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March 22, 1993

93-51

ALABAMA -- Special report issued by national WMU leaders.  
ATLANTA -- HMB director resigns protesting 'intolerance.'  
NEW ORLEANS -- New Orleans trustees OK budget with 2% increase.  
MISSISSIPPI -- He resigned his pastorate for casino worker ministry.  
ARKANSAS -- Church's crusade yields 2,625 professions of faith.

Special report issued  
by national WMU leaders

By Susan Doyle

Baptist Press  
3/22/93

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Confusion and misunderstanding about recent decisions made by Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union have prompted national WMU leaders to issue a 12-page special report.

"There has been some confusion surrounding action taken by the WMU executive board during its Jan. 9-13 meeting," said Dellanna W. O'Brien, national WMU executive director. "This special report has been prepared to help provide background information and to bring clarification and understanding to the board action."

The report is being distributed by mail to all pastors, church staff members, retired pastors, directors of missions and other SBC state and national workers. It is also being distributed at each state WMU spring meeting.

The report includes a line-by-line overview of WMU's work and involvement with the Southern Baptist Convention before the board action and after the board action. Most of the items are exactly the same both before and after the board action.

Only six of the 16 items listed show differences following the board action. These items include WMU's decision to place greater emphasis on encouraging Southern Baptists to volunteer in response to missions needs, to aggressively market generic missions materials to evangelical groups and to provide materials to support in prayer any Southern Baptist group involved in missions.

The special report also describes WMU's action as "similar to practices of several SBC agencies."

With action taken by the board, WMU will begin to aggressively market missions education materials for other evangelical groups. The report cites the Baptist Sunday School Board's similar practice of producing generic Christian materials which it sells to Southern Baptists and to other Christian organizations.

"The Foreign Mission Board works with other evangelical Christian entities to do mission projects in various parts of the world," the report says. "The Radio and Television Commission routinely makes air time available to non-Southern Baptist groups on the ACTS Network."

The report also cites the practice of the Southern Baptist Convention of making exhibit space available to non-SBC groups at its annual meeting.

In addition, Southern Baptist seminaries admit and graduate students from other evangelical denominations, the report says.

"We commend these agencies and commissions for their attempts to broaden their ministry and influence beyond their former boundaries," O'Brien said.

Also included in the report:

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- extensive background material for each of the six recommendations approved by the WMU executive board.
- a column from Carolyn Miller, national WMU president, including information about the formation of the 17-member special committee which drafted the recommendations approved in January by the WMU executive board.
- comments from O'Brien concerning WMU's commitment to missions.
- a summary of responses to the WMU board action by the Foreign Mission Board trustees and the SBC Executive Committee.
- a timeline showing WMU's history of close partnership with the SBC.
- information about WMU's auxiliary status.
- findings from recent research by an independent firm which show how WMU members are an asset to SBC churches.

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HMB director resigns  
protesting 'intolerance'

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
3/22/93

ATLANTA (BP)--A director of the Home Mission Board resigned in March, saying the HMB refuses to appoint "moderate" missionaries.

Orris Bullock, pastor of Fountain Memorial Baptist Church in Washington, said only candidates who respond to questions about the Bible with words such as "inerrancy" are appointed.

"It's intolerance that I'm reacting against," Bullock said. "If there was tolerance of the moderate position, things would be different."

However, Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis said, "We're not concerned about catchwords but about concepts. We do insist that missionaries respect the authority and authenticity of Scripture -- that the Bible is truth without any mixture of error. But we don't say they must use the word 'inerrant' or 'infallible.'"

Lewis said no effort is made to determine whether a missionary candidate is involved in moderate or conservative political aspects of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Bullock became an HMB director in 1985 and his term was to expire in 1994. He was on the directors' missionary personnel committee from 1989 to 1992.

Missionary candidates are typically recruited by state conventions and referred to the Home Mission Board for appointment. Candidates are reviewed by the Home Mission Board's missionary personnel department before the board of directors appoints them.

Candidates are required to complete a belief statement about such things as the phrase from the SBC's Baptist Faith and Message statement that the Bible is "truth without any mixture of error," the Bible's miracles and historical narratives as well as the Bible's inspiration and authority. They are also asked whether they affirm the Baptist Faith and Message.

In addition, missionary candidates must write their life history, take psychological tests, pass a credit reference check and go through personal interviews with members of the HMB staff.

In his resignation letter, Bullock also said under "recently enacted policies, even the Apostle Paul would not qualify for appointment as a Southern Baptist home missionary."

He said that remark was in reference to the board's policy to not appoint, approve or endorse people who "participate in or promote glossolalia" -- speaking in tongues. The policy was adopted in 1987.

The board's policy on appointing missionaries who have been divorced also was adopted in 1987. It states divorced people will not be appointed to pastoral roles unless their divorces were biblically based and they have not remarried. Divorced people who have remarried will be considered for assignments other than pastoral roles if their divorces were biblically based.

The policy defines biblical rationale for divorce as adultery or desertion or physical abandonment..

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Bullock said he "takes issue" with the board's policy to provide no financial support to churches with women pastors. That policy was adopted in 1986, and a 1990 motion to rescind it failed.

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New Orleans trustees OK  
budget with 2% increase

Baptist Press  
3/22/93

By William H. Perkins Jr. & Debbie Moore

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary trustees approved a seminary budget of slightly more than \$7.6 million, 2.2 percent over the current fiscal year, during their March 16-18 meeting in New Orleans.

Trustees also re-elected W. Keith Huffman, pastor of First Baptist Church in Ironton, Mo., chairman. Morris L. Anderson, pastor of Dotson Memorial Church in Maryville, Tenn., was elected vice chairman while Charles Glynn Rhinehart, a survey engineer for an oil company in New Orleans, was re-elected secretary-treasurer. All were elected by acclamation.

Seminary President Landrum P. Leavell II expressed concern for "fluctuating" Cooperative Program support for the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries. CP funding for the seminaries appears " ... cloudy at best, gloomy at worst. We must depend more on the friends of the seminary," he said.

The full board of trustees affirmed the December action of the trustee executive committee in electing Mark R. Foley as vice president for student development and director of testing; Asa R. Sphar III as assistant professor of psychology and counseling in the division of pastoral ministries; and Argile A. Smith as assistant professor of preaching, also in the division of pastoral ministries. Each position was effective Jan. 1.

Trustees granted the professor emeritus title to two recently retired professors. Carroll B. Freeman Sr., professor of psychology and counseling, retired in September 1992 and taught at NOBTS 18 years. Donald W. Minton, academic counselor and director of testing, retired in December 1992 and served at NOBTS 32 years. Minton started adult education classes at the seminary in 1963.

Tenure was granted to four faculty members: Walter E. Brown, associate professor of Old Testament and Hebrew; Jerry W. Pounds Sr., assistant professor of Christian education; Gerald L. Stevens, assistant professor of New Testament and Greek; and Donald J. Wilton, assistant professor of preaching.

Trustees also approved four faculty promotions: H. Gerald Aultman to professor of organ and piano; Jerry W. Pounds Sr. to associate professor of Christian education; W. Edward Thiele to professor of discipleship; and Donald J. Wilton to associate professor of evangelistic preaching.

Trustees set Sept. 14 as their next regular semiannual meeting, with the board's executive committee scheduled to meet June 24 and Dec. 14.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Riverboat gambling is on the rise in Mississippi and several other states. Here's one Baptist minister's response to the needs of casino employees.

He resigned his pastorate  
for casino worker ministry

By Allen Palmeri

Baptist Press  
3/22/93

BILOXI, Miss. (BP)--When Harrison County voters said yes to dockside gambling last spring, John Landrum was disappointed.

As pastor of Popp's Ferry Baptist Church in Biloxi, Landrum had taken a strong "no dice" stand that many others in Mississippi Gulf Coast pulpits had. As the reality of their defeat settled in, many of the pastors simply shifted their focus to other activities.

Landrum tried to shake it off, but he couldn't fight the tug of God. Hundreds of casino employees would soon make the coast their new home.

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But who would reach out to them? Landrum tried to think about what might be running through their minds:

"I'm a casino employee, and I need to go to a church for help. Where do I go? I can't go to a church that preaches against gambling. Where can I find someone who will love me without conditions?"

Landrum wants to be that man. So he resigned his position at Popp's Ferry, returned to Pass Road Baptist Church as a member and printed a business card that reads, "Rev. John Landrum -- Chaplain to the Mississippi Beach."

With the support of his wife, Linda, also a chaplain, Landrum called the management of the three Biloxi riverboat-style casinos and offered his services.

"They are some of the nicest people you'd want to meet," Landrum said.

He stresses he does not want anything from casino managers. He simply wants to serve them in a counseling capacity if they notice any spiritual or emotional needs among their employees, particularly needs that can be met through one-on-one counseling.

"You're going to see a work among these people, because God said to do it," Landrum said of his vision for the new ministry.

Pass Road pastor Edgar Jackson thinks Landrum's idea is one whose time has come.

"I thank God that there's somebody that's going to take this ministry to these people," Jackson said. "I wholeheartedly support him."

Keith Rogers, whose Families for Quality Life organization spearheaded the fight against dockside gambling, agrees with Jackson.

"There's a lot of people who have moved into our area who are now potential prospects for the churches -- people who have needs," Rogers said. "We fully expect that as time goes on, as people get caught up in (gambling) more and more, there will be a lot of suffering."

Landrum has studied the target of his ministry well enough to recite some numbers.

Three of the Biloxi casinos -- the President, the Biloxi Belle and the Isle of Capri -- employ 2,400 people. Of those, 75 percent are local people, leaving 600 who are new to the coast.

If 10 casinos, with 800 employees apiece, take hold on the coast, that means 8,000 employees. Two thousand of those will be new residents -- people who might not know where to find spiritual shelter if a hurricane or problems hits them.

(A fourth casino has now opened, and up to a dozen more could arrive on the Gulf Coast by the end of the year, Landrum said. One scheduled to open April 15 is a small converted cruise ship while another opening May 15 will be a three-story unit built on four barges, encompassing 70,000 square feet.)

Both Cathey Riemann, public relations manager for the President, and Rich Westfall, director of marketing for the Isle of Capri, expressed support for the concept Landrum is promoting.

"We like to see our employees become active members of the community," Riemann said. "That would certainly include finding a church. We're very happy that he's providing this service to them."

"It's something that is one of those personal decisions that a person makes," Westfall said. "If someone can help our employees and direct them in the best way, in a need they might have, certainly we would listen to them and talk to him and make the best direction available in our area."

"Someone new in town doesn't always know the best direction to turn. You can always look in a phone book. But anytime you can talk to someone who knows the area, we're always open to the information."

Landrum likes to think in terms of escaping the four walls of a church. Outside of those walls are things that church people often have problems thinking about -- such as casinos.

"If we're going to reach people in America today, we're going to have to go where they are," Landrum said. "Folks, if Jesus has saved you, you need to learn how to be a fisherman, and then do it."

Landrum said he has only a few things on his wish list: a stable monthly budget and an office near the midpoint of the coast.

His vehicle is Landrum Evangelistic Association, a nonprofit organization he and Linda operate out of their home in Gulfport. A board of directors is planned.

But the main plan driving Landrum these days is the plan found in Jeremiah 29:11-13. It is the plan that God has laid on his heart, he said.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

Said Landrum: "That has become real in my life."

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Palmeri is a writer for The Sun Herald in Biloxi, Miss. Used by permission.

Church's crusade yields  
2,625 professions of faith

By Trennis Henderson

Baptist Press  
3/22/93

SPRINGDALE, Ark. (BP)--It wasn't a typical revival program. And the results weren't typical either.

First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark., held a recent series of crusade services led by the "Power Team," a Dallas-based group of world-class athletes who combine feats of strength with words of Christian testimony. The results? Overall attendance of more than 32,000 people, a total of 2,625 professions of faith in Jesus Christ and more than 400 converts baptized -- so far.

Describing the services as a combination of "children's church and high-energy lay renewal," pastor Ronnie Floyd added, "It's totally different than anything I've ever done before. We were trying to reach people who are unchurched."

Floyd said the key to the revival's success was spiritual preparation. Participants in the church's "Warriors on the Wall" prayer ministry began praying for the services five months prior to the crusade.

"We have 700-plus people praying an hour a week for the ministries of our church," Floyd said. "Any time day or night, I know people in our church are praying."

Combined with the prayer emphasis, Floyd said, "I really felt led of the Lord to call our church to 40 days of prayer and fasting." He said an estimated 1,000 people took turns praying and fasting during the 40-day emphasis.

"You abstain from food with a spiritual goal in mind," Floyd explained, adding participants "were praying for 1,000 people to receive Christ."

The next step in the process was to collect names of unsaved and unchurched individuals. By the time of the crusade, the church had compiled a list of 5,000 prospects. Volunteers prayed for them by name throughout the crusade week.

Floyd said church members also were involved in "cleansing of the temple -- ourselves -- through the reading of the Word." Basing their actions on John 15:3, participants took turns publicly reading the Bible from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22, concluding the 80-hour effort immediately prior to the start of the crusade.

Once the spiritual preparation was done and the crusade had begun, "God was all over it," Floyd declared. "The first night of the crusade we had over 3,000 people here -- not your typical Sunday night crowd. Two hundred people were saved.

"We just sat back and watched God move among us," Floyd recounted. "We got there because we followed his principles. I call it the God factor in church growth."

As the crusade got under way, the region was blanketed with several inches of snow. But the crowds continued to come. "I think God sent the snow to show that only he could get the glory for this week," Floyd said. "We had all kinds of people saved -- senior adults to children. It was pretty awesome. It captured the attention of the region."

Acknowledging the Power Team's unique approach to evangelism, Floyd said, "I knew there was something we needed to do to catch the attention of lost people."

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