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October 5, 1993

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EDITORS' NOTE: This story replaces (BP) story titled "Missionaries meet in Moscow as fighting continues," dated 10/4/93.

Baptist ceremonies continue
in the shadow of Russian battle By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
10/5/93

MOSCOW (BP)--Opening ceremonies for a new five-story Russian Baptist headquarters and seminary went on as planned Oct. 5 -- just hours after Russian troops beat back communist and nationalist hard-liners in a two-day street war.

Gathering Oct. 4 for their yearly congress, Russian Baptists seemed only mildly interested in the violent events just miles away, where the traumatic birth of democracy in Russia took another twist.

There, troops staking the future of Russian democracy on the leadership of President Boris Yeltsin were bloodily crushing his political enemies in the Russian White House, where Parliament meets.

"It's all just become boring," one Russian Baptist representative said, referring to a months-old struggle between Yeltsin and the nation's holdout communists.

Baptists, who suffered seven decades of persecution under communists and even stiffer oppression under the Russian Orthodox Church before that, are ready to get on with their work. But it's been difficult for them, and the rest of the nation, to do so under the shadow of the hard-liners who, until now, have managed to put freedom on hold.

During the last several months Baptists have joined other evangelical groups to fight a proposed measure to limit their freedom to worship and restrict foreign missionaries from helping them spread the gospel. The measure grew out of a marriage between leaders of the Orthodox Church and communist lawmakers in Parliament.

Since communists started losing their totalitarian grip on the nation during the demise of the Soviet Union, they have used the Russian Parliament to fight economic reform and individual liberties, such as religious freedom.

Lawmakers blocked Yeltsin's attempts to enact the reform he promised Russians when they elected him president in 1991. They also stymied progress on a new constitution and new elections -- both overwhelmingly voted for during a national referendum in April.

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The now-defunct Parliament and current constitution are holdovers from when Russia was a republic of the former Soviet Union. On Sept. 21 Yeltsin decreed Parliament nonexistent and called for new elections in December.

Street battles broke out in Moscow Oct. 3 when Russians loyal to Yeltsin's foe, Vice President Alexander Rutskoi -- named "acting president" by communist lawmakers -- broke through government police lines. They seized part of a key broadcast center and government offices and vowed next to take the Kremlin, site of Yeltsin's office.

Yeltsin called in special forces to crush the rebellion and arrest its leaders. His aides promised not to shoot Rutskoi or Ruslan Khasbulatov, leader of the Parliament -- both now in custody.

Sam James of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board watched out of his window at Moscow's Zvezdnaya Hotel as fighters fired machine-gun rounds with red tracer bullets in a battle for a TV tower rebels had seized. James, the board's vice president for the region, heard choppers overhead and mortar blasts close by.

James and Southern Baptist missionaries from the region had arrived in Moscow for a scheduled meeting -- just in time to watch the events unfold. Their meeting was to precede the dedication ceremonies and three-day Russian Baptist Congress.

In a special ceremony at Moscow's Central Baptist Church, the first 17 students of the new Baptist seminary were presented Oct. 2. The new Baptist building is the realization of a dream for Russian Baptists. Its funding came from Baptists inside and outside Russia.

During their congress, Russian Baptists also planned to recognize Vasily Logvinenko, the retiring president of their union, and elect his successor.

World Baptist leaders and representatives of the federation of Baptists in the rest of the former Soviet Union also attended the congress. Many are members of the new seminary's board of directors.

In a letter from Gregory Komendant, president of the federation of Baptist unions in the Commonwealth of Independent States, Baptists said they were praying for Yeltsin and believing God would bring lawful peace to the nation.

In another letter to Yeltsin, the Baptist World Alliance and the European Baptist Federation said they represented 80 million Baptists in 200 countries worldwide in ensuring him of sympathy for the bloodshed in Russia.

"We are asking God to bring a restoration of peace and well-being to Russia," the letter said. "Evangelical Christians-Baptists have always stood for democracy, freedom and justice. In this tense time we affirm our belief in the mercy of God, which will help you bring about the restoration of Russia."

Baptists hope the efforts of Orthodox Metropolitan Cyrill to help mediate an agreement between Yeltsin and the rebel lawmakers will bode well for them in the future. Cyrill, who now heads the international department of the Russian Orthodox Church, has been a friend of Baptists.

Many Orthodox clerics fear Baptists and the gains they have made since the former Soviet Union threw the doors open to religious freedom in 1990. Boris Yablakov, a Russian Baptist photographer, talked with an Orthodox priest demonstrating for Rutskoi as violence began to break out.

The priest, claiming he and other priests are communist, said, "We're tired of opening up to the West." Some Orthodox priests carried red communist flags with Orthodox icons on them.

Gleb Yakunin, a reformist lawmaker and Orthodox priest once stripped of his parish because of his outspoken support of religious freedom under communism, said totalitarian control of the Orthodox Church and the state were closely wed.

The Orthodox Church was not only subordinated to the state "but was a branch of the state," he charged.

Yakunin said Orthodox Patriarch Alexei II told Yeltsin his denomination would openly oppose the president if he refused to approve the laws proposed this summer, moving the Orthodox Church closer to becoming a state religion.

Yeltsin refused to sign the law twice, and it died with his dismissal of Parliament. But evangelicals expect attempts to limit their religious freedom to resurface.

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Southern Baptist missionary-journalist Stanley Crabb, in Moscow for the Baptist congress, contributed to this story.

Priority missionary jobs
could help light up 'World A'

By Bob Stanley

Baptist Press
10/5/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--1994 could be the year Southern Baptists help the Foreign Mission Board turn on the light of the gospel in much more of "World A" -- the least evangelized parts of the globe.

The jobs are there and waiting, board officials say after giving top priority to this vast unreached area in its 1994 personnel request list.

Forty-one percent of the highest-priority requests for missionaries in 1994 seek people willing to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to World A's peoples. World A is a term mission experts coined to describe parts of the world where most people have had little or no chance to hear the gospel.

In recent years the Foreign Mission Board has pushed World A needs to the top of its priority list. Next year 30 of the 73 most urgent job requests call for people to work in World A, says Jim Riddell, associate director of the personnel selection department.

Twenty-three priority requests seek people to work in World B, where the gospel is more accessible but most people have not become Christians, and 20 others come from World C, where most at least call themselves Christians.

Southern Baptists have a commitment to continue and escalate efforts to reach all three "worlds."

The World A emphasis already is producing results. The Foreign Mission Board at mid-1993 had 432 missionaries targeting World A's 1.2 billion people. They represent about 11 percent of the board's 3,900-plus missionaries.

Of 212 least-evangelized "megapeoples" in World A, the board is targeting 80. This year it committed more than \$17 million of its \$183.8 budget to evangelize these groups, each of which has 1 million or more people.

Also high on the 1994 priority list are personnel for the "harvest fields" -- more open countries like Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, the Philippines, Indonesia and South Korea where people are ready to respond now to the gospel.

But the 73 top personnel priorities form just a fraction of global personnel needs, Riddell emphasizes. By the end of 1993, he estimates, the personnel selection department will be working with more than 550 requests.

The Foreign Mission Board's new president, Jerry Rankin, says he is optimistic Southern Baptists will continue to respond to world needs. Right now, he says, personnel staffers are working with 1,960 files on missionary candidates (a majority of which are couples) at various stages of the appointment process.

Despite some budget restrictions, Rankin stresses the Foreign Mission Board is "absolutely committed" to keeping the channel of missionary service open, confident that "God will supply the resources." As the board seeks people God calls to meet the needs, Riddell says it has two main messages it hopes to communicate to Southern Baptists:

- 1) It's a big world, with millions of people who don't yet know Christ.
- 2) The Foreign Mission Board is still in the business of sending people out to evangelize the world.

Riddell, who grew up overseas as the son of missionary parents, adds his own postscript: It's a hard world to live in -- one that requires willingness to sacrifice some of the "good things" Americans have become used to.

Missionary life has never been easy, but those who work in unreached parts of the world must be unusually flexible and adaptable, he explains.

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At least one 1994 priority assignment seeks a missionary wife with the ability to teach children of overseas workers. As far as the host government is concerned, her husband will be in the country simply to accompany her.

But he'll go to meet an urgent need for a church planter in the Asian country. And to reach people who haven't yet heard the gospel, the job description notes, he may sometimes leave his family for weeks at a time, traveling long distances by foot across rugged mountain terrain.

Another example: The mission board continues to look for a couple to begin language study in Croatia -- to prepare for the day they can live in Sarajevo, Bosnia, a city that this year became the bullet-riddled Beirut of Europe.

Actually, says Sam James, FMB vice president for Europe, the area needs two or three missionary families. When peace comes, he wants the board to have a "Rapid Deployment Team" of veteran missionaries ready to move in to help meet needs of the embattled region -- and seize evangelism opportunities. But as soon as possible, new missionaries who have studied the language and culture will be needed to work with Baptists in establishing long-term ministries.

While focusing on such difficult regions, the board also needs people for places like Mexico, now considered ripe for evangelistic harvest after 100 years of relative resistance to the gospel.

In Mexico City the board seeks a church planter couple to help Central Baptist Association start churches. The metropolitan area, with an estimated 22 million people, now has more than 100 churches in two Baptist associations.

Requests for church planters or developers make up about 50 to 60 percent of new missionary requests each year, Riddell says. Another 25 percent call for other types of church vocations such as seminary teachers and specialists in religious education, music, youth and student work.

The remainder includes requests for teachers, agriculturists, medical personnel, print and electronic media workers and other specialists to meet needs in certain countries.

As the priority needs emerge each year, Riddell enjoys looking for "gee-whiz" requests -- jobs so different or so challenging they stand out.

Among those he mentions this year:

-- A church planter/developer couple for Novosibirsk, Russia -- four time zones east of Moscow. They would work alongside a religious education couple recently appointed to work in this gateway to Siberia. -- An assignment teaching English as a second language at an institution in the Middle East. This is a repeat request, which like many in difficult Muslim areas went begging last year.

-- A student worker in Costa Rica, working with college and university students from a church base.

As a former student worker in Texas, Riddell says he wouldn't mind filling that last job himself.

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(BP) graphic (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Analysis

Militant Islam opposes
Israeli-Palestinian peace

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
10/5/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Powerful Arab forces are lining up behind the historic Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, but at least one potent force is dead set against it -- radical Islam.

Plenty of moderate Palestinians who lost their homes when the state of Israel was created in 1948 also oppose the peace plan as too little, too late. So do many bitter younger Palestinians who remember nothing other than living under Israeli rule in the Occupied Territories.

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Those voices alone, opponents acknowledge, probably won't bring down a plan with the backing of the Palestine Liberation Organization and support of Arab governments once hostile to Israel's very existence.

But militant Muslim resistance might.

Hamas (or the Islamic Resistance Movement), the most powerful Palestinian Muslim fundamentalist group, immediately declared its rejection of the plan. Now it threatens civil war among Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank over the plan. The smaller Islamic Jihad faction also opposes the pact.

"Hamas will be a major player" in the life or death of peace in the area, said Ibrahim Abu-Rabi, a Palestinian Muslim who teaches Islamic studies and Christian-Muslim relations at Hartford (Conn.) Seminary.

Fundamentalist Muslims, not only in Palestine but in the general Muslim and Arab world -- including the international wing of the influential Muslim Brotherhood -- stand against the Israeli-PLO agreement, he added.

Israeli forces killed two top Hamas military commanders and cracked down on militants in Gaza as October began. But Israel has made it clear the long-term burden of dealing with Hamas now rests with PLO chief Yasser Arafat.

"It's his problem," said Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres.

Arafat predicts Palestinians will fall into line behind the peace plan. Polls taken in the Occupied Territories immediately after the signing of the "Gaza-Jericho" pact indicate most Palestinians support Arafat and the pact.

The significance for Christians -- beyond the obvious desire for peace and the centrality of the Holy Land to their faith -- is this:

"If positive steps are taken to implement the agreement, it can only further opportunity for Christian work in that part of the world, simply by bringing greater regional stability and stability within the countries concerned," said Robert Douglas, executive director of the Zwemer Institute, an organization that trains people to plant churches among Muslims.

"That will make it easier for workers there to go about their business, and it will also take a bit of the edge off some of the anti-Americanism which often gets confused with anti-Christian attitudes."

Islamic expert Dudley Woodberry of Pasadena, Calif., echoed Douglas. Christian work in the area by either Arabs or foreign missionaries will be easier, he said, "if there's peace and if the West and Americans, who are often associated with Christianity, are no longer seen as the supporters of injustice but as facilitators of some sort of peace."

But Hamas and other radical Muslim groups won't give in quietly. Hard-line Palestinian leader George Habash warns he will put a price on Arafat's head for signing on to the peace plan.

That's nothing new; Arafat has escaped assassination as many as 50 times, by one estimate. "He has more lives than a cat," said one observer of his amazing political longevity.

Arafat will need several more lives to survive the next six months.

"I anticipate an attempt to assassinate Arafat" by Muslim militants, said Woodberry, dean of the School of World Missions and professor of Islamic studies at Fuller Theological Seminary.

"Having said that, he has never been looked at as negatively as (Anwar) Sadat, for example, because he has upheld the Palestinian cause in the past," he added. Sadat, Egypt's late president, paid with his life for making peace with Israel. Muslim extremists assassinated him in 1981.

Muslim fundamentalists see the state of Israel and Western influence as the personification of evil. But they hold even greater contempt for secularized Muslims whom they see as traitors or compromisers.

"They've always generally seen nominal, secularized Muslims as their enemy at home," said Woodberry. For example, he said, militant efforts in Egypt "to kill tourists and things of that nature are (intended) ultimately to overthrow the regime of (President Hosni) Mubarak, which they consider secularized."

Muslim militants long have viewed Arafat with suspicion, but now he's an enemy.

Regardless of Arafat's fate, the peace agreement itself "poses such a threat to the unifying force that an Israeli state has had for (Muslim radicals) that I would anticipate tremendous reaction initially to try to scuttle it," Woodberry said.

"The longer it lasts, the more progress that's made, the more it will take the wind out of their sails, and they know that."

A deep sense of trauma helps fuel Muslim fundamentalism in the region, according to Woodberry.

"Part of that trauma is not having a homeland in Palestine," he said. "The less there is of that trauma, the less there will be causes for fundamentalism. That's why it's so important to see what steps are taken to actually capitalize on the agreement.

"But there's been such a feeling of injustice in the past, such a feeling of hate from children who have grown up knowing nothing but hate," that terrorist acts will certainly originate from groups like Hamas, he said.

Still, wide differences of opinion exist even among hard-line Palestinians and within Hamas itself, cautioned Douglas. "All militants aren't militant to the same degree," he said.

But a showdown between the PLO and Hamas in Gaza undoubtedly will come, he acknowledged. "It's going to be chaotic for awhile."

A generation gap partly explains the split among Palestinians.

"In many ways supporters of Hamas are young people born under Israeli occupation after 1967, whereas PLO leadership was born before that time and was in exile for a long time," explained Abu-Rabi. Many Hamas supporters feel the PLO has lost touch with Palestinians in the territories.

However, the radicals face not only the coming military muscle of the PLO but the changing interests of once-stalwart supporters. The main financial backing of Hamas, reported Abu-Rabi, has come from Saudi Arabia -- which may move toward recognizing Israel as the peace process moves on.

Such regimes, Douglas reminded, also feel threatened by militant Muslims backed by forces bent on returning the whole region to theocratic rule.

"They're very much in favor of a degree of relationship with the West, and they aren't about to let this fundamentalist focus get the upper hand."

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EDITORS' NOTE: The following story can be used in tandem with (BP) story titled "Clinton health plan may hike SBC costs without any extras," dated 9/30/93.

Annuity Board: It's too early
to comment on health reforms

Baptist Press
10/5/93

DALLAS (BP)--It's too early to know how church staff members' health insurance through the Annuity Board will be affected by President Bill Clinton's health care proposals, according to officials of the Southern Baptist agency based in Dallas.

Thomas E. Miller Jr., Annuity Board senior vice president for public relations, beyond noting that Congress has not yet enacted any reforms, added, "If proposed legislation actually becomes law, there will be months or years of phase-in. It is premature to make any speculation on possible future effects."

In the meantime, Miller said, the board "is continuing to expand our plans and programs for the benefit of our customers."

As of Oct. 4, 70,216 Southern Baptist employees and their dependents were covered by Annuity Board medical plans -- 51,369 church and associational staffers and dependents in the church comprehensive, catastrophic and seminarian medical plans and 18,847 denominational and large-church employees and dependents in group comprehensive and catastrophic medical plans.

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At at least three Southern Baptist agencies -- the Foreign and Home Mission boards and the Baptist Sunday School Board -- officials have stated that Clinton's reforms, as proposed, could cost their agencies more while providing similar or less coverage.

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Historical Commission journal
reviews SBC strife since '79

By Kim Medley

Baptist Press
10/5/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Conservative and moderate Southern Baptists agree 1979 was a pivotal year in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention. But views of what happened during and since 1979 differ depending on whether you read articles by Richard Land and James Hefley or Bill Leonard and Stan Hastey.

Land, Leonard, Hastey, and Hefley provide a point-counterpoint look at the last 14 years of SBC history in the October 1993 issue of the journal Baptist History and Heritage, "The Southern Baptist Convention, 1979-1993: What Happened and Why?" published by the SBC's Historical Commission.

Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, provides a conservative perspective in his article and cites James P. Boyce, Basil Manly Jr., John R. Broadus, John R. Sampey, A.T. Robertson and J.M. Frost as examples of former Southern Baptist leaders who were united theologically by a commonly held belief in the infallibility of Scripture.

Bill Leonard, professor of religion at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., representing the moderate movement, disagrees with Land. "(Land) runs the now familiar litany of selected quotes from selected leaders, suggesting that consensus was determined solely by the issue of biblical inerrancy . . . Nothing could be further from the truth. As David Dockery has recently shown (in his book "The Doctrine of the Bible"), there are six to seven different views of that doctrine which exist among inerrantists themselves."

By tracing the outcomes of the evolution controversy of the 1920s, the Elliott controversy of the early 1960s and the Broadman controversy of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Land shows the frustration of conservatives at "winning the votes in public, and losing at the level of institutional implementation in private."

Land states this frustration -- coupled with "a rapidly growing awareness that some of the Southern Baptist seminaries and universities were drastically to the left" -- motivated conservatives to direct the convention's course back toward a consensus of biblical inerrancy. He identifies at least five groups involved in the conflict -- "fundamentalists," "conservatives," "theological conservatives and political moderates," "theological moderates" and "true liberals."

Land says this "course correction" was accomplished when conservatives recognized the appointive powers of the SBC's elected president and decided "to use the presidency . . . to effect the changes they believed were urgently needed by changing the trustee boards of . . . various (SBC) institutions and agencies." He notes the challenge ahead for Southern Baptist leadership is to "seek to work with those . . . (theological moderates) who are amenable to cooperative effort as a minority within a thoroughly conservative denomination."

Leonard acknowledges conservative Southern Baptists have indeed changed the makeup of Southern Baptist agencies. However, he said he believes conservatives have wanted more than consensus on biblical inspiration. "Southern Baptists discovered soon enough that when the fundamentalist subgroup gained majorities on trustee boards, they quickly demanded consensus on a variety of theological, sociological, and political agendas. . . ."

Leonard ends by noting, "... Southern Baptists are beginning to reap what they have sown. In their fear of being overtaken by the left, Southern Baptists failed to recognize that a denomination can also be torn apart from the right. It has been a painful lesson to learn. We all lost, didn't we?"

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Stan Hastey, executive director of The Alliance of Baptists, offers a view similar to Leonard's in his account of the controversy from the moderate perspective. Hastey quotes Walter B. Shurden: "Fundamentalists have demonstrated clearly that they are not interested simply in the nature and authority of the Bible but in imposing their interpretation of the Bible on others" Thus, Hastey continues, "moderate leaders who concluded the struggle for control of the SBC was non-theological not only were wrong, they actually hurt the moderate cause by denying the full import of what was happening."

In addition to issues concerning theological disputes, Hastey also attributes the controversy to the need for control of SBC agencies and the participation in national politics by conservative Southern Baptists. He says "the primary objective of the inerrancy party was to gain control of the boards of trustees of the various seminaries, boards, and commissions of the SBC" and adds, "... nothing less than the purging of all 'liberals' and the placement of 'conservatives' in their places will suffice." Hastey also asserts "the new fundamentalist establishment was active from the beginning in a concerted effort to make of the SBC a reliable source of support for an ultraconservative national political agenda."

Hastey concludes his article by stating what he views to be the fatal weakness of SBC leaders prior to 1979 -- "entrenched elitism." He defines entrenched elitism as "the old establishment's earlier ability to accommodate leading fundamentalists without allowing them to take control" of the denomination. According to Hastey, this elitism, developed over several decades, resulted in turning the SBC into "an elaborate piece of ecclesiastical machinery in which vast power was vested in a relative handful of denominational bureaucrats" that invited "the kind of populist upheaval that overtook it."

James Hefley, president of Hefley Communications, Inc., begins his conservative response to Hastey's article by thanking the Historical Commission for allowing "this symposium on changes in the Southern Baptist Convention. Conservative, moderate, and otherwise, we need to learn from and sense the heartbeat of one another on the various issues -- even if we never agree."

Acknowledging "Hastey is quite correct in identifying other issues in the controversy," Hefley points out these issues "pale in comparison to the Bible question. There is a parallel here with election politics. A Bill Clinton staffer scrawled across a blackboard in campaign headquarters before the 1992 election: 'It's the economy, stupid.' Conservatives have been trying to tell all Southern Baptists: 'It's the Bible!'"

Hefley credits Hastey with conceding that "the old SBC, prior to the 'takeover' was ruled by an 'entrenched elitism' ... " and says, "Generally, I agree with Hastey's predictions on the future of the SBC, the old establishment, and new organizations" However, he disagrees with Hastey's assessment that "the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will not soon become a rival body to the SBC."

"In my judgement," Hefley writes, "the CBF is already a rival body, although they have not so announced." He concludes, "... I doubt if this colloquium between two moderates and two conservatives will change many minds."

"During its 148 years of history, the Southern Baptist Convention has been involved in numerous controversies, but none of them has impacted the convention as much as the current one," says Lynn E. May Jr., executive director of the Historical Commission and editor of the commission's journal. "Our goal in providing this issue of Baptist History and Heritage is to help the reader better understand differing views about the nature and causes of changes that have taken place in the SBC during the past 14 years. This straightforward identification of the issues at stake clearly shows why the controversy has been so intense."

Copies of "The Southern Baptist Convention 1979-1993: What Happened And Why?" are available for purchase from the Historical Commission by calling the commission toll-free at 1-800-966-BAPT.

David Dockery says inerrancy
is historic SBC position

By Norman O. Miller

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--"Theologians must remember that they are never superior to the revelation they explore," said David Dockery, guest lecturer at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's annual Page lecture series, Sept. 28-29, in Wake Forest, N.C.

Dockery, vice president for academic administration and dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., traced the Southern Baptist Convention's historical position on the authority and inspiration of the Bible from the SBC's establishment in 1845 to the current Southern Baptist view of Scripture.

"Some have asserted that the issue of inerrancy is a recent innovation, but that is just not the case," Dockery said. "The historic Southern Baptist position was the commonly held conviction that the Bible is the inspired, written and authoritative Word of God."

Dockery noted the "theological and political struggles" in the SBC during the last 14 years, saying, "The focal point of the struggle has been the affirmation or denial of the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, and the Southern Baptist Convention of the '90s has clearly decided that inerrancy cannot be ignored, de-emphasized or eliminated from the discussion. ... Theology is the bottom-line issue, and the core of that is the issue of the doctrine of Scripture."

Invoking the insight of the founder of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas, B.H. Carroll, Dockery told his audience of more than 600 people, "Much of the motivation for change in the SBC over the past two decades reflects Carroll's belief that churches and schools rise or fall according to their understanding of inspiration.

"I think we need to recognize, however, that our Baptist heritage has more than one stream to it, but there is one overriding stream -- a stream which is strongly confessional, strongly evangelical, and it needs to be re-examined and reclaimed," Dockery said.

"We have emphasized diversity over unity, and I believe there is a unity in the diverse stream of the SBC's historic view of Scripture. There is a major consensus reasserting itself now at the end of the 20th century, and the center of that consensus is built upon a strong affirmation of Scripture."

Dockery said the SBC cannot determine its contemporary identity solely from history. "Though history informs us and shapes us, it is not the ultimate shaper. History does, however, gives us parameters concerning biblical and theological exploration."

Citing the future challenges of theological education for Baptists in the 21st century, Dockery said they are "more diverse than any previous generation has faced: multi-ethnic and cultural issues, understanding how we do church -- contemporary, high church or revivalistic models."

"All of these challenges," he said, "can only be addressed from a sure foundation that the Word of God can speak to and through these different situations. That has to be at the center of all the other changes we have to address to do relevant theological education. ... A confidence that the Bible is trustworthy is foundational for all theological education."

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William Jewell's Kingsley
asks for immediate retirement

By Bob Terry

Baptist Press
10/5/93

LIBERTY, Mo. (BP)--In a surprise announcement, William Jewell College President J. Gordon Kingsley announced he has asked the school's trustees for early retirement, effective immediately.

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In a statement shared with the college community Oct. 1, Kingsley wrote, "Because of differences in administrative philosophy with the board of trustees, I have requested immediate early retirement from the presidency of William Jewell College."

The announcement was made simultaneously at a special called meeting of the William Jewell College faculty, administration and staff and at a student assembly attended by about 500 people.

Dean of the college, Jimmie E. Tanner, and vice president for student affairs, Gary Phelps, read the statement prepared by Kingsley to the respective groups. Kingsley was believed to be out of the city attending a board meeting of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago.

Tanner said Kingsley sent the statement, which had been worked out between the trustees and Kingsley. The announcement said, "It would serve no useful purpose to go into any details as to our differences." Kingsley said his primary interest was in the welfare of the college and he urged "fullest cooperation with the board of trustees, Dr. Tanner as the interim president and our succeeding president."

Tanner told the student newspaper he had assumed interim president responsibilities the previous day, Sept. 30.

Kingsley had been scheduled to speak at a Parents' Day convocation Oct. 2. However, he was not on campus. At the meeting, Tanner was introduced as interim president and no mention of Kingsley's request for early retirement was made.

Trustee chairman John White of Boston said he was surprised by the request for early retirement. "I have heard rumblings for a couple of days but I did not expect his request for early retirement," White said in a telephone interview. He added a special called meeting of the trustees has been set Oct. 13 because "there are some things in the request which require approval of the board of trustees."

White and other trustees contacted by the Missouri Baptist newsjournal Word & Way declined to comment on Kingsley's reference to "differences in administrative philosophy between the president and the trustees." White said additional information about Kingsley's request for early retirement might be available after the Oct. 13 meeting.

Contacted by the newspaper, Kingsley declined to comment beyond what he said in the statement read to the college community. "That statement was carefully worked out with the trustees and I just shouldn't say anything else," he said. "I'm sure the trustees will approve our agreement when they meet Oct. 13 and I have said all I can."

Kingsley said he had no immediate plans for the future.

In the statement read to faculty, staff and students, Kingsley said, "I do not intend to make any announcement of this to the general public."

When asked about the sudden retirement request, William Jewell public relations director Rob Eisele declined to comment, saying he was authorized only to say what was in the news release. His assistant Rebecca Morrison did tell the Kansas City Star newspaper Kingsley was not under investigation by the board of trustees for any wrongdoing.

Lack of explanation about Kingsley's surprise request has created confusion on the Liberty, Mo., campus, said the chairman of the William Jewell College Faculty Council, communications professor Lois Anne Harris.

"The phrase 'differences in administrative philosophy' leaves everyone to speculate what it means. I believe leaving the announcement there was more hurtful than helpful. It only generates speculation and does more harm to all the parties involved."

Harris said the announcement did not come as a surprise. "All week we knew a major change was fixing to happen. The students had hints. They were asking faculty if it were true that the president was going to resign."

"The faculty anticipated the president's departure. Walking into the meeting Friday was like walking into a funeral," she added. "The announcement just created sadness and confusion."

Harris said the faculty never questioned Kingsley's commitment to the college or to working in the best interests of the school, even when they differed with him.

White credited Kingsley for his own involvement with William Jewell. "My wife and I are graduates of William Jewell but we had not been very involved until the last seven or eight years," he explained. White made a major gift during the college's recent Leadership 2000 campaign in which more than \$27 million was raised. The school's new science building is named in his honor.

"Gordon Kingsley has been a very important leader for William Jewell College," White continued. "He has seen the school through things that would have been problems for other colleges. He has helped William Jewell be successful as a college."

Kingsley's request for early retirement is the second surprise departure of a major William Jewell College administrator in the last two months. On Aug. 4, Suzanne Patterson, vice president for institutional advancement, resigned without announcing future plans. She had been credited with directing the highly successful Leadership 2000 Campaign.

Since that time Kingsley has directly supervised institutional advancement efforts. Sandra Hader, vice president for business administration, will oversee that office in the interim period, Tanner said.

Kingsley was inaugurated as the school's 12th president in 1980. Prior to that time he had been a faculty member and dean. He was instrumental in establishing the college's overseas study programs in Oxford and Cambridge, England, and he initiated the Oxbridge Alternative, an honors tutorial program funded by the Hall Family Foundations.

During Kingsley's tenure as president, William Jewell was named among "America's Best Colleges" by US News & World Report five times. The college was listed in successive editions of Peterson's Guide to The Competitive Colleges and in Barron's Guide to the Most Prestigious Colleges and The Best, Most Popular and Most Exciting Colleges.

Endowment for the school has tripled during Kingsley's presidency, growing from a market value of \$15 million in 1980 to an estimated \$45 million in 1993.

Kingsley is a graduate of Mississippi College and holds graduate degrees from the University of Missouri and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Tanner is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and holds graduate degrees from the University of Oklahoma.

Currently William Jewell College has 1,354 day students on the Liberty campus and 431 students in the evening division for a total of 1,785.

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Latest RTVC special for ABC
to profile Alaska missions

Baptist Press
10/5/93

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"Northern Lights," the latest network special produced by the Radio and Television Commission, will begin airing on ABC-TV Oct. 10 (check local listings for time).

The one-hour documentary focuses on the faith and commitment of people living in the harsh, beautiful land of Alaska's Arctic Circle.

Produced and directed by Emmy winner Bernie Hargis, "Northern Lights" highlights the northernmost Southern Baptist church in the world and the missionary efforts of its pastor and members. It is narrated by motion picture star Peter Graves and combines videography with testimonies from faith pioneers challenged by the frontier.

RTVC cameras take the audience above the Arctic Circle to a mysterious, sparsely populated land where living is hard and where God's love is never taken for granted. Here, viewers meet Sid Martin, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Kotzebue, and his wife, Marsha.

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Kotzebue, 26 miles above the Arctic Circle in far northwest Alaska, is home to nearly 4,000 people, 75 percent of whom are Inupiaq Eskimos. There are no roads into or out of the town. Sid was a high school coach and taught biology in North Carolina when he sensed a call to permanent mission service in Alaska in March 1991.

The Martins had taken several mission trips to Seldovia, Alaska, before giving up their North Carolina home of 15 years to move to Alaska.

"We were willing to go anywhere God wanted us," Marsha said. "When we were asked to go to Alaska we assumed we would return to Seldovia. We were surprised that Kotzebue deep in the Arctic Circle was going to be our new home. We packed up our belongings and went to Kotzebue, sight unseen."

Now, Sid serves not only as pastor of First Baptist but also as minister to five villages, some of which are as far as 180 miles away. In winter and spring the settlements can be reached only by dog sled, snowmobile or plane. At times they are impossible to reach at all.

There is a great need for other missionaries in this part of the world, the couple noted, because they are only able to set up church in each village once every six weeks. "The majority of our work at First Baptist Church, Kotzebue, is done Monday through Wednesday and we spend Thursday and Friday traveling to the next remote village to set up church at that location," Sid said.

"Northern Lights" captures the adventuresome spirit of Christians intent on carrying out the Great Commission in America's largest state, a land of fewer than 500,000 souls. Another couple, Don and Sarah Haile, made a long journey from Illinois to the small village of Shungnak. There they operate a school nine months each year. Don is principal of the public school that covers kindergarten through 12th grade, and Sarah teaches.

The Martins and the Hailes, like Wycliffe translators Wolf and Hildegard Seiler, or bush pilot Matt Russell also profiled in the program, went to Alaska because of a call to help native Alaskans. It also recounts the work of Eskimos as they battle the loneliness and cold of the Alaskan winter -- like Bessie Cross, former mayor of Kotzebue, Sonny Russell, dog sled racer and Ester Norton who hand makes animal-skin coats.

The Radio and Television Commission produced "Northern Lights" as part of a series of programs on ABC developed by members of the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission, a coalition of five faith groups -- the National Council of Churches, the United States Catholic Conference, the New York Board of Rabbis and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America as well as Southern Baptists. Other programs in the series are scheduled on ABC Dec. 12 and Jan. 23, 1994.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the RTVC. For exact date and time of "Northern Lights" in local areas, contact IBC director Robin Denton at the RTVC, 1-800-777-1127.

Ruschlikon seminary plans
move, educational changes

Baptist Press
10/5/93

KISHINEV, Moldova (BP)--The Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, will move to an undetermined site outside Switzerland within the next three years.

The move is part of a comprehensive plan for the seminary approved by the council of the European Baptist Federation, which met Sept. 20-24 in Kishinev, Moldova.

It would locate the financially strapped seminary in a less-expensive country that also will be more flexible in granting visas to families of students, reported European Baptist Press Service. Swiss authorities have refused residence visas for student families since 1990.

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The seminary will either sell or lease its property on Lake Zurich, valued at about \$17 million, and apply property assets to endowments for scholarships and property development.

No new site has been selected, but EBPS cited Berlin and Prague, the Czech capital, as two leading contenders. The 44-year-old school was founded by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, but now is owned by the European Baptist Federation. Foreign Mission Board trustees, citing theological and philosophical differences, withdrew funding for the school at the end of 1991.

The comprehensive plan approved by the EBF council anchors the seminary's academic program within the European Baptist theological education system, EBPS reported. It calls for the seminary to maintain its traditional character as a center for multi-cultural and international education, emphasizing ministerial and missionary training.

The plan encourages partnerships with emerging theological schools in Eastern Europe and the existing Baptist schools of Western Europe. Baptist Theological Seminary courses will be redesigned to link with those of other European Baptist schools.

After completing theological education at national schools, students may enroll in the relocated Baptist Theological Seminary, advance their academic level to university status and prepare for doctoral studies at various European universities, EBPS said.

The new plan also calls for continuation and intensification of seminary satellite programs such as the Summer Institute for Theological Education, the International Baptist Lay Academy, the Institute for Mission and Evangelism and the Institute for Baptist and Anabaptist Studies.

Seminary President John David Hopper, a former Foreign Mission Board missionary now serving with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, welcomed the changes as a chance to lessen financial and student visa problems and "establish a strategy for the coming decade."

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