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**WRAPUP**

**Executive Committee tackles  
WMU, BJC, abortion issues**

**By Art Toalston**

**Baptist Press  
2/24/93**

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee registered concerns for the SBC's future relationship with its Woman's Missionary Union auxiliary during its Feb. 22-24 meeting in Nashville.

The committee also approved an end to a heated dispute with the Baptist Joint Committee for Public Affairs over \$300,000 in SBC funds originally set aside for a Baptist building in Washington.

Additionally approved were a recommendation to the Southern Baptist Convention for the 1993-94 SBC Program Allocation Budget; a new publication, "SBC Life," to replace The Baptist Program; a request to the Annuity Board to divest itself of stocks of corporate contributors to Planned Parenthood; and a study of "the future of theological education in Southern Baptist life."

The Executive Committee voiced "deep concern" in a resolution addressing changes approved by WMU's executive board in January to broaden the auxiliary's scope of work with other Baptist groups and Christian bodies, such as producing missions education materials "at their request."

While giving high praise to WMU's longstanding promotion of SBC missions offerings, its prayer efforts for missionaries and its missions education programs, the Executive Committee resolution called on WMU to "make clear its singular cooperation" with the SBC and its Foreign and Home Mission boards.

Responding to questions from an Executive Committee member, national WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien said WMU is not planning to promote other mission offerings, such as one initiated by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a two-year-old organization of Baptist moderates, nor will WMU become a missionary-sending organization.

"We appreciate the affirmation expressed by the SBC Executive Committee for WMU," O'Brien said after the meeting. "The WMU executive board next meets in June in conjunction with the WMU annual meeting and the Southern Baptist Convention. This would be the earliest time this resolution could be considered by our board."

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In a split vote over an agreement hammered out between Executive Committee and Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs officials and legal counsel, the Executive Committee agreed to give the BJC \$100,000 from its operating reserve -- \$25,000 each of the next four years -- to settle a dispute over a \$300,000 fund established in 1966 for a Baptist building in Washington.

The agreement calls for both sides to "put to rest" the issue, which arose in 1991 when the BJC claimed the \$300,000 and SBC messengers in 1992 in Indianapolis instead approved control of the fund by the Executive Committee.

A number of Executive Committee members opposed the agreement on the grounds it was a reaction to a threatened lawsuit by the BJC -- and that it's "flatly wrong" to submit to threats, as one member put it. Both sides cited biblical passages in debating the proposed agreement before it was approved by a 2-1 or wider margin in a show of hands.

A 1993-94 SBC Program Allocation Budget of \$138,234,735 was approved for recommendation to the SBC annual meeting June 15-17 in Houston. The Executive Committee's recommendation follows its 1989 decision to recommend a basic budget no larger than receipts of the last fiscal year of record, which in this case was 1991-92.

The recommendation is \$1,965,660 less than this year's budget, or a 1.4 percent decrease.

Also approved was the 1991-92 audit of the Executive Committee. In the report of the 1991-92 SBC Operating Budget administered by the Executive Committee, net revenues over expenditures for the fiscal year totaled \$252,451, compared to \$287,373 in 1990-91. That leaves the operating budget fund reserve with a balance of \$568,397 as of Sept. 30, 1992.

With "SBC Life," a full-color, newspaper-like publication, The Baptist Program -- published by the Executive Committee since 1925 -- will be phased out after its September edition. SBC Life will be launched with a special edition for the SBC annual meeting in Houston, then begin regular publication in October. Like The Baptist Program, SBC Life will be published 10 times a year.

SBC Life's editor will be Mark Coppenger, Executive Committee vice president for convention relations.

"While The Baptist Program was designed primarily for ministers and other denominational professionals," Coppenger told Baptist Press, "SBC Life should be engaging to laypersons as well. There's so much Christian vitality in the Southern Baptist Convention that the parade of pictures and information should be exhilarating."

After unanimously approving the new publication, Executive Committee members voted to decline action on a motion referred from the SBC's 1992 meeting to publish a monthly edition of Baptist Press.

Stepping into the abortion issue, the Executive Committee voted to request the Annuity Board "identify any company in its portfolio that is contributing to Planned Parenthood or any other provider or advocate of legal abortion" and "begin a process of divesting itself" of those stocks.

J.C. Mitchell, a Winter Park, Fla., pastor and an advocate of the divesting, said in an interview information available from pro-life research arms indicates the Annuity Board may have investments in various companies that contribute to Planned Parenthood.

Mitchell cited news accounts that Planned Parenthood receives \$7 million annually from corporate contributors.

In brief debate of the proposal, Executive Committee member William Hall of San Clemente, Calif., advocated stockholder actions as more effective in spurring companies to discontinue Planned Parenthood contributions. Selling such stocks, he said, "seems like a bite without any teeth."

The divesting request to the Annuity Board, however, passed with only minimal opposition.

Responding in behalf of the Annuity Board, Thomas E. Miller Jr., senior vice president for public relations, told Baptist Press the matter would be presented to the agency's trustees.

The Annuity Board currently is following through on a trustee-initiated Kmart shareholder action to instruct the company to eliminate from its Waldenbooks subsidiary publications "largely devoted to the description of sexual encounters or that has a graphic depiction of exploitative sex and/or gratuitous violence."

Joining efforts to urge President Bill Clinton to end U.S. diplomatic relations with the Vatican, the Executive Committee passed a resolution stating such ties are "clearly a violation" of the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment prohibition against laws favoring one religion over another.

On Feb. 15, the SBC Christian Life Commission, the National Association of Evangelicals and three other denominations sent a formal letter to Clinton urging him to rescind diplomatic relations and exchange of ambassadors President Reagan established with the Vatican in 1984.

In approving an in-depth study of the future of theological education in the SBC, the Executive Committee authorized chairman David Hankins, a Lake Charles, La., pastor, to appoint a study committee in consultation with the SBC's Education Commission and six seminaries.

Such a study is needed, said Guy Sanders, program and budget subcommittee chairman and a Lake Wales, Fla., pastor, because questions abound which no other SBC entity is assigned to address. Matters needing attention, he said, include the relationship between the SBC's six seminaries and state Baptist colleges, especially those with theology programs; whether and where new SBC seminaries might be needed; the range of degree programs offered; and various funding questions.

The Executive Committee also approved a revision of the seminaries' SBC program statement to include baccalaureate programs. The revision, requested by the seminaries' presidents, reflects adjustment to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's new baccalaureate program, started last fall.

In other business, the Executive Committee:

- set a \$38,000 fee to the Pastors' Conference for costs related to the yearly pre-SBC meeting. The fee, based on an analysis of costs the past five years, will be charged through 1995 and reviewed by the Executive Committee in 1995.

- approved the hiring of C. Barry McCarty, president of Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary, to again serve as parliamentarian of this year's SBC meeting in Houston.

- gave full representation for the Nevada Baptist Convention on SBC entities, with the convention having reached the necessary SBC Bylaw 25,000-member mark, and expanded representation for the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention, entailing trustees on the Foreign and Home Mission boards and the Sunday School Board, with the convention having reached the necessary 20,000-member mark.

- declined action on a motion from the 1992 SBC annual meeting to change the annual meeting from the current Tuesday-through-Thursday to a Monday-through-Wednesday schedule.

- authorized continued study of a registration fee at SBC annual meetings.

- approved a 3 percent raise for Executive Committee staff members, effective Oct. 1.

- approved a recommendation to the SBC of a more detailed description of financial information to be made available by SBC agencies to members of cooperating Southern Baptist churches. The proposed policy in the convention's business and financial plan would provide access to information from "records of SBC entities regarding income, expenditures, debts, reserves, operating balances and salary structures." The proposal would replace a policy which reads, "... the books of all convention agencies shall be open for inspection ... ."

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-- approved a change in the way gifts are recorded at the SBC level, with the Executive Committee to accept funds and designate them as "Cooperative Program" gifts if designated as such from state conventions. Gifts received directly from churches or individuals for distribution only to SBC entities will be reported as "Cooperative -- SBC Causes." The latter category will be added to reports presented by the Executive Committee, and the SBC basic budget title will be changed from "SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget" to "SBC Program Allocation Budget." The recommendation makes clear that any designations or restrictions by donors to causes recognized by the SBC Program Allocation Budget "will be strictly honored."

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Herb Hollinger contributed to this report.

Executive Committee resolution  
states praise, concern for WMU By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
2/24/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Praise and concern for Woman's Missionary Union marked a resolution adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee Feb. 23.

The Executive Committee, in one of the resolution's 12 clauses, voiced "deep concern for the Woman's Missionary Union and its future relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention even as we affirm the long-established role of the Woman's Missionary Union and honor its unique and abiding contributions to this denomination and its missionary cause."

The Executive Committee termed as "historically significant" changes adopted by WMU's executive board Jan. 10 to broaden its work beyond SBC entities.

But the Executive Committee asked WMU's executive board "to make clear its singular cooperation with the Convention and its mission boards and its undivided commitment to the Cooperative Program (financial channel of SBC missions support), the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions."

The Executive Committee adopted the resolution with only a few dissenting votes among its members.

The Jan. 10 actions by WMU's executive board included plans to "produce resources" and provide prayer support for Baptist groups such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of moderates opposed to the SBC's conservative direction and for other Christian groups, "at their request." The board also affirmed its openness to receiving "contributions to be used for WMU and related missions needs" and approved plans to "promote and facilitate effective volunteerism."

"We appreciate the affirmation expressed by the SBC Executive Committee," WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien said in a written statement after the Executive Committee meeting in Nashville.

"There are several areas of the resolution which are ambiguous and we will seek further clarification," she said, though not identifying specific areas of concern.

"The WMU executive board next meets in June in conjunction with the WMU annual meeting and the Southern Baptist Convention," O'Brien continued. "This would be the earliest time this resolution could be considered by our board."

If WMU does not answer concerns voiced in the resolution, James Morton, a pastor from Grass Valley, Calif., asked fellow Executive Committee members, "Where does that leave us?"

Guy Sanders, chairman of the Executive Committee's program and budget subcommittee, answered the resolution is like any other resolution: "We're expressing ourselves on an issue. We're not codifying anything here." Sanders, a Lake Wales, Fla., pastor, added the resolution simply states "where we are in the present and where we would like to be in the future" in the SBC's relationship with WMU.

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Morton then commented the resolution contains "very direct" words, such as its call for "singular" cooperation by WMU with the SBC and its Foreign and Home Mission boards.

Morton asked whether WMU, in voting to offer its missions education materials in non-SBC markets as part of its new initiatives, is doing anything different than the Sunday School Board does with many of its products.

"Are we overreacting to something?" Morton asked. He said he did not feel WMU is making any "earth-shaking changes," though he acknowledged others would disagree.

"It appears to me it would be wise not to do this," Morton said, referring to the proposed resolution.

Earlier in the brief discussion, another Executive Committee member, Ronald Huffman, a pastor from Middletown, R.I., recounted O'Brien's responses to questions during the program and budget subcommittee's meeting that day, that WMU will not be promoting the missions offering of Baptist moderates' Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and that WMU will not become a missionary-sending organization.

To him, Huffman said, O'Brien's responses "made the resolution ... not needed."

No other Executive Committee members, however, voiced caution over the resolution.

Among other expressions of concern by the Executive Committee in its resolution addressing WMU's new directions:

-- " ... our urgent concern that the exclusive relationship of 105 years which has been so wondrously blessed by God be protected by mutual trust and loyalty."

-- " ... our eager and glad-hearted intention to work with the Woman's Missionary Union, to respect and honor its effective and praiseworthy work, and to affirm its status as auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, so long as the Woman's Missionary Union pledges its faithful and solitary support of the mission offerings and mission programs of the Southern Baptist Convention and its mission boards."

Among the Executive Committee's words of praise for WMU:

-- It "has led by precept and example in sacrificial support of the missionary cause;" it has promoted and supported the SBC's missions offerings and provided "continual prayer support of Southern Baptist missionaries" and "effective teaching and training of women and children for the cause of missions."

-- " ... those offerings have produced millions of dollars in vital support for Southern Baptist missions and those prayers have sustained dedicated missionaries throughout the world."

The Executive Committee, in its resolution, added it will "prayerfully support each agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, each state convention, each state fellowship, and each local church as they decide their response to the changes announced by Woman's Missionary Union."

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Executive Committee approves  
settlement of disputed fund

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press  
2/24/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--At least one element in more than a decade of strife between the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Southern Baptist Convention apparently will end with the SBC Executive Committee's approval of a settlement for a \$300,000 fund claimed by both.

The Executive Committee, following a lengthy debate Feb. 23, voted to approve the settlement and from operating reserves give the BJC \$25,000 a year for four years. The agreement's wording indicates the BJC's executive board had approved the settlement but the terms also note the BJC's executive committee must approve it. That committee meets March 1 in Washington.

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Also, both sides are to make "good faith" efforts to refrain from "impugning the motives and integrity of the other party ... over the facts and circumstances surrounding this controversy ... (and) to see that the dispute is put to rest."

A BJC spokesman contacted by Baptist Press early Feb. 24 said it was his understanding the BJC had tentatively approved the settlement. A statement was expected to be released later in the day.

At the core of the dispute is a \$300,000 allocation, established by the SBC in 1964 and funded in 1966, which has been on deposit with the Southern Baptist Foundation. Documentation as to the original ownership of the fund is somewhat murky but apparently it was set up to purchase a building in the nation's capital to be used by a Baptist public affairs committee.

Interest on the fund was sent to the BJC on a regular basis until a dispute between BJC leadership and SBC leadership erupted in the 1980s. Last year at the SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis, messengers approved a motion severing all ties with the BJC, ending a 50-year relationship with the Washington-based religious liberty organization of 10 Baptist bodies.

In 1991, the SBC stopped all contributions to the BJC which at one time accounted for more than 50 percent of the BJC's budget. In 1992 messengers turned down a proposal for binding arbitration in the \$300,000 dispute and gave the Executive Committee authorization to allocate the money for SBC causes.

Following the 1992 votes in Indianapolis, BJC General Counsel Oliver S. Thomas said he would recommend his board file suit in Washington against the SBC.

It was the threat of a lawsuit which prompted considerable criticism of the settlement during the discussion at the Executive Committee meeting.

"(It's) flatly wrong ... to submit to threats," T.C. Pinckney of Alexandria, Va., told the committee in urging defeat of the settlement proposal. "I have serious problems with it."

Several committee members said regardless of the threat of a lawsuit the committee should do "what is right" and not agree to a settlement which seems to "buy off the threat." Biblical passages were used by both those favoring a settlement and those opposed.

In opposition to the proposal, William Parker of Lake Mary, Fla., referred to the possibility the suit would be filed in Washington, the home of the BJC, and said it shouldn't make any difference because "God is in the courtrooms in D.C." and God would vindicate those who were right.

But the proposal had the backing of a number of attorneys on the Executive Committee, including Joe H. Reynolds of Houston and David T. Gray of Radcliff, Ky., who cited the enormous costs of litigation with no assurance of winning in a civil courtroom.

It also was apparent the proposal had the backing of the committee's top officers, Morris H. Chapman, president, and David E. Hankins, a Lake Charles, La., pastor and committee chairman. It was Chapman and SBC legal counsel James P. Guenther who helped hammer out the agreement over several months with BJC officials.

In a hand vote of the 78-member committee, Hankins ruled the settlement proposal passed. He told Baptist Press following the meeting that it was about a 2-1 "or better" majority for the agreement although the count totals were not made public.

The agreement says both parties agree the settlement does not represent a division of the fund in dispute but rather acknowledges the fund is the "sole property of the SBC." In the agreement's six sections, it bars the BJC from any further claim to the funds as well as any future litigation in the matter.

The SBC will make the \$25,000 payments on April 1 each year through 1996. A proposal to take the \$100,000 from SBC operating reserves passed, but an amendment by Gibbie McMillan of Baton Rouge, La., which would have allocated the \$300,000 to the SBC Christian Life Commission, failed. A recommendation for the allocation of the \$300,000 will come at the committee's meeting in Houston prior to the annual meeting of the SBC, June 15-17.

The Christian Life Commission claimed the \$300,000 fund because the commission was given the SBC responsibility for religious liberty issues when the SBC severed ties with the BJC. CLC trustees and the old public affairs committee of the SBC had merged, which, the CLC said, gave it additional claim to the 1964 allocation.

Since a building was never purchased in Washington, the money has been in trust at the Southern Baptist Foundation office in Nashville. However, the interest on the money, amounting to more than \$600,000, was sent on a regular basis to the BJC until the payments were stopped as of June 30, 1992.

In the summer of 1991 the BJC located property and asked the foundation for the funds. The request was refused and the foundation turned to the Executive Committee for direction in what to do with the money. The Executive Committee established a study committee which determined the money still belonged to the SBC, despite the BJC claim.

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BJC executive committee  
affirms fund settlement

Baptist Press  
2/24/93

WASHINGTON (BP)--The executive committee of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has voted to accept a \$100,000 settlement in a dispute with the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

BJC officials on Feb. 24 furnished Baptist Press with a copy of a Feb. 16 letter from BJC legal counsel Oliver S. Thomas to SBC legal counsel James P. Guenther which confirms the BJC acceptance.

"We have polled the members of our Executive Committee, and they are willing to accept a cash payment in the amount of \$100,000 to settle the dispute," Thomas wrote Guenther. The letter, however, makes it clear the BJC continues to believe the \$300,000 in an account with the Southern Baptist Foundation, is owned by the BJC.

"This is not an easy decision for the BJC," Thomas said. "We feel entitled to the entire \$300,000 corpus and are reluctant to accept any compromise settlement. Yet, we are grateful for the support we have received in the past from the SBC and, like you, wish to avoid a lawsuit if possible.

"We also look forward to the day the SBC might again wish to participate in the work of the Baptist Joint Committee," Thomas told Guenther.

The SBC Executive Committee voted Feb. 23 in Nashville to accept the settlement and to give \$25,000 annually from operating budget reserves, beginning April 1, 1993, to the BJC for four years.

The BJC executive committee meets again March 1 in Washington, a spokesman said. The committee is expected to officially ratify the settlement at that meeting.

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Baptists caught in  
Rwanda civil war

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press  
2/24/93

KIGALI, Rwanda (BP)--Baptists are among those fleeing before a rebel army advancing toward the Rwandan capital of Kigali in central Africa.

American citizens, including 12 Southern Baptist missionaries and workers, have been advised by the United States Embassy to remain near their homes and in phone contact with the embassy in case it becomes necessary to evacuate.

"All Southern Baptist personnel are reported to be safe and not in immediate danger," said missionary Larry Randolph.

The same cannot be said of Rwandan Baptists.

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In mid-February, after a week of heavy artillery fire on the town of Ruhengeri, about 80 soldiers from the rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front forced their way into pastor Nkamiyahanzi Philipo's home, threatening to kill him and his family. While the soldiers looted his home and the nearby church, the family slipped out and hid in nearby banana fields.

With only the clothes they were wearing, the family walked 35 miles to the town of Gisenyi. They were taken in by the Baptist pastor there, but Gisenyi also was expected to come under attack any day.

"We hear gunfire every day and wonder if it is directed at anyone we know," missionary Diane Randolph said. "We don't know about many of our Christian friends, if they are homeless or perhaps even dead. Please pray for peace for Rwanda."

The Rwandan civil war exploded in October 1990 when rebel troops, mostly second- and third-generation refugees, invaded from Uganda. Since then President Juvenal Habyarimana has steered the country toward multi-party democracy but numerous peace talks and cease-fires have collapsed.

Both sides have been accused of massacres and atrocities. The country is home to two ethnic groups with a centuries-old history of animosity, the majority Hutu (Habyarimana's tribe) and the Tutsi, represented by the Rwanda Patriotic Front.

A French government official in Paris said Feb. 21 his government believes the front "has the capability to capture Kigali, but we don't know if it wants to do so." France has sent 300 troops to Rwanda to protect its 400 citizens there.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Rwanda include the Randolphins, of Oakman, Ala., and Dallas, respectively; Stan and Marlene Lee, of Greenville, S.C.; Katrina Knox of Columbia, Tenn.; Martha Colwell of Athens, Ga.; and David and Janet Hooten of Knoxville, Tenn.

International Service Corps workers are Marvin and Anice Ogle of Greeneville, Tenn.; Nancy Delger of Bozeman, Mont.; and Carole Ann Cook of Waco, Texas.

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State editors hear report  
criticizing Baptist Press

Baptist Press  
2/24/93

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (BP)--Southern Baptist state paper editors approved "for information only" a report by a three-member committee which alleged a lack of balance, quality and credibility from the Southern Baptist Convention news service, Baptist Press, during their annual meeting in Scottsdale, Ariz., Feb. 16-18.

The Southern Baptist Press Association, the national organization for state Baptist newspapers, also elected Jack Brymer, Florida Baptist Witness editor, for a second term as president and hired a part-time executive director.

The 27 editors, associates and Baptist Press bureau chiefs conducted other business, heard reports from several committees and met twice with state executive directors who were simultaneously holding their annual meeting in Scottsdale.

A report from the Baptist Press Liaison Committee, a three-member committee appointed by the press association's president which makes a yearly report to the association, prompted tense discussion and debate during the meeting.

Findings of the committee were reported by its chairman, North Carolina Biblical Recorder Editor R. Gene Puckett. Other committee members were Marv Knox, editor of Kentucky's Western Recorder, and Guy Henderson, editor of Mississippi's Baptist Record.

Herb Hollinger, SBC vice president for Baptist Press, questioned the objectivity of the committee -- Puckett is chairman of the independent news service, Associated Baptist Press, and Knox is a director -- but agreed to consider the report.

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Brymer apologized for having urged Puckett to continue as chairman in what a number of editors expressed was a conflict of interest. Puckett had offered to resign from the committee when he was elected to the ABP post last fall. Knox also told the editors he had reservations about serving on the committee, not so much for his tie to ABP as for the position of critiquing the news organization where he previously worked. Knox had been news and feature editor for BP prior to moving to Kentucky.

Puckett defended the committee's report which he said avoided a comparison between Baptist Press and ABP in order to prevent the appearance of bias. However, Louis Moore, representing Baptist Press's bureau at the Christian Life Commission office in Washington, compared the analysis of BP by ABP directors to having United Press International staff critique their competitor, Associated Press.

Arizona Baptist Beacon Editor Elizabeth Young said some of the criticism of BP was valid but she had "a problem with the majority of the committee serving on the board of ABP."

After delaying discussion of the report twice in order for Hollinger and BP bureau chiefs to review it, the editors group eventually agreed to receive "the report and dialogue concerning BP as information," urging "continued dialogue and openness between BP and the Southern Baptist Press Association."

In a separate motion, officers were instructed to study changing the name of the BP Liaison Committee to allow study of other news services, such as Religious News Service, Evangelical Press, Associated Baptist Press, Zondervan and others.

Hollinger, Moore, Bob Stanley, bureau chief for the Foreign Mission Board, and Linda Lawson, acting bureau chief at the Baptist Sunday School Board, expressed a desire for editors to call them when they are dissatisfied with the quality of news coverage.

Virginia Religious Herald Editor Michael Clingenpeel said, "I would hope the principals involved will get together to discuss concerns face to face."

Missouri Word and Way Editor Bob Terry expressed concern editors who are cooperative with or supportive of ABP are presumed to be adversarial toward BP.

Young said she was not "choosing sides" in questioning the report's credibility. "My biggest complaint is that we've shot at BP and we all could give some instruction to ABP, too."

Responding to the report, Hollinger described the actions requested in the report as unique in his 16 years of association in the SBPA. He formerly edited state Baptist newspapers in California and the Northwest.

He recalled the reaction of former SBC public relations director W.C. Fields, who directed BP at the time, when he complained about some news coverage. "Basically, he told me if your don't like it, don't run it," Hollinger said.

Hollinger reminded editors that control of the news "has always been in the hands of the state editors" but the recommendations in the report "border on punishment" of BP.

Responding to criticism that BP had moved an excessive number of CLC stories, Moore apologized for having gotten the idea that "a good journalist turns out lots of stories."

"I would rather bury you with all kinds of stories than have you accuse me of covering up," Moore told the editors. Moore also said he was "tired of being abused" by sources who refuse to cooperate with the CLC when writers attempt to obtain comments when called. Referring to the difficulty of getting Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs staff to comment when called, Moore quoted BP writer Tom Strode of the Washington office as saying, "We call them more than they call us."

While questioning whether "every letter Richard Land writes deserves a news story," Texas Baptist Standard Associate Editor Toby Druin said the discretion over whether to include the releases belongs to BP, not Moore. When he complained to Moore about the volume of stories from the CLC, Druin said he recalled telling Moore, "It was his responsibility to do his job and mine to do mine" in selecting which articles to publish.

Terry said the 28 percent increase in the number of articles released by BP last year "confirms the perception that the gates are opened a lot wider."

Hollinger disagreed, citing the increase as originating primarily from the BP's central office in Nashville, particularly under the encouragement of his associate, Art Toalston, who "wanted to provide you with something from Baptist Press that you could be proud of." Hollinger also discounted a perception voiced at the meeting that BP never turns down a story offered by the bureaus.

Terry said he was seeing a type of story in BP that he had not seen in previous years, "stories that are marginal and stories that seem to convey a political overtone."

Clingenpeel agreed some stories "appeared manufactured." He said the newfound accessibility to BP through computer linkup has caused pastors and laity to notice when he chooses not to use some articles. "They don't understand the size of my news hole and come with complaints about stifling because we didn't carry a particular story."

Responding to the accusation of putting a spin on stories to make bad situations look good, Hollinger shouted, "I have never done that and I never will do that."

Accused of incorporating state paper editorials into news articles, Hollinger asked why editorials were off limits. "If one of you writes an editorial that is significant national news, I hope we're not in a position that we can't use it."

Terry said, however, he objected to singling out some editorials for articles, while ignoring others.

Mark Wyatt, California Southern Baptist editor, questioned whether such directions had been given to BP by the liaison committee in the past. He encouraged individual editors to express their concerns and make their own determinations as to which stories they will use in their publications.

Presnall Wood, Texas Baptist Standard editor, also expressed concern that the SBPA not direct Baptist Press, preferring to receive the report as information while increasing efforts at communication between editors and BP.

Gary Ledbetter, editor of the Indiana Baptist, asked if receiving the report was regarded as having the endorsement of the editors. Brymer said the "document is not invalidated nor validated" by the action of the editors, but received only as information.

In other business by the association, Brymer was elected to a second one-year term when the president-elect, John Hopkins, retired editor of the Baptist Digest of Kansas/Nebraska, did not elect to serve. Elected president-elect was Jim Watters, editor of the Northwest Baptist Witness while Bob Terry, was elected secretary/treasurer.

Lynn Davis, former Ohio state paper editor and recent retiree from the Baptist Sunday School Board, was elected executive director of the association, the first employee in the association's history. Davis lives in Brentwood, Tenn.

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Tammi Ledbetter, Indiana Baptist managing editor, was lead writer for this story, with BP staff contributing to the report.

RTVC officials outline  
staff restructuring

Baptist Press  
2/24/93

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission outlined the restructuring of its staff Feb. 19 in a meeting with Baptist editors in Fort Worth, Texas.

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RTVC President Jack Johnson said the move would result in elimination of several positions and reassignment of others. Johnson said the moves came as a result of the changes made in transmission of ACTS programming in October. ACTS (American Christian Television System) entered into an agreement with VGI, a Denver, Colo.,-based cable industry corporation, to provide eight hours of programming on the "Faith and Values Channel." Also on the channel 16 hours daily is the Vision Interfaith Network (VISN).

Johnson reminded the group the ACTS move not only doubled the potential viewing audience but also made possible a reallocation of human and financial resources to much-needed priorities.

Johnson named those priorities as services to churches and convention agencies, audience building, refurbishing of facilities and replacement of obsolete equipment.

He said the restructuring will change the nature of the network operations division, with it focusing on programming and developing ACTS, the commission's cable network, and FamilyNet, a program service aimed at broadcast television stations. Administration, programming and traffic will be directed by Vice President Michael Wright.

The support services function is being assigned to the business services division headed by Jerry Stamps, vice president for business services. The division will include accounting, information services, computer network, insurance, mail service and the physical plant. Charles Roden, former director of support services, has taken early retirement.

The external relations division under Vice President Doug Dillard will be expanded to include marketing, consulting services, institutional advancement and the TimeRite advertising agency in addition to public relations, counseling services, direct mail, graphics and printing. The former development department was closed.

A total of eight job assignments were eliminated in the restructuring, according to Richard T. McCartney, RTVC executive vice president. A deferred compensation plan based on length of service enabled long-term employees in the eliminated positions to continue to receive their base salaries from three to 12 months after separation. "The result will be a small reduction in personnel costs in the current budget and an approximate \$250,000 savings in 1993-94," McCartney said.

McCartney said a number of people were reassigned to other areas of responsibility. He said the changes would result in a better concentration of personnel and resources to fulfill the RTVC's mission.

He said funds which previously had been used in satellite and transmission expenses could be reallocated to production of new programs. Also, he said the commission will launch a renewed emphasis on consulting services to churches and an International Conference on Communications Ministries (ICCM) scheduled for the Arlington (Texas) Convention Center, June 28-July 1. This program of helps for churches had suffered in recent years as funds were used to support the launch and operation of ACTS.

Other factors which affect future uses of budget funds, according to McCartney, include:

- growing opportunities to broadcast Southern Baptist television and radio programs in Russia and other parts of the world.
- deterioration of the commission's communication center buildings, requiring as much as \$500,000 to address. He said the buildings, 20 and 30 years old, need repairs to roofs, exterior walls, heating and air conditioning, and removal of asbestos from its office wings.
- need to replace worn and outdated TV and radio production equipment and refurbish studios.
- the requirement to fund more than \$300,000 to produce specials for national networks. These programs had been funded by the networks in prior years.

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ACTS' move to the Faith and Values Channel and this leaner, more efficient organization, Johnson said, "should enable us to make missions and evangelism the high priority we know Southern Baptists want them to be."

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Written by RTVC staff.

1992 VBS enrollment  
reaches record high

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press  
2/24/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Enrollment in Vacation Bible Schools and backyard Bible clubs reached a record high in 1992, surpassing the 3.7 million mark.

According to statistics compiled by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, 3,709,174 children, youth and adults were enrolled last year, surpassing the previous year's total by almost 90,000.

Almost 76 percent of Southern Baptist churches (29,482) reported having VBS in 1992. In addition, 1,712 mission Vacation Bible Schools and 3,508 backyard Bible clubs were reported.

"VBS continues to be a bright spot for us," Harry Piland, director of the board's church growth-Sunday school division, said. "It remains a viable force for evangelism, Bible study and missions."

Two other categories showing gains over the previous year were the number of people enrolled in Sunday school through VBS, 66,273, and the number of people making commitments to a church-related vocation, 2,005.

Professions of faith (65,621) and total prospects discovered (499,053), however, were both below 1991 totals.

The 1992 figures also showed 91 percent of Vacation Bible Schools are five-day schools, 62 percent are conducted in June and 54 percent are held in the evening.

Training already is under way to prepare leaders for 1993 Vacation Bible Schools. The theme for this year's schools, based on Matthew 5:14-16, is "Summershine."

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Criswell shares perspectives  
from 65 years of ministry

By Trennis Henderson

Baptist Press  
2/24/93

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--"If I had my life to live over again, I would change the order of my priorities," declared W.A. Criswell, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas.

"All through the years of my life, my priorities were first God, second the church, third my family. If I had my life to live over again, I'd make it God, I'd make it my family and then I'd make it my church. I think I made a mistake in that."

That perspective was among dozens of insights Criswell shared with about 35 central Arkansas pastors during a recent conference at First Baptist Church in Little Rock. The Feb. 8 meeting was coordinated by Frank Gantz, pastor of West Rock Baptist Church, and hosted by First Baptist pastor Bill Elliff.

Sharing candidly about "the things I have learned in the 65 years I have been a pastor," Criswell addressed topics ranging from funeral services to premillennialism. The 83-year-old minister, who also is chancellor of Criswell College, was accompanied by Criswell College President Richard Melick, who shared promotional information about the college.

Describing Criswell as a "living legend," Melick said the Little Rock meeting was the first of several such gatherings across the nation. He said Criswell's presence and perspectives were being shared as "a gift from the college to American Christianity."

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Discussing practical aspects of the pastorate, Criswell remarked, "In my humble persuasion, the study, the library of the pastor ought to be at his home. When you get up in the morning, go to the study and stay there; every morning keep that sacred for you and for God."

Encouraging pastors to study each morning, work for the church each afternoon and be available for meetings each evening, Criswell said, "When you stand up in the pulpit the following Sunday, they'll know what you have been doing -- studying God's Word, listening to the voice the Lord and preparing that message."

Discussing preaching styles, church priorities and premillennialism, Criswell repeatedly contrasted himself with George W. Truett, his predecessor at First Baptist in Dallas. Criswell, who has served at Dallas 48 years, followed Truett, who served there 46 years.

"It is a wonderful thing if a preacher will always preach through the books of the Bible," Criswell said. "My great predecessor in Dallas, Dr. George W. Truett, was a topical preacher. I don't think Dr. Truett ever preached any other kind of a sermon than a topical sermon."

Criswell said he began preaching expository sermons early in his ministry "and have been doing that ever since. I started at Genesis 1:1 and for 18 years, I preached through the Bible." Since that time, he said, he has always been preaching through a book of the Bible.

Crediting much of the Dallas congregation's growth over the years to his focus on expository preaching, Criswell added, "Any time you devote your life to expounding the Word of God, the Lord will bless you and he will bless your people."

Concerning local church priorities, Criswell said Truett's idea of a church "was a place to preach and that was it. It was a pulpit."

By contrast, Criswell continued, "My idea of a church has been in an altogether different category. It is that a church ought to encompass the entire life of the family -- mind, soul and body."

Criswell said he accomplished that through an emphasis on Sunday school which eventually grew to more than 8,000 people in attendance. A Christian academy and a strong recreational program also contributed to that philosophy.

Criswell said worship services "ought to magnify the preaching of the gospel." Referring again to his predecessor, he noted, "That's what Truett did -- he magnified the preaching."

He said an effective music program and physical comfort in the services also are important considerations. "Nothing ought ever to be in that church that makes them feel uncomfortable," he said.

Emphasizing the importance of pointing toward an invitation as an opportunity to respond to God, Criswell added, "Dare to change the approach. Don't be married to any kind of method or procedure of any day that is past."

As an example, he noted, "When I began preaching 65 years ago, revival was the entire life of the church ... . Everybody came to the revivals, infidels and all, and most of us got religion." In recent years, however, "the church will just sit down and wait for the revival meeting to be over."

"Instead of fighting a program that will not succeed, what I need to do is change the approach and that's what I have done," Criswell said. "I don't even propose to have a revival in the church in Dallas. It doesn't work so we do it some other way. In order to get these people to God, we make every service a revival service 52 Sundays a year."

Criswell said he became "convicted and convinced of the truth" of premillennialism, due in part to Revelation 1:19 which he described as the outline of the New Testament book.

"The Bible is a book of confusion if you are not a premillennialist," Criswell declared. "To me and anyone who accepts premillennial interpretation, the Bible is a plain and simple outline of what we are experiencing today and what we're going to experience tomorrow."

Among other topics Criswell addressed were:

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-- Radio and television: "You will never be able to send out enough missionaries to preach to the whole world. It is neither feasible nor possible. ... Yet the Book says this gospel shall be preached to the whole world, then shall the end come. My answer to that prophecy is the invention of radio and television. That's God's way of the gospel being preached to the whole world."

-- Missions support: "The Cooperative Program was born in my lifetime. It is surely one of the finest instruments God has ever given our people. But if you want to support a missionary in Brazil, wonderful; designate it. ... Don't hesitate to encourage people to designate in the church."

-- Deacons: "God ordained the preacher to be the head of the church. Any time you have a deacon-led church, you have a weak and weakening congregation. ... I love the deacons but God never intended the deacons to lead the church."

-- Counseling: "World without end do preachers fall into tragedy in counseling. Women will love to tell you the intimacies of their lives. Don't ever allow it. ... Ninety-nine percent of all the problems anyone ever faces can be solved if you will get right with God. That will solve it."

-- Bivocational pastorates: "I praise God for the bivocational pastor, but insofar as he is able, he ought to build the church so that the church supports him. A bivocational pastorate is a ministry of necessity."

-- Funeral services: "Make it personal," Criswell urged. "A funeral service gives you a marvelous opportunity to bring the comforting message of Jesus" and "one of the greatest opportunities in the world to proclaim the gospel."

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English comes in handy  
on African borders

By Craig Bird

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TUNDUMA, Tanzania (BP)--In a border town, sometimes you have to change things besides countries -- like languages.

Southern Baptist missionary Jon Lord recently arrived at Tunduma Baptist Church on the Tanzania-Zambia border to preach and show the popular "Jesus" film outdoors. Following an afternoon church service, he visited door to door with the local pastor until 4 p.m., then preached to 300 students at the primary school.

By the time dusk approached, the tired missionary from West Monroe, La., was ready to show the film, get the day over with and go home. As he waited for the last rays of the African sun to fade across the border, a crowd began to gather around the screen he had erected.

A young man approached as Lord leaned wearily against the car and asked in English, "What is the cinema?" Lord answered in Swahili, "Maisha ya Yesu" (the life of Jesus). The young man's eyes lit up as he exclaimed, "Oh, Michael Jackson!"

"I was too tired at the time to think that was funny," Lord said later. "But I began a polite explanation about the film," based on the Gospel of Luke. The young man quickly stopped the missionary and explained, "I am a Zambian and do not hear (understand) Swahili. Could you tell me about Jesus in English?"

"After preaching and witnessing all day in Swahili it was actually a little hard to shift back to the ol' mother tongue," Lord admitted. "But without even warning him about my Louisiana accent I began to share Jesus."

It was almost dark -- time to start the movie -- so Lord, fearful the Zambian would melt into the crowd, asked, "Is there any reason why you cannot accept Christ right now?" The reply: "Today, I have become a Christian."

Not long afterward Lord got a letter. It said: "Thank you for the Bible which you gave me. Please Jon, keep on living for God and teaching the Good News of Jesus. I will not stop following Jesus. I was a sinner, but now have asked Jesus to come into my heart. You are the one who let me know about Jesus Christ." It was signed by the young Zambian, Boniface Mwakalosi.

"That letter," Lord said, "reminded me of the thousands of Southern Baptists who give and pray so I could be in that border town full of police and thieves, customs officials and smugglers, truck drivers and money changers -- and a Zambian who thought he was going to watch Michael Jackson and instead met Jesus Christ."

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