as president ... and I am absolutely certain that I would be less prepared for the job."

Clinton asked the congregation to pray for him. He said the world is "still a very dangerous ... place and our country is mired in deep difficulty."

"With God's help and your prayers, I will do my best," he said.

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Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptists
choose Texan as new leader

Baptist Press
1/11/93

ROCHESTER, Minn. (BP)--A Texas Baptist association's director of missions, William C. "Bill" Tinsley, has been elected as the new executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist Convention.

Tinsley, Denton Baptist Association director of missions since 1986, will succeed Otha Winningham, who will retire April 1 after nearly 18 years with the Minnesota-Wisconsin convention, which now encompasses some 13,850 members in 132 churches and chapels.

Tinsley received a unanimous vote from 23 members of the convention executive board at a Jan. 8 meeting at the state's Baptist headquarters in Rochester. He is scheduled to move to Rochester Feb. 4.

Before working in Denton, Tinsley had been a field consultant and associate coordinator in church extension for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, helping design and implement a "Mission Texas" campaign aimed at starting 2,000 new churches in Texas from 1990-95. Tinsley also supervised nine church extension field consultants.

Larry Creamer, who led the convention search committee's nine-month process, said, "I am convinced beyond any doubt that Dr. Bill Tinsley is the man God has raised up to lead the work of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist Convention. The work of our convention will surely prosper under his leadership." Creamer is pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Fort Atkinson, Wis., and Community Baptist Church in Milton, Wis.

"God has supplied Bill with the abilities and gifts needed and we are blessed by his coming," said Bob Barrett, convention president and lay member of First Baptist Church in Wausau, Wis.

Tinsley, before working with Texas Baptists, was founding pastor of First Baptist Church in The Colony, Texas, which began with seven people in 1976 and grew to an enrollment of 861 in Sunday school and sponsored two missions.

He also has been pastor of churches in Franklin and Mexia, Texas. A native of Corsicana, Texas, he is a graduate of Baylor University and holds master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Tinsley and his wife, Jackie, have three children, Jonathan, 19, Collin, 14, and Allison, 6.

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BookLink ministry adds
3 collection points

By Steve Barber

Baptist Press
1/11/93

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The National Fellowship of Baptist Educators' BookLink ministry, which provides Christian reference and study books for Southern Baptist missionaries and national pastors, has added three more volunteers to its list of shipping directors.

The new volunteers are C.E. Holladay of Clinton, Miss.; John Dent of Walhalla, S.C.; and Olin Williams of Eubanks, Ky.

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"We are asking those donating books to mail via Parcel Post or UPS to the shipping director nearest them, to even out the workload," said B. Hal Buchanan of Tupelo, Miss., who serves as the ministry's executive director.

Buchanan said more volunteers still are needed to help with collection and shipment of materials.

Anyone interested in volunteering or donating books for BookLink may call 1-800-645-4391.

The organization receives requests almost daily from missionaries overseas. The greatest needs are for reference works and study Bibles.

BookLink continues to be one of the National Fellowship of Baptists in Missions' most successful fellowship ministries, according to Bob Salley, NFBM director. The educators' fellowship is one of 14 under the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's NFBM umbrella.

Since its inception four years ago, BookLink has shipped more than 64,525 books, tapes, tracts and other items to five states and 52 countries.

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White named managing editor
of trade books at BSSB

Baptist Press
1/11/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Frank Wm. White, design editor of Facts and Trends and a writer for Baptist Press, has been named managing editor of trade books in the Baptist Sunday School Board's trade publishing division, effective Jan. 15.

In his new role, White will oversee production processes for trade books published by Broadman Press.

Before accepting his new position, White worked two years as design editor for Facts and Trends, a monthly news and information publication produced by the BSSB's communications department. He has been a feature reporter six and a half years in the same office.

White was news editor at The Leaf Chronicle in Clarksville, Tenn., before coming to the BSSB in 1984. He is a veteran of Operation Desert Storm and continues to serve as commander of a public affairs detachment in the U.S. Army Reserve.

He holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and political science from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro and a master's degree in journalism from Indiana University in Bloomington.

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Hardin-Simmons receives
\$2 million from estate

Baptist Press
1/11/93

ABILENE, Texas (BP)--Hardin-Simmons University has received a \$2 million donation, HSU President Lanny Hall announced Jan. 8.

The gift is from the estate of Robert and Elizabeth Bline of Clovis, N.M. Mrs. Bline, the former Elizabeth Board, graduated from Simmons College in 1930 and was active in various campus activities. She died in 1982 while her husband, a businessman and rancher, died in 1992. Both were long-time boosters of the university.

Although there have been larger estate gifts to the university, Hall said, the Blines' is the largest single gift check in HSU history.

The Blines' donation is undesignated, thus its use will be determined by HSU trustees.

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