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October 21, 1994

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Texas pastor to propose limit  
of 'Cooperative Program' terms

By Toby Druin

Baptist Press  
10/21/94

DALLAS (BP)--A compromise will be proposed concerning "Cooperative Program" terminology in the report of a Cooperative Missions Giving Study Committee to the Baptist General Convention of Texas, which meets Oct. 31-Nov. 1 in Amarillo.

Michael Dean, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, said he will offer an amendment to the committee report to label gifts to Baptist causes apart from the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Southern Baptist Convention as "Cooperative Missions Giving" instead of "Cooperative Program" as proposed in the report.

The committee chairman, Cecil Ray, has responded stating the panel's proposed "Cooperative Program" terminology for gifts to a range of Baptist causes should be adopted.

Dean said he will offer the amendment when the committee report is presented at 3:25 p.m. Oct. 31 at the convention in the Amarillo Civic Center.

Dean will attempt to amend the third recommendation in the committee report. As stated by the committee, Recommendation 3 is as follows:

"3. That the Baptist General Convention of Texas will recognize and distribute as Texas Cooperative Program contributions, funds from the churches given in any or all of the following ways:

"(1) Gifts to the adopted budget of the Baptist General Convention of Texas (Texas missions and ministries) and the adopted budget of the Southern Baptist Convention according to the annually adopted percentage division between the two;

"(2) Gifts to the adopted budget of the Baptist General Convention of Texas (Texas missions and ministries); and

"(3) Gifts to the adopted budget of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and to other worldwide Baptist missions and ministries. These may include the Southern Baptist Convention, any agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, Woman's Missionary Union, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist World Alliance and other missions and ministries within the Baptist family.

"Note: The Baptist General Convention of Texas will continue to recognize the decision of a church to delete up to five line items in the Baptist General Convention of Texas budget and the Southern Baptist Convention budget and still count the contributions as Cooperative Program."

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Dean said he will offer an amendment that will replace (3) above, substituting in its place a Recommendation 4 as follows:

"That the BGCT will recognize and distribute as Cooperative Missions Giving those gifts to any other causes associated with Southern Baptists according to the instructions of the local church."

Dean said the amendment would cover gifts to such groups as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist World Alliance or any agencies of the SBC.

Dean, whose wife was a member of the study committee and has joined with four others in forming a minority report, said his idea for the recommendation came out of the discussions he and two other pastors, Darrel Rains of Pampa and John Hatch of Lake Jackson, had Oct. 13 in Dallas with study committee chairman Cecil Ray of Georgetown and committee members Dean Dickens of Dallas and Mary Humphries of San Marcos.

"What I am proposing is a form of compromise," said Dean, "because we are not going to be able to please everybody. But with this amendment I think we can adopt the committee report."

Ray, apprised of Dean's proposal, said as he understood it the amendment would provide Texas Baptists with the same provisions as the committee report but with alternative titles.

"I think there is greater strength in maintaining cooperative giving under one general heading of 'Texas Cooperative Program,'" Ray said. "I personally prefer keeping it under the title of 'Cooperative Program' and believe in the long run it will better serve Texas Baptists."

Hatch, who drafted the minority report, said after the Oct. 13 small group meeting that an amendment to the committee report might not preclude the minority report but was unavailable for comment on Dean's proposal. The minority report would provide that only gifts to the BGCT and/or SBC budgets be considered "Coop rative Program."

David Currie, coordinator of Texas Baptists Committed, which has pushed approval of the committee report, said Dean's proposal "is still an effort to leave a wedge in how we respect the gifts of local churches."

"I think of the committee report as the 'Texas Baptist Freedom and Respect Act,'" he said. "In it we are saying to local churches that they have the freedom to give as they choose and we, as a state convention, are going to respect those gifts equally."

"This proposed amendment does not respect gifts equally. It creates a separate but equal doctrine, which in America we consider unconstitutional and I would consider unbaptistic."

"It is saying that a gift sent directly to the Home Mission Board, the Foreign Mission Board, the Baptist Joint Committee, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or Truett Seminary is not going to be counted equally as if it were given to the Executive Committee of the SBC, and that is not good Baptist polity."

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Alabama friends recount  
new Miss America's faith

By Mark Baggett

Baptist Press  
10/21/94

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Heather Whitestone is a rare gem, say her Alabama Baptist friends who welcomed her back to the state for a mid-October homecoming after winning her Miss America crown the previous month.

Those who know her from her years in Birmingham and as a student at Alabama's Jacksonville State University say her Christian faith motivates all she does. "I don't see Heather as one for whom the bright lights of success will affect her faith," said Chuck Carter, pastor of Green Valley Baptist Church's south campus in Birmingham.

Whitestone began coming to the church almost a year ago and immediately began to work with the church's deaf ministry.

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"She has built relationships with those in the ministry and has been an encourager," Carter said. "Last Easter, she shared her testimony and made an impact on everyone present. She has just been an inspiration to those around her, and now that we won't see too much of her this year, our job is to pray for her."

Inevitably, the word used to describe Whitestone is "genuine."

"She is a lovely person, very down to earth, very genuine -- what you see is what you get," said Bob Ford, Baptist campus minister at Jacksonville State.

It was at one of their weekly Tuesday night worship services that Ford and the students in campus ministries got to see Whitestone perform the sacred ballet that propelled her to the top of the Miss Alabama and Miss America pageants.

At both the Baptist campus ministry and Jacksonville's First Baptist Church, Whitestone's work with other hearing-impaired persons became the seed for deaf ministries which continue.

Jane Rice Holloway, the 1973 Miss Alabama and wife of First Baptist pastor John Holloway, remembered Whitestone's first preliminary pageant, Miss Goose Pond Colony in Scottsboro, which Whitestone did not win but performed well. Holloway knew Whitestone's character and talent would take her a long way.

"She came to see me as a freshman, wanting to talk about the pros and cons of the Miss Alabama pageant," Holloway recounted. "I felt from the beginning that she had the intelligence, poise and talent to do well, and I knew her talent would win her scholarships. She is a compassionate, stable, consistent person who speaks her mind frankly. She will do an excellent job as Miss America because she is extremely hard-working."

As part of the youth group at Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham, Whitestone made a profession of faith in the 11th grade.

She had grown up in the Episcopal church but started attending a Baptist church in St. Louis while attending a nationally known school for the deaf there. She also learned about God through closed-caption worship services on television.

Her faith grew and became inseparably linked to her talent in dance. Responding to the faint traces of the music that she counts out in her dancing, Whitestone spent night after night in the basement of Sparkman Hall during her freshman year on the Jacksonville State campus, turning on the music and moving about freely, following her own graceful patterns.

Danny Blair, associate pastor and worship leader at Green Valley South in Birmingham, thinks Whitestone has a gift for ministry. Working with Whitestone and with his wife, Angela, who also is profoundly deaf and knew Whitestone at Jacksonville State, Blair and the church have started the Deaf Christian Fellowship (DCF).

At first, the church provided an interpreter for the 15-20 deaf worshipers; then a deaf preacher led a separate service. Now, in large part because of Whitestone's suggestions, the DCF meets the first part of the service with the larger congregation and then separates for the sermon.

"Heather loves people and has a heart for ministry," Blair said. "The frustration she's experienced between the hearing and the deaf worlds is due to the fact that she gets along well in both. She has not wanted to exclude either one. She's just wanted to be herself.

"And that has transferred over to her ministry, where she has a real sympathy and a burden for young people trying to find themselves. She is philanthropic by nature and has indicated that when this is all over, she will use her gifts to support people. Actually, this is just the tip of the iceberg. If the Lord leaves her here, she will make a difference," Blair said.

Another of her mentors and close friends agrees.

"She has the purest heart," said Teresa Cheatham Stricklin, a 1978 Miss Alabama who knew Whitestone at Jacksonville State and worked with her two years ago in preparing for the Miss Alabama pageant. "She is truly a Christ-molded young lady."

Stricklin, now coordinator of recruiting at Jacksonville State, remembered meeting Whitestone and her mother at the university on a tour of the campus. In trying to communicate Stricklin's name to Whitestone, one of the student workers pointed to the picture of Stricklin winning Miss Alabama. Whitestone's interest in pageants led to a mutual admiration and to Whitestone's eventually becoming Miss Jacksonville State University.

"I saw a beautiful dancer and a beautiful person," said Stricklin, a member of First Baptist at Jacksonville. "What she gets comes straight from God, from reading Scripture. She doesn't hear all the subtleties, the undercurrents we hear. She takes her faith at face value. She has a special wisdom from God."

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**Frank Black dies at 75;  
was longtime RA official**

**By Steve Barber**

**Baptist Press  
10/21/94**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Frank Black, an employee of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission for 29 years who wrote the Royal Ambassador Pledge still in use, died Oct. 21 in Memphis.

Black, 75, suffered heart fibrillation Oct. 14. He slipped into a coma and did not recover.

"We have lost a giant in the field of missions education for boys," said James D. Williams, president of the Brotherhood Commission. "The number of boys and young men who have been influenced by Frank's work is absolutely beyond counting. His family and loved ones are very much in our thoughts today.

Black joined the Brotherhood Commission May 1, 1955 as an assistant to Edward Hurt Jr., who was associate secretary in charge of Boy's Work. Both had arrived in Memphis that year to lead Royal Ambassador work after the 1954 Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in St. Louis, had transferred responsibility for RAs from Woman's Missionary Union to Brotherhood.

In addition to the Royal Ambassador Pledge, Black wrote and edited the first set of RA advancement books (Page, Squire and Knight), the first edition of Royal Ambassador Campcraft and various RA training materials. Before his retirement in 1984, Black also served four years as associate director of the Brotherhood Commission's Baptist Men department.

After retirement, he continued to work for the Brotherhood Commission on a contract basis. He also served as director of the International Legion of Royal Ambassador Leaders, which honors longtime service with the RA organization, since its founding in 1989.

Black was born in Calhoun County, Miss., and served in the Army Air Corps during World War II and the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He was a district Boy Scout executive in Brookhaven, Miss., before joining the Brotherhood Commission.

He is survived by his wife, Agnes, a son, Robert, and a daughter, Betty Green. Services are scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 22. Visitation is scheduled for noon until 1:30 p.m. at Lee Memorial Funeral Home in Okolona, Miss. Graveside services will follow at 2 p.m.

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**Seminary students tapping  
high-tech research partner**

**By Debbie Moore**

**Baptist Press  
10/21/94**

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Computers now hum throughout the quiet aisles of the John T. Christian Library on the campus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Besides students' ubiquitous laptop and sub-notebook computers, now Marquis, a state-of-the-art, on-line public access catalog (OPAC) system, is in full operation at the seminary, making the old card catalog system obsolete.

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"This computer system will revolutionize research," said Ken Taylor, library director. "Research techniques will be not only easier but also faster."

In the old days students had to stand in the library lobby and pull multiple card catalog drawers to read one bibliographic card at a time, then walk up to the second floor, only to discover the book they needed already had been checked out.

Now students and faculty may use any of nine terminals located throughout the library, type a name or term, click a "mouse," then view on color monitors all the books meeting their search criteria. The computer system does all the searching for them, even letting them know if the book is not in. If the book is checked out, patrons type a command into the computer system to reserve the book for them when the book is returned to the library. Then, when the book is next processed, the library staff will notify the patron concerning the book's availability.

Seminarians probably will wonder how they ever began research papers with just a card catalog.

But one of the most amazing features of Marquis is NOBTS scholars -- whether they live on the main campus or attend school at one of the seminary's extension center campuses across the Southeast -- now may access the library's holdings from wherever they are via personal computers, 24 hours a day. Students and faculty can see not only bibliographic information on a computer screen in the comfort of their home, but also may request books to be mailed to them at no charge. The only cost will be in returning books.

The NOBTS library has roughly 200,000 volumes. Unlike the old card catalog, now even the library's periodicals will be listed on the computer system. A media module to catalog audio-visual items also will be available within the year.

"We are working toward having every library item on the system very soon, and as new items arrive, they will be added only to Marquis," said Connie Pong, director of technical services for the library. Also, as soon as a book is ordered for the library, it will be shown in the database to library patrons as "on order."

Marquis, the name of the software the computers are using, is a product of Dynix, the world's largest provider of library automation software. Designed for highly specialized collections, Marquis was installed by the NOBTS computer services department to meet the library's particular needs; Laurie Story Watts, NOBTS director of computer services, has overseen the project from the beginning. Marquis software currently is used by 40 libraries across the nation, including Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky, the University of Mississippi Medical Center and the University of Alabama at Birmingham Health Sciences Library.

"Even students who have absolutely no computer experience feel comfortable operating the system once they give it a try," said James Byrd, the library's circulation assistant. "All the students who have tried the computers have been amazed at how quick and thorough the process is. Once they actually get on a computer and try it out, they're sold."

"One of the benefits of the system is the ability to cross reference," said Eric Benoy, circulation/reference librarian. "You can find all the books you want on a topic, then combine search terms to narrow down the list so you can obtain precisely what you need." Within seconds, searches can be limited by over 20 different criteria, including dates, authors and call numbers, or even rearrangement chronologically in ascending or descending order.

Computer printers are also available alongside the terminals for library patrons to take up to five pages of their newly found information with them. Or, they can choose to download the bibliographic reference information from Marquis to their own disks for use in their own personal computers.

Marquis' OPAC will benefit not only researchers but also will assist the staff by streamlining procurement and circulation of materials.

In an increasingly computerized world, the NOBTS library's new automated catalog will prove to be a valuable tool in educating theologians for the 21st century.

Rwandan family that escaped  
thanks Baptists for help

By Craig Bird

DURHAM, N.H. (BP)--Jean-Marie Higiroy wasn't one of a million. Nor are he and his family among the millions. And he appreciates it.

Higiroy's dramatic escape from Hutu militia death squads in Rwanda last April, and subsequent battle to avoid assignment to a refugee camp with his family, were the subject of several Baptist Press stories. Now he lives in Durham, N.H.

He credits God's protection with sparing him and his family from the fate of an estimated 1 million Rwandans hacked to death by Hutu extremists working from death lists.

Most of the victims were members of the Tutsi ethnic minority targeted by the killers. But a significant number -- like Higiroy, a government official -- were Hutus active in political organizations opposed to the "pure Hutu" emphasis of the ruling party.

Higiroy recently wrote to thank unexpected allies in his effort to enter the United States: Southern Baptists.

"My wife and I don't have words to translate our feelings about (Southern Baptists') contributions to getting us out of Nairobi, Kenya, and our resettlement in the U.S.A.," Higiroy wrote in a recent letter. "From the bottom of our hearts we say 'thank you.'"

Having avoided the common graves of the 1 million killed, he didn't want his family to join the millions of Rwandan refugees scattered around Tanzania, Zaire and Burundi.

"If given a chance I have the skill to support myself," he insisted. "I won't need others to feed and house me and my family."

His 12-year-old daughter has an American passport, since she was born while Higiroy was doing graduate work in the United States. That was enough to get the entire family -- after a narrow escape from the death squads -- into a car convoy out of Rwanda and aboard a military plane to Nairobi.

They arrived with no money, no idea how to contact Mrs. Higiroy's sister in Nairobi -- nothing except the clothes they were wearing and gratitude they had not been murdered. The family accepted an offer to stay at Brackenhurst Baptist International Center and were befriended there by Southern Baptist missionaries who also had evacuated Rwanda.

The missionaries contacted American journalists, who reported the escape and also the fact Higiroy's family -- despite his doctoral degree in communications from the University of Texas-Austin -- faced life as dependent, destitute refugees. They could not enter the United States on their daughter's passport.

Individual Southern Baptists like Mr. and Mrs. Larry Fox in Fort Worth, Texas, joined Baptist Press, newspapers in Texas and New York and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs to raise interest in the family. Friends and professional colleagues also pled his case with the U.S. government.

Higiroy said personnel at the United States Embassy in Nairobi also worked tirelessly to get him certified as a political refugee instead of an economic one -- which meant he could come to the United States.

Finally, in July, the family flew to America. Higiroy received an appointment as visiting professor in communications at the University of New Hampshire-Durham.

Ken Lyle, now executive director-treasurer of the Baptist Convention of New England, has been in contact with the family. Lyle headed the Baptist Convention of Maryland-Delaware in the late 1980s when that convention had a mission partnership with Rwanda.

Interestingly, Higiroy, who is Roman Catholic, had never heard of Baptist work in Rwanda before the evacuation.

But now, thankful for his million-to-one chance of escaping the sea of death and destitution in his homeland, he will never forget what Baptists did for him when he needed it most.

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EDITORS' NOTE: The Richmond bureau of Baptist Press released a photo of the Higiroys April 28.

Low self-esteem is beatable  
even in winter years of life

By Terri Lackey

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Senior adults who suffer from a low self-image can take practical steps even in the winter of their lives to combat their feelings of unworthiness, the editor of a national senior adult magazine said.

"Sometimes we wonder how in the world we can get to this stage of our lives where we have witnessed so many blessings and still have low self-esteem," Al Shackelford, editor of Mature Living magazine, said to a group senior adults attending a Chautauqua Oct. 17-21 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Shackelford said today's senior adult males grew up associating their self-esteem with their jobs and senior adult females linked it to their families.

"Well, for most of you, both of those are gone. You're retired by now probably, and your children have left the home to start their own lives," he noted.

Shackelford said some senior adults suffer from low self-image because the world doesn't treat them with proper respect. "The world says, 'These people are from another day. They don't know anything about our new technology.'"

As Christian senior adults, Shackelford said they should accept the challenge to see themselves as very important people.

"God created you in his image. He could have created us all with a dull gray finish, with the same eyes, the same weight, the same abilities and interests, but he made us all different. He made us all like him, but with our own stuff. That's important for us to remember wherever we go and whatever we do."

Shackelford offered some practical steps for senior adults interested in working on their self-esteem, including improving the quality of their lives in three specific areas -- physical, mental and spiritual.

He said senior adults should start by toning up their physical lives. That includes eating right, getting plenty of rest and regular exercise.

"Our bodies are not as pretty as they used to be and we have a lot of aches and pains. Maybe we can't run marathons, but the main purpose is to keep our body in good order so God can use it for his work," he said.

Eating right means starting off with a good nutritious breakfast, eating a lot of vegetables and fruit and drinking a lot of water, he said.

"Plan activities you enjoy doing to keep you from snacking all day. I know when it's raining or cold outside and I don't want to get out there, I'll grab a handful of cookies every time I pass the kitchen. Just keep yourselves busy so you won't do what I sometimes do."

Older adults need more rest in their senior years than they did when they were young, Shackelford said.

"You need at least eight hours and maybe more. I know a lot of people like to brag about how little sleep they need, but feeling rested contributes to a higher self-esteem."

As far as regular exercise, Shackelford said nothing can beat walking for its convenience and low cost. "All you need is a good pair of shoes and some loose clothing. As your body feels good, your self-esteem goes up."

Shackelford advised senior adults who live alone to get up and get dressed each morning "to feel better about yourselves."

"Don't go around the house all day in your grungy bathrobe. It's nice to be lazy, but that does something to your self-image. Get up, eat breakfast, take a shower and put on some nice, bright clothes. You need to care about how you look even if nobody is looking at you."

Shackelford told the senior adults they could help their self-esteem by exercising their minds.

"You need to set some goals and plans and things you would like to accomplish. That's what keeps us going."

"Remember when you used to say, I wish I had time for more Bible study and prayer and devotion? Well, now you do."

"Keep your mind active. Did you know that 10 percent of all college students are above 50 years of age?"

Senior adults can help themselves spiritually by spending time in relationships with others and with God, Shackleford said.

"Look around you for mission opportunities. You are givers. You are a generation of people who care for others. Look around and see if there isn't something you would like to do for others in the name of God."

Shackleford listed 10 ways senior adults can build their self-esteem. They are:

1. Conduct a personal inventory listing personal assets, identifying goals, beliefs, liabilities and specific actions to turn liabilities into assets.
2. Map out a plan. Review your assets, your goals, your beliefs.
3. Just do it.
4. Stop comparing yourself to others.
5. Acknowledge your strengths.
6. Stare down your greatest fear. Admit it, face the fact, recognize it, be hop ful.
7. Get up and get out.
8. Adopt healthy habits.
9. Start giving to others.
10. Renew your vision for your life.

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Historical Commission expands  
toll-free line to Hawaii, Alaska

Baptist Press  
10/21/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Beginning Oct. 18, the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention expanded its toll-free line to receive calls from Hawaii and Alaska.

With a successful first year of toll-free 1-800 service completed in January 1994, the commission has extended its regular coast-to-coast service to Hawaii and Alaska in anticipation of the SBC's 150th anniversary year.

"The Historical Commission wants to help all SBC churches prepare for the 1995 observance," said Lynn E. May Jr., commission executive-director. "Now churches in Hawaii and Alaska can reach us despite the difference in time zones. Even after office hours, callers can place orders or leave messages if they have further questions."

To help churches prepare for the SBC's 150th anniversary, the commission has prepared two resources available through the toll-free service: "Guidelines for Celebrating 150 Years of Southern Baptist Heritage," a free item, and "One Sacred Effort," a new videotape featuring a contemporary look at 150 years of Southern Baptist work. Orders of the videotape placed before Dec. 31 receive a 20 percent discount.

The commission's toll free number is 1-800-966-BAPT.

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Ethridge to leave FMB,  
promote CP in S. Carolina

Baptist Press  
10/21/94

WHITE OAK, S.C. (BP)--Robert "Bob" Ethridge, an assistant vice president at the Foreign Mission Board, has been elected Cooperative Program and resource development director by the general board of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

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Ethridge will be responsible for coordinating a process for marketing the Cooperative Program and other means of church giving in support of work related to South Carolina Baptist Convention and for developing resources for support of the work.

Ethridge is assistant vice president for strategy in the Foreign Mission Board's office of communications. He joined the FMB staff in 1983 as a media designer and later was director of the audiovisual department.

Prior to serving the Foreign Mission Board, Ethridge was public relations specialist for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn. He also was assistant professor and public relations director at Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis.

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CORRECTIONS: In (BP) story titled "Southwestern trustees begin Ken Hemphill era," dated 10/20/94, please correct a portion of the second paragraph to read: ... seminary's first full-time faculty member in the school of theology ...

Also, in (BP) story titled "Jo Ann Leavell: Contented as a pastor's wife," in the same issue, please correct the first sentence of the third paragraph to read: Leavell has been a pastor's wife 41 years ... (not 36)

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

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