

(BP)

-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 523-5332
NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-1914
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

June 3, 1993

93-92

NASHVILLE -- June 14 meeting scheduled by Lloyd Elder in Houston.
NEW MEXICO -- Glorieta not affected by mysterious illness.
CYPRUS -- Southern Baptists to cut support to Arab Baptist Theological Seminary.
CYPRUS -- Decentralized theological education program planned for Middle East.
WASHINGTON -- CLC decries nominee's 'planned child' comments.
TEXAS -- RTVC v.p. Wright resigns; Deborah Little Key promoted.

June 14 meeting scheduled
by Lloyd Elder in Houston

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
6/3/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--A June 14 meeting has been scheduled in Houston -- the day before the start of the Southern Baptist Convention there -- by Lloyd Elder, former Sunday School Board president, to discuss with state Baptist leaders a proposal he is circulating for various reforms of the SBC.

Meanwhile, Herschel Hobbs, one of the SBC's elder statesmen, has endorsed Elder's proposal. The 15-page document, titled "Calling the Family Back Together: A Research Report to the Southern Baptist Family," calls for broadened participation in SBC annual meetings and in appointment of trustees for SBC agencies.

The June 14 meeting -- to which state Baptist convention presidents, executive directors and board chairmen have been invited -- will begin at 8 p.m. in Houston's Four Seasons Hotel adjacent to the George R. Brown Convention Center, site of the SBC's June 15-17 annual meeting.

Elder and Hobbs discussed the meeting and the proposal via a telephone conference call to Baptist news media June 3.

Elder, professor of biblical studies and preaching at Nashville's Belmont University, was BSSB president from 1983-91. Hobbs is a former SBC president and retired Oklahoma pastor.

Concerning the meeting with state Baptist leaders, Elder voiced openness to representatives attending from the SBC and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a national organization of Baptist moderates.

Morris H. Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president, had not responded by Baptist Press' mid-afternoon deadline June 3 and Cecil Sherman, CBF coordinator, could not be reached for comment.

Selected representatives of Baptist news media also could attend the meeting, Elder said, but otherwise it will be closed to the public because the room to be used has a 120-seat capacity.

During the SBC annual meeting, Elder predicted, some sort of effort likely will unfold to present the proposal, or something similar, to local church messengers.

"I do not have a designed way that it will happen," Elder said. He said he will not do it in one-man fashion but "I believe someone will come forward with a substantive motion."

--more--

Elder said he has received a sizable favorable response to the proposal, with one two or three negative responses, after mailing 6,300 copies of it national, state and local church and missions leaders in mid-May. He said he has ordered a reprint of 10,000 copies, using donations he has received.

On June 2, Elder circulated a cover letter and the proposal directly to state Baptist leaders invited to the June 14 meeting and to SBC agency executives and Baptist associations' directors of missions across Texas. He also has suggested they circulate his proposal to staff members "and other constituents."

"Yes, Houston could be historic in ending the controversy and moving forward together as a family," Elder wrote.

Elder's proposal includes 20 "action plans" toward ending the theological-political controversy in the SBC dating back to 1979.

After an initial action plan calling for a general recommitment to missions, others include:

- reducing the SBC president's appointment power by half. Under the proposal, one of each eligible state convention's two members on the SBC Committee on Committees, for example, would be elected by those conventions. The SBC president would select each state's other member of the Committee on Committees.

- allowing each state to select its eligible first, third and fifth representatives on the SBC Executive Committee, Foreign and Home Mission boards, Sunday School and Annuity boards, the six SBC seminaries and other commissions and boards. The Committee on Nominations -- named by the broadened Committee on Committees -- would select the other state representatives on SBC boards.

- initiating SBC "regional voting conventions" at 36 to 72 sites within a four-hour drive from messengers' churches. Some 200,000 messengers, Elder says, could participate in a live, simultaneous network for conducting SBC business, using modern video technology.

- scheduling SBC meetings every other year rather than annually.

Such changes, Elder writes, would be made via amendments to the SBC Constitution and Bylaws.

Hobbs, in an interview with Baptist Press, said when he received Elder's proposal in the mail, "I said to myself, 'This is it, ... the first really well-thought-out thing I have seen'" toward resolving the SBC controversy.

Earlier this year, Hobbs issued a call for SBC and CBF leaders to hold a summit-type meeting in Houston, but Morris H. Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president, and Cecil Sherman, CBF coordinator, both discounted the idea.

Hobbs, in the telephone news conference, called the proposal "one last hope" of involving more Baptists in SBC decision-making "rather than just a very small group."

"I see no end to this (controversy), except if it keeps on like it is, it's either going to drain ourselves dry of our power or we're going to have a division."

Hobbs complained about SBC committees appointing only non-CBF supporter Baptists as trustees of SBC agencies. He quoted Chapman as saying the SBC presidents have done what they thought to be best for the convention.

"Brethren, that scares me to death," Hobbs said. "That's papacy, one man saying, 'I think I know what's best for Southern Baptists...'"

Hobbs insisted the report of the SBC Peace Committee, of which he was a member, called for balanced representation in SBC appointments and that SBC presidents have violated the convention's action overwhelming approving that report.

Elder and Hobbs voiced doubt that SBC leaders would give up their current control of convention affairs, with Elder saying that's why he's directing his proposal to a broad segment of Baptists and Hobbs saying "some new blood" is needed in SBC decision-making.

**Glorieta not affected
by mysterious illness**

By Charles Willis

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--While federal and state investigators seek the cause of a mysterious and sometimes fatal illness in the area of the Navajo Reservation straddling New Mexico and Arizona, no symptoms of the illness have been reported at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

Employees of the Southern Baptist national conference center, more than 200 miles away from the reservation, have been monitoring information to determine any potential cause for concern to people planning to attend summer conferences. As of June 3, no one on the Glorieta staff or any of their family members had contracted the illness, and no reports indicated tourists or visitors to the state had been affected. No travel restrictions have been announced within the state.

The illness, which had claimed 13 lives by Saturday, May 29, is referred to as an unexplained adult respiratory distress syndrome. Initial symptoms resemble flu, including muscle aches and fever, and include at least one of three other symptoms: cough, headache or inflammation of a membrane of the eye. News reports on June 3 indicated no new cases of the illness had been reported since May 29, and state public health officials expressed hope that the illness in the Four Corners area--where New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado meet--may be abating.

The illness has affected primarily Native Americans. Only people with direct contact with residents of the Navajo Reservation have become ill, according to news reports. The illness is not believed to be highly contagious, since family members of persons diagnosed with the illness have not contracted it.

Glorieta officials are in daily contact with medical and government officials to gather and evaluate information, according to Larry Haslam, conference center director. Inquiries from people anticipating travel to Glorieta have numbered fewer than 30, he said. Callers have been promised a return telephone call when additional information is available.

Haslam said the summer conference schedule will begin as planned on June 5, with Summer Youth Celebration, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division. Centrifuge, a series of week-long summer youth camps, also begins June 5.

--30--

**Southern Baptists to cut support
to Arab Baptist Theological Seminary**

By Mike Creswell

**Baptist Press
6/3/93**

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)--In a major policy change, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will phase out support for the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon and instead set up a decentralized education program throughout the Middle East.

The change will leave the seminary in Beirut in the hands of Middle Eastern Baptists under a new 11-member board of trustees made up of Baptists from Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. The present board has half Foreign Mission Board personnel and half Middle Eastern Baptists.

Middle Eastern Baptists support the plan, but some are concerned about raising \$100,000 a year to operate the school as board support phases out over the next three years. This year the seminary will get \$6,000 from World Vision, an interdenominational missions group. Leaders say they must get support from many sources to keep the school open.

"Really, we're afraid" of the responsibility, said Nabih Haddad, general secretary of the Lebanese Baptist Convention, which has 25 congregations with about 1,000 members. He is a member of the seminary's new board of directors. But the seminary's board, even though it hasn't taken control yet, is "enthusiastic and working hard," said Foreign Mission Board representative Emmett Barnes, and is grappling with obtaining a new constitution, personnel and finances.

--more--

Southern Baptist administrators have worked for more than a year on setting up a new Decentralized Theological Education (DTE) system patterned after similar programs originated by Southern Baptist missionaries in the Caribbean and the Philippines. Missionary Weldon Viertel, who helped set up these two programs, has moved to Cyprus to establish the Middle East program.

Viertel said the school could begin using DTE materials and approach in its teaching to greatly reduce its operational costs. "It's not worked out yet how the two will relate," he said.

The Arab seminary has been the cornerstone in training Baptist leaders in the Middle East since its establishment in 1960. Lebanon then was one of the more open countries in the region and students from most countries could attend freely. Enrollment during the school's first decade averaged 12 to 15 students, reflecting the low number of Baptists in the Middle East.

But 16 years of civil war in Lebanon kept out many potential students, and artillery shells hit the school complex several times. Now that fighting has stopped, enrollment climbed this year to 27 students from Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Sudan and Iraq. The school offers a three-year diploma program and a two-year, less intense program. A Bachelor of Theology degree also was offered to students who had at least one year of university-level education.

Before the war the Foreign Mission Board assigned several representatives to the seminary as administrators and teachers. But during the war those workers have either retired or been reassigned elsewhere. Only Emmett and La Nell Barnes are still assigned to the school.

Barnes has been seminary president from Cyprus since the board withdrew personnel from Lebanon. He has worked with Ghassan Khalaf, a Lebanese Baptist who serves as the on-site administrator. Lebanese Baptist pastors, some not qualified for seminary-level teaching, have taught classes in recent years.

It would help the seminary if missions organizations could send in qualified teachers, Haddad said, but a long-standing U.S. government ruling bars Americans from Lebanon. President Clinton renewed the ban in February for another year.

An effort to revive the seminary was made as late as 1988 when administrators tried to relocate it in Cyprus, an island in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. But the Cyprus government refused.

Haddad said economic problems in post-war Lebanon make it hard for most churches to support their own pastors, much less take on the financial burden of operating the seminary.

Final agreements still are being worked out, but the current proposal calls for the Foreign Mission Board to fund the seminary on a reducing basis for three years. The board would provide the school with \$60,000 in 1993, \$40,000 in 1994 and \$20,000 in 1995. After that year board support would stop. The board already had begun reducing its support in the 1980s.

Seminary property remains as one subject for negotiation. The campus is in the suburbs of Beirut about 1,000 feet up in mountains overlooking the city. When the school was constructed the only neighbors were olive groves, and the nearby town was separate from the city. Today the area is being covered with expensive high-rise apartments.

"A conservative estimate of the seminary complex's total value would be more than \$1 million," said Barnes, although he noted some of the buildings need repairs and renovations.

But the campus includes more than the seminary. One building contains Baptist Publications, the publishing house; a television studio; and offices which include the Baptist correspondence ministry. It also includes three missionary residences. One of them still contains the furniture of the Barneses, who had always nourished the dream of one day returning to Lebanon.

The seminary itself has three buildings. A main building contains administrative offices and a men's dormitory, chapel, library and classrooms. A second building has apartments for six married couples and a nursery. A third building provides housing for a cook and a guard.

Sorting through who eventually will own the assortment of buildings in the complex will take more meetings, Barnes said.

**Decentralized theological education
program planned for Middle East By Mike Creswell**

LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)--Southern Baptists will establish a new decentralized program in the Middle East to deliver Christian education to more people.

Patterned after a similar system adopted in the Caribbean and the Philippines, the Decentralized Theological Education (DTE) approach calls for detailed teaching manuals which combine a textbook with student learning activities. Four curricula will cover a wide range of Christian topics, beginning with a discussion of salvation for new believers and extending through seminary training for pastors.

Some 750 to 1,000 Baptists have used the system in the Philippines, according to Weldon Viertel, who set up that program while serving there between 1983 and 1992. Last year he transferred to Cyprus, where he has been involved in setting up a similar program for the Middle East.

Unlike some seminary extension programs which depend on satellite classes and teachers, DTE focuses on students using guided-study material for individual use at home. "The best way to distinguish our approach from traditional teaching is that we shift the emphasis from a teacher teaching to students learning," Viertel said. "The teacher guides the learning process rather than being the primary source of knowledge for the process."

"A side benefit is that in this kind of training the student becomes more responsible, thus avoiding the development of so much dependency on the teacher," he added.

Viertel said DTE is more economical and flexible. "It allows us to adjust to student schedules and needs without removing them from their ministry and support system, which results in highly subsidized training programs," he said. "Yet DTE can maintain academic standards of campus programs while using qualified national leaders as teachers throughout each country."

Students advance from Bible-based foundation studies on conversion and basic Christian concepts such as prayer to the nature of the church and its ordinances. A second level presents a wide range of Christian doctrines and teachings while a third level covers leadership topics such as the starting of churches. A fourth level focuses on the training of pastors.

DTE allows students to move into formal degree programs, but it emphasizes "lower levels where need is the greatest," said Bill Wagner, Southern Baptist representative based in Belgium who helped set it up. He is evangelism and church growth consultant for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

The program will begin by using existing materials, such as the widely-used "Survival Kit" discipleship course for new believers, and some materials from other evangelical groups. But it will train Middle Eastern Baptists to write new teaching manuals unique to the area and its needs.

Foreign Mission Board representative Mike Edens, currently based in Egypt, will coordinate the program with help from board representative Karl Weathers. Viertel will continue to work with the development of materials.

Some Baptists questioned the program when it began in the Philippines, but eventually it won widespread approval, Viertel observed. In one instance DTE students outscored classroom-taught students who had studied the same material. In 1991 the Baptist seminary in the Philippines voted to use the DTE approach for the first two years of its Master of Divinity degree program.

"The idea is that pastors will study the DTE material and then train lay members," said Viertel. He said many Baptists outside the United States have no system of adult Bible education such as the Southern Baptists Sunday School system. Thus, he said, DTE will meet a major need for lay training.

"It will help fill the gap between new member orientation and evangelism training. Curriculum-based training means we can expect certain results from people who study," Viertel said.

A theological foundation of the DTE approach, Viertel said, is that the church is the missionary servant of Christ rather than just a group of baptized believers. "So all the church needs to be involved in theological training for service," he said. "Our theology is biblically based, thus it's mission-oriented," he added.

The DTE approach also is people-oriented, he said. "We don't have the money to develop and maintain programs that require expensive buildings. We must use our key resource -- people." Once materials are produced, the only other support needed will be Foreign Mission Board representatives who will serve as in-country coordinators. As nationals are trained they will move into the leadership roles.

Leaders already trained by the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon will be of great help in DTE, he said. As it sets up the DTE program throughout the Middle East, the Foreign Mission Board will phase out support for the seminary over the next three years and leave it entirely in the hands of Middle East Baptists.

--30--

CLC decries nominee's
'planned child' comments

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
6/3/93

WASHINGTON (BP)--Joycelyn Elders' primary task as surgeon general, if she is confirmed, will be to make sure every child given birth in the United States is a wanted child, she recently said at an abortion rights conference.

The first way to strengthen families "is to make every child born in America a planned, wanted child," Elders said in early May. "And that will be my chief mission as your surgeon general."

Her comments drew immediate, negative response from the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"Joycelyn Elders is for more than abortion rights; she's for abortion," said James A. Smith, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's director of government relations. "She seems to actually think it is a good thing. That the next surgeon general of the United States would have such an attitude about a practice which kills 1.6 million children each year is troubling, to say the least.

Elders made the remarks in a keynote speech at the first national conference of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights in early May in suburban Washington. RCAR provided an audio tape of her speech to Baptist Press.

RCAR, which was celebrating its 20th anniversary, consists of 36 organizations committed to the position women should have the religious freedom to choose abortion without interference by the government.

Elders' confirmation hearing before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee is expected to be this summer but has not been scheduled, a committee spokesman said. President Bill Clinton nominated her as surgeon general in December. She will replace Antonia Novello, who reportedly will serve until the end of June.

Planned Parenthood and other abortion rights advocates commonly have used the "every child a wanted child" terminology in Elders' speech during the last two decades. Also in her speech, Elders, director of the Arkansas Department of Health, endorsed Medicaid funding for abortion; the French abortion pill, RU-486, and the Freedom of Choice Act, legislation in Congress which would strike down state restrictions on abortion now allowed under Roe v. Wade.

She repeated her criticism of pro-life Americans, this time of those who oppose sex education and clinics in public schools.

There are "organizations out there that love little children as long as they're in somebody else's uterus," Elders said. "They're against everything that's going to help children, but they have this wonderful infatuation with the fetus that's been going on for years. So we need them to get over their love affair with the fetus and start doing something to make a difference for children."

--more--

In January 1992, Elders said at an abortion rights rally in Little Rock pro-lifers need to "get over their love affair with the fetus." The quote was circulated widely after Elders' nomination was announced.

Smith said, "The intemperate remarks of Ms. Elders about pro-lifers reveal an open hostility to a vast number of Americans and their values," Smith continued. "The fact that President Clinton chose her in light of her controversial and combative personality demonstrates that she will have a great deal of influence in this administration. Issues and agendas like abortion, abortion funding, condoms in schools and safe-sex education will have a champion in Joycelyn Elders."

Elders said she told a representative in the Arkansas legislature she is "about preventing pregnancy. I'm not about abortion." In addition to supporting abortion rights, she has advocated sex education and contraceptive distribution in public schools.

Elders, who is Methodist, also said the "way that we show that we are really Christians ... is first of all we are committed, not just concerned, about choice. And this group has shown that they are committed, and they are willing to do what they need to do to make choice a right for every woman.

"I feel that we are not good enough, we don't know enough and we don't love enough to sit on God's judgment seat and make that decision for anybody else," Elders said.

While governor of Arkansas, Clinton appointed Elders to her present post in 1987.

Among RCAR's 36 members are groups from the Presbyterian Church (USA), United Methodist Church, Episcopal Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), United Church of Christ, Unitarian Universalists, as well as 13 Jewish organizations, the YWCA and the American Humanist Association.

In a recent briefing paper, RCAR voiced opposition to laws requiring parental notification or consent for minors seeking abortion, waiting periods and informed consent for women considering abortion.

--30--

RTVC v.p. Wright resigns;
Deborah Little Key promoted

By Doug Dillard

Baptist Press
6/3/93

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Deborah Little Key has been named general manager for ACTS and FamilyNet networks for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. She was appointed after Michael A. Wright resigned as vice president of network operations to begin a private television consulting and production business, according to Richard McCartney, RTVC executive vice president.

Key will preside in her new role at the meeting of national ACTS and FamilyNet affiliates and ACTS and FamilyNet awards events to be held as part of RTVC's international conference on communications ministries at the Arlington (Texas) Convention Center, June 28-July 1.

McCartney commended the contributions of both Wright and Key in bringing ACTS coverage to 1,273 cable systems reaching a potential 19.1 million households and FamilyNet to 118 affiliates reaching a potential 42.1 million households.

Wright's new company, MediaLink International in Fort Worth, Texas, will concentrate on development of TV programming, McCartney said. "Wright's desire to bring together creative talent, funding and distribution channels for fresh, family values programming will greatly benefit both the Radio and Television Commission and independent television programmers," he said.

Wright said he hopes to help fill the networks' need for fresh programming through his new work in the private sector. "There are lots of producers and creative individuals coming up with good ideas at the same time that networks and independent stations are hungry for programming. The challenge is to match their interests and needs and figure out where the money will come from." That, Wright said, will be the purpose of MediaLink International.

--more--

Key agreed Wright's new work should benefit the commission. "Programming is one of my top priorities as we look forward to the first anniversary of ACTS' move to the Faith and Values Channel and enjoy the remarkable expansion of FamilyNet."

Key, who has been national marketing director for ACTS since 1990, began service at the commission in 1983 while a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. Her first job was as drama coach for the children who appeared in "Sunshine Factory," an RTVC-produced children's program.

Key taught speech and religious drama classes in Southwestern's communications department after receiving her degree in communications in December 1983. She had graduated from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, in 1980 with a degree in theater. Her first love was theater and she had not intended to pursue a career in radio and television. But a part-time secretarial position at RTVC quickly developed into a position as regional coordinator for the fledgling ACTS network in February 1984. She helped develop the concept of local ACTS boards through which churches could work to get ACTS on cable systems and use the channel for local programming.

Key became ACTS' southwest regional manager in April 1984 while continuing to teach in Southwestern's center for Christian communications studies. She became promotion manager for ACTS in January 1986 and helped develop the popular ACTS awards program and ACTS' national prayer awakening ministry. Key was promoted to central division director for ACTS in January 1988.

She is married to Milton Key, development officer for Dallas Baptist University. They live in Arlington, Texas.

Wright, a California native, moved to Fort Worth in 1982 and began as a clerk at the commission while completing his degree at Dallas Baptist University. His career rose with the rapid expansion of ACTS after it was launched in 1984. He conceived the regional marketing strategy for ACTS and became southeast regional manager based in Atlanta. He returned to Fort Worth in 1986 as vice president of cable operations and advanced to vice president of affiliate relations in 1987. The name of the division was changed to network operations in 1991, shortly after the commission bought FamilyNet.

Wright also was a key figure in the contacts and negotiations which led to the commission's entry into Russian television in 1992.

HOUSE MAIL



BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

HOUSE MAIL

So. Baptist Library & Archives
901 Commerce
Nashville, TN 37203