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November 23, 1994

94-191

FLORIDA--SBC president hosts listening session with young pastors.  
ZAIRE--FMB official: Refugee relief not affected by corruption.  
VIRGINIA--'Want ads' for missionaries top 700 at Foreign Mission Board; graphic.  
VIRGINIA--New generations must answer the call to foreign missions; photo.  
VIRGINIA--The call to missions: What does it mean?  
VIRGINIA--Questions to help answer: Are you called to missions?  
KENTUCKY--Church gives more than asked to missions work.  
TENNESSEE--BSSB to delay changing quarterly release dates.  
ALABAMA--Alabama convention defuses Samford, Mobile controversies.  
MICHIGAN--Michigan Baptists elect Collins to succeed Wilson.  
TENNESSEE--Union Univ. administrators announce retirement plans.  
NEW ORLEANS--Penrose St. Amant, 79, dies; left legacy in church history.

**SBC president hosts listening  
session with young pastors**

**By Herb Hollinger**

**Baptist Press  
11/23/94**

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--"I wanted to hear the heartbeat of some of the younger pastors in a face-to-face session."

Jim Henry, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said that was the reason he hosted 60 pastors Nov. 18 for an "input" session.

Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., invited about 90 pastors for a six-hour meeting at an Orlando airport hotel.

"We had about 60 pastors, made up predominantly of those in their 30s and 40s, from across the country who came together to brainstorm and pray together about the future," Henry told Baptist Press.

Th input was "excellent," the dialogue "honest" and the results "helpful as we build stronger lines of understanding and communication in our SBC family," Henry said.

Th emphasis was to listen to the young pastors, he said, but "I had opportunity to share my heart.

"One of the most meaningful moments occurred when they asked me to kneel in the middle of the room and they gathered around me for a period of intercessory prayer," Henry said.

Five points discussed at the meeting, according to Henry:

- 1) "What are the rallying points, the strengths, the positive, the possibilities in our Southern Baptist churches and denomination and what can we do to call our people to be God's people in a spiritually anemic culture?"
- 2) "How do we move toward greater representation of ethnic groups?"
- 3) "What recommendations would you suggest in helping our seminaries to better prepare students for ministry?"
- 4) "What role do you see the state conventions and associations playing in the future?"
- 5) "How can we build greater support for our Cooperative Program and SBC?"

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Southern Baptists "should be heartened when they see the rising tide of younger leadership in our SBC churches," Henry said. "My sense from this representation group is: Let's move forward, the best is yet if we exalt Jesus Christ, submit ourselves to his Lordship, focus on Kingdom of God priorities and pray for a sweeping revival in our churches."

A church official said the invitation list did not include any SBC officials or officers and was a list put together by Henry. Each pastor provided for his own expenses, the official said.

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**FMB official: Refugee relief  
not affected by corruption**

By Mark Kelly

**Baptist Press  
11/23/94**

GOMA, Zaire (BP)--Corruption keeping food aid from reaching many Rwandan refugees in Zaire has not prevented Southern Baptist relief donations from reaching needy refugees, a Foreign Mission Board spokesman said.

Relief efforts administered by the board have avoided a corrupt distribution system because Southern Baptist missionaries directly supervise the distribution of humanitarian relief, said James Westmoreland, FMB associate area director for eastern and southern Africa.

Malnutrition has increased by 15 percent in many refugee camps, even though international relief groups are delivering 25 percent more food than needed to feed the estimated 825,000 refugees, according to media reports.

Spokesmen for relief organizations blame the rising malnutrition on a distribution system that allows Rwandan militiamen and former Rwandan government officials to sell foodstuffs delivered by aid groups.

"Everything Southern Baptists send in for Rwandan refugee relief is personally monitored by missionary personnel," Westmoreland said. "They make sure the relief donations get where they are supposed to go."

Southern Baptist missionaries are involved in humanitarian relief efforts in an orphans' camp at Goma, Zaire, and a refugee camp at Bukoba, Tanzania. Donations for those efforts may be designated to hunger and relief, c/o Foreign Mission Board, SBC, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-6767.

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**'Want ads' for missionaries  
top 700 at Foreign Mission Board** By Erich Bridges

**Baptist Press  
11/23/94**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--"Want ads" for new Southern Baptist foreign missionaries in 1995 have topped 700.

The list of new co-workers sought by missionaries around the world total d 708 in late November, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board reports. Some of the requests call for or are likely to be filled by married couples, so the actual number of missionaries needed to fill all the assignments could be much higher.

Requests for church starters and developers once again lead the list, along with other church-related workers such as seminary teachers, musicians and student and youth workers.

But the mission fields also need general educators, physicians, dentists, nurses, media workers, engineers, agriculturists, veterinarians, social workers, business people, secretaries and others.

The Foreign Mission Board is seeking nearly 600 new missionary church starters and developers, evangelists, theological teachers and other church-related workers for 1995. Requests for other types of general educators and medical workers total 129.

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Jobs also await 70 missionaries skilled in media ministries, business and other mission support services. Another 50 assignments call for missionaries trained in community development, social ministry, agriculture, veterinary medicine and related fields.

If you add up all these totals, you get more than 800. That's because some specific missionary job requests appear in more than one category.

Church planting remains "the key request, because it's the major part of what we do," said Jim Riddell, FMB associate director for mission personnel.

"But we have a wider array of job options available," he said, not only because of the wide variety of mission needs and ministries worldwide, but because "in many places we can't get someone in the country strictly as a church planter. So we must have other roles for people to fill."

The board's 10 area directors -- assigned to different world regions -- have highlighted 15 key assignments each from the overall list for a global "top 150" priority list.

While no single region dominates the priority list, the board is looking hard for missionaries to help it meet a major commitment to expand missions in Eastern Europe over the next few years.

"We are facing great challenges in Eastern Europe," said Europe area director John Floyd earlier this year. "One (of several challenges) is the fact that present openness may not remain long. Indeed, in some areas former communist political leaders have now been re-elected to positions of national leadership. And subtle oppression and even open hostility from the Orthodox Church and others continues."

Riddell also cited continuing "tremendous needs" in the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and "World A" -- a term for the many places and peoples virtually untouched by the gospel.

Here's a sample from the priority missionary "want ads":

-- missionaries to develop evangelism and Sunday school ministries in Russia and Ukraine.

-- a missionary to start a church in a city of at least 50,000 people in Lithuania.

-- church planters for Albania, Poland and Romania, and a missionary to strengthen existing congregations in Croatia and Bosnia.

-- a surgeon, an obstetrician-gynecologist, a hospital administrator, a family practice doctor and a community developer for Yemen.

-- a church developer and an outreach specialist for Gaza, and a student minister for Morocco.

-- strategy coordinators to design ways to evangelize large unreached people groups in China, Africa, the Middle East, Indonesia and southwest Asia.

-- church planters/developers for Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Thailand.

-- a combination church planter/physician for Nepal.

-- evangelists, church planters and developers for Senegal, Togo, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Malawi.

-- a community developer/agriculturist for the Niger Republic, veterinarians for Guinea and Eritrea, and a community health worker for Uganda.

-- church planters and developers for Bolivia, Colombia, Uruguay, Ecuador, Chile, Peru and Argentina, and a seminary teacher for Argentina.

-- religious education consultants and church planters and developers for Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, Honduras and Costa Rica.

-- a literature ministry business manager for Nicaragua.

-- a media producer for Christian radio and TV programs in Brazil and the Caribbean.

-- a social worker to help expand ministries to slum dwellers in Brazil.

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(BP) graphic illustration (horizontal) mailed Nov. 18 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Graphic and cutline available on SBCNet News Room.

New generations must answer  
the call to foreign missions      By David Williard

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Missionary opportunities have never been greater, and mission leaders say God is calling Christians to seize the moment to bring the gospel of Christ to the world.

But fewer people, it seems, are answering the call.

Such is the dilemma facing the evangelical missions community. The world needs 200,000 new missionaries now, and "half should come from the United States," declared George Verwer, a leader in the A.D. 2000 and Beyond Movement, earlier this year. More recently, European Christians suggested they need 20,000 missionary workers to "re-evangelize" Europe.

Yet Western evangelical missionary ranks are shrinking, not growing. As late as 1988, 50,000 career missionaries hailed from America alone. Four years later, that number had plummeted to 41,000. As post-World War II missionaries have retired, not enough members of a younger generation have stepped forward to take their place. Those who do don't stay as long on the mission field.

The problem, some say: Churches of the West have lost confidence, turned inward, become sanctuaries of retreat rather than launching pads. Others suggest the problem lies in values reflected by the baby boom generation. (The effect the boomers' children -- dubbed the "baby busters" or "Generation X" -- will have on missions is yet to be seen.)

Research indicates boomers' emphases on individual fulfillment and short-term commitment make it hard for them to seriously consider God's call. How is this dilemma affecting Southern Baptists? Many missions-minded churches continue to send people forth. Others, however, seem to have become distracted by home-grown concerns.

Opportunities, meanwhile, continue to expand.

"God is on a roll!" declared Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin while describing the climate for global missions.

"That's the only way to explain what's happening: the countries that are opening, the people groups that are being touched, the social upheaval, the cultural transition," he said. "It's the hand of God moving," not the result of U.S. foreign policy or Foreign Mission Board strategy.

Mission reports show record baptisms and church starts in successive years and increasing inroads into parts of the world with virtually no Christian witness.

"I'm convinced 1 million people would come to Christ today if they were only told the gospel," said FMB senior vice president Avery Willis. "But who will tell them?"

Southern Baptists are responding. The FMB missionary force has surpassed 4,000. And the "pipeline" leading to appointment has more than 3,000 people in regular contact with the board to explore their future in missions.

Who are they?

"These are people who could be very successful right here in America," said Pat Bullock, vice chairman of the FMB trustee personnel committee. "I've been astounded ... at the education, skills and talents they bring."

They represent a cross-section of the Southern Baptist constituency.

"Basically they are healthy people," observed Henry Holland, one of two psychiatrists who works with the board in its missionary candidate-screening process. In many ways, they are the same as those he saw more than 20 years ago when he began his association with the mission board.

"With all the changes in the Southern Baptist Convention, the candidates ... still say the same things as in 1974," he said. They see the needs of the world and express willingness to make personal sacrifices to meet them.

If candidates say the same things as those a generation before, some also say more about topics previously taboo -- including past use of alcohol and marijuana, sexual experimentation or abuse they suffered as children.

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Holland called working with the missionary candidates "a window of hope." He is amazed by how "many of these people have had (tremendously painful) life experiences and have overcome them without professional help."

Most missionary candidates today represent the last group of baby boomers -- Americans born between 1946 and 1964. The average age of a missionary appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1993 was 34.6 years, up from 31.2 years in 1983. About 50 percent of the mission force fall into this category.

Boomer mentality, on the surface, may not seem conducive to career missions. After all, they're the rock 'n' roll generation, status-conscious, fad followers, experimenters with drugs, entertainment-oriented.

But other boomer characteristics can enhance mission service. Boomers tend to be work-oriented, loyal to a task instead of an employer or career, individualistic rather than group-oriented, and desirous of a "personal sense of value" -- all potentially positive traits in a missionary.

Southern Baptist foreign missionaries exhibit some of these traits, reports a study by Jim Slack, FMB consultant on church growth and evangelism.

His findings suggest boomer influence has been felt in several ways: 1) discussions of money matters have increased; 2) personal fulfillment more often defines missionary calling and duration of service; 3) many missionaries assume they will change jobs on the mission field and may move beyond missionary service at some time in the future.

These traits identified in young missionaries also appear in those seeking appointment. One of the first things they challenge is the "traditional" call to missions.

"It used to be when someone was called, it meant they would automatically spend their life on the mission field," said Jim Riddell, associate director of missionary personnel selection. "Now when they come to us, that's not an assumption. Now when someone says, 'I'm called,' often it's like there's a tag on it: 'I'm called for now.'"

The term this generation seems to have applied to the call is "dynamic." There's an implicit recognition it can change, that God can speak to a person successively. Indeed, in recent years the board has encouraged experienced missionaries to change assignments to open work in places once closed to missions, like the former Soviet Union. It also encourages mission candidates to try short-term service as a way to test a lifetime call.

But to contemplate a missionary force in which "career" appointees only sign on for five years or so is to foresee the undermining of the Foreign Mission Board's career missionary philosophy.

"It destroys the dynamism if you start out saying, 'I'll go into this, but I know I can get out anytime I don't feel good about it,'" observed veteran missions leader Winston Crawley.

According to a 1992 report Slack prepared, "change of call" was given by a more than 2-to-1 ratio over the next most-cited reason why missionaries resigned. (Researchers caution that "change of call" has become a convenient term to cover resignations due to a variety of reasons.)

Still, "if baby boomers are resigning earlier, that evidence has not shown up yet in the statistics," Slack said. FMB missionary attrition levels -- at under 5 percent, among the best of any missionary-sending agency -- have remained fairly level over the past decade.

But a decrease in the number of career missionary appointees has occurred. The total missionary count is up, but the number of career appointees is not. Last year 223 career and associate missionaries were sent out. That's better than the 205 posted in 1992 and 209 in 1991. But it falls significantly below the annual figures from 1984 to 1987, which were 276, 304, 292 and 283.

If God is moving in unprecedented ways, why aren't tens of thousands of Southern Baptists responding? Riddell's reply: "Tens of thousands are. They are going as volunteers or through short-term programs."

Sacrifices demanded by career missionary service are high. Few in any era have been prepared to make them. Maybe boomers respond to career missions as they hear God's call -- and they just aren't hearing it, at least not in their churches.

Southern Baptist missions supporters are calling on churches once again to "call out the called." In the past, many assumed denominational missions ranked high in Southern Baptist churches. A report prepared for the Foreign Mission Board by 20/20 Research concluded that assumption is no longer valid:

- "churches tended to be more inwardly focused, more concerned with their congregations and local missions functions ... than with foreign missions;"
- respondents "were aware of missions functions and activities" but "were not overly enthusiastic about them;"
- "foreign missions activities were not a top priority;" and
- "there was not a great desire on the part of the respondents to become personally involved in foreign missions activities" and most "indicated that they would not like to assist a missionary on an interim basis and most certainly they would not like to become a career missionary."

Yet some churches still consistently send forth missionaries.

"Missionaries often come in clusters from the same congregations, while other churches never seem to produce a missionary, and most of the members never consider becoming a missionary," writes FMB Executive Vice President Don Kammerdiener. "One obvious explanation: Churches that produce missionaries tend to hear biblical preaching on missions."

FMB trustee Bullock, himself a pastor, suggests Southern Baptist pastors may be the "weak link" that allowed career appointees totals to turn downward. "I'm blaming it on them, and as I do that I'm accusing myself," he said. "We must go back to a sense of repentance of self-centeredness and from the pulpits shout that God has called us all to be missionaries."

Critical issues facing future missionaries include the growing number of refugees, continuing growth of Islam and of secularism, and expansion of the numbers of people with intense human need. One of the most exciting challenges: reaching whole people groups that are unevangelized.

The Foreign Mission Board remains committed to the career missionary concept while trying to act as a bridge to the field for people motivated toward short-term missions involvement.

"The call to missions is the call to make a difference," Crawley said. "In order to have an impact, you have to be there long enough, and be deeply involved enough, to make a difference. Superficial doesn't really cut it in today's world."

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed Nov. 18 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet News Room. Williard is associate editor for The Commission, magazine of the Foreign Mission Board. This story and the one below were adapted from its Sept.-Oct. issue.

The call to missions:  
What does it mean?

By David Williard

Baptist Press  
11/23/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Timothy Swihart got "the call" in the blink of an eye.

He attended a mission information conference one day on an impulse. Suddenly everything changed.

"As I listened to the missionaries ... God, in one instant, lined up all the spiritual markers in my life to reveal to me that mission service is what he had been preparing me for all this time," said Swihart, now a Southern Baptist missionary to South Korea. "I was so overwhelmed by the clarity of his call that I literally ran to find my wife and see what God was doing in her life."

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For missionary Karen Bullington, now in the Dominican Republic, the call came much more deliberately.

"My call to missions really began with my salvation experience," she reflected. "My call has grown slowly inside of me as I have tried to follow God's leadership in every area of my life. God led me to pursue a career in medicine and during my training consistently directed me toward foreign missions."

Some missionaries talk of having been "shaken." A few mention dreams. Others have heard a voice -- God's voice -- although a recent appointee explained God did not use actual words, but "the words, or you could call them symbols, just formed in my head. I knew they were from him."

Most, however, speak of a long maturation process, a period involving educational, career and spiritual decision-making that eventually "comes together" or "makes sense" within a missions context. The resulting sense of conviction may be overwhelming, but generally finds expression in a quiet "sense of rightness."

Restlessness drives some people to consider missions, but God's affirmation may be experienced as a sense of peace. Frequently, however, doubt sets in. The call is difficult to pin down.

"If only God would write it on the wall," lamented Lloyd Atkinson, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's personnel selection director, during a recent meeting with missionary candidates. If only God would always use an actual voice when he calls, there would be less uncertainty.

Errors occur. Some old hands at the Foreign Mission Board tell of a couple sent to Africa by steamship after being touted as certain to spend their lives on the field. By the time the vessel had reloaded for return to America, the couple was back on board. In three weeks they had seen enough.

More recently another couple -- this time traveling by jet -- stayed a mere three days.

So what does it mean to be called to foreign missions?

The general concept of calling is one of the most significant biblical teachings. The New Testament refers to calling 195 times. Of these, 73 have a strictly theological meaning. Biblical references to calling include such phrases as being "called," "given this task" and "sent by God."

When it comes to missions, some Southern Baptists have taken mutually exclusive views of the call. Some hold that everyone is called to go overseas unless specifically convicted by God to remain at home. Others maintain that everyone should stay at home unless specifically called to go overseas.

Most foreign mission leaders through the years have avoided either extreme. Even the late Baker James Cauthen, who called a whole generation of Southern Baptists to missions with his irresistible sermons as FMB executive director, essentially asked, "Are you ready to keep moving in the direction of missionary service unless God closes the door?" one colleague observed.

Randy Rains, a former missionary candidate consultant recently reappointed a missionary, sees awareness of missions as the first of four steps involved in the "call." Subsequent steps include 2) developing an interest, 3) incurring a desire to experience and 4) coming to a sense of conviction.

The entire process "can take just a few months," he suggested. "Or it may take 10 to 12 years."

Rains referred to what in effect is a "secondary call" -- a special call to missions existing beside other special calls to Christian service. These secondary calls, none superior to another, exist within an overriding call to salvation in Christ. The validity of a secondary call can be affirmed if a person also displays related gifts.

The "cross-cultural dimension" distinguishes the missionary gift from other valid gifts, writes Don Kammerdiener, FMB executive vice president. "Missionaries are persons able to interact and understand both their own and other cultures, so they can adequately and dynamically translate the meaning of the gospel into the cultural framework of the target group."

Other interpretations exist, inside and outside of Southern Baptist life. Some missiologists began de-emphasizing "secondary calls" a generation ago. They describe the call to salvation and Christian discipleship as a call to missions for every believer. You're either a missionary, they say, or a mission field.

Kammerdiener responds by comparing the apostles Peter and Paul in the New Testament. Peter was called by God to preach the gospel to the Jews. Paul, a Jew like Peter, was called to evangelize the Gentiles.

"Not everyone comes as dramatically to this sense of calling to the cross-cultural missionary task as did the Apostle Paul," Kammerdiener acknowledges. "(But) those who have planted a whole life in their missionary task nearly always state that they could not have stayed had they not been assured that God had called them and maintained them."

H concludes: "If everyone is a missionary, we will ultimately come to the day when there are no missionaries."

Traits evaluated during screening of FMB missionary candidates include a continuing experience of spiritual growth, professional competency, a strong sense of Baptist identity, a commitment to personal evangelism, a healthy family life and psychological and emotional maturity.

As important as such traits are, the Foreign Mission Board looks at them only in light of a person's call. Every career missionary must express that they have been set apart by God -- a "conviction that holds them; they do not hold it," according to FMB trustee Pat Bullock.

"We are not an employment agency," explained Rains. Mission candidate consultants presume that only a missionary can know whether a personal call really exists. In a normal hiring situation, the onus for decision rests with the employer. But the Foreign Mission Board views itself as a channel. The assumption is that if individuals are called, if they can meet the requirements of education and experience, and if they are patient and flexible, opportunity will be found for them to serve.

Ultimately FMB consultants will recommend for or against the appointment of particular candidates. But they realize they can only make educated guesses regarding a person's true motivation. Their focus during the application process is not to judge the validity of a person's conviction, but to bring that person toward self-assessment.

Some people respond to missions out of a sense of adventure or a romanticized vision of what missionary life entails. Others may respond after seeing the physical destitution in which many of the world's people exist. Such intentions may be good but may not sustain someone for the long haul on the mission field.

Consultants encourage Southern Baptists to enter the application process even though all the issues may not be worked out. "The word we want to get out is that someone does not have to know whether they are called when they contact us," said one consultant. "We help with the screening, but then we leave the ball in their court."

Jim Riddell, associate director of personnel selection, described the consultant's role as "trying to help people work through a fog."

"Our greatest concern is to get people away from all of the vision and to some reality," he said. "When they get off the plane, the smell and taste of the mission field will hit them."

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Questions to help answer:  
Are you called to missions?

Baptist Press  
11/23/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Are you called to be a foreign missionary?

If you're willing to ask yourself that question, first answer these questions from Foreign Mission Board consultant Rick Bates:

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Have you thought seriously about what God's purpose for your life may be? Are you willing to seek prayerfully his will for your life? Are you willing to make the changes that might be necessary to follow God?

Have you chosen your vocation in light of Christian principles? Does your profession utilize the gifts and capabilities the Creator God gave you? Are you truly aware of your gifts and talents? Are you using them, in your service to Christ?

God's call involves a personal response to the witness of the Holy Spirit within us. In this sense, the call of God is inward, personal and even secret. Are you willing to tune in to God's inner voice? Are you willing to follow God as he opens and closes doors in accordance with his calling?

Many who have heard a distinct missionary call have asked God to show them where he needed them most. They were obediently willing to let Christ settle the place of service -- no matter where. Are you willing to be in the place of service where God most desires you to be? Are you willing to sacrifice in order to follow anywhere God might direct? Are you keeping aware of the needs of the world? Do you feel divine leadership to serve in a particular place? Do you like people and cultures that are different from you? Are you willing to learn about and appreciate those cultures?

While God's call may come to us in a private experience, our understanding of his calling may be clarified through talking to fellow Christians. Such confirmation may involve a pastor, church members, family or fellow Christians.

Have you talked to others regarding any hint or conviction of God's calling in your life? Who can you depend on to be forthright with you in discerning God's will for you? Are you taking advantage of the various programs and personnel available through your local church, state office, Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board?

If you're interested in finding out more about opportunities for serving overseas with the Foreign Mission Board, call Faith Bryan, initial contacts coordinator, toll-free at 1-800-999-3113, ext. 635, or write her at P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-0767.

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Church gives more than  
asked to missions work

Baptist Press  
11/23/94

CAMPBELLSVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Members of Friendship Baptist Church near Campbellsville, Ky., disagreed with their pastor, and he's happy about it.

The small rural church which never has had a full-time pastor determined the pastor's vision for participating in the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership with Russian Baptists wasn't big enough.

He had asked the church to give \$1,000 to help build, restore or renovate a church building in Russia.

The congregation voted to give \$5,000 instead.

"I thought too small," said pastor Fred Miller. "It's wonderful when the people think and dream bigger than the pastor."

In addition to the \$5,000 contribution, Friendship Baptist Church will give \$5 per month for two years to help support a Russian missionary who will start new Sunday schools.

Now members are working toward sending some of their own as volunteers to help build the church they're supporting financially, Miller said. "I truly believe this could change our church forever."

Just 18 months ago, the church had only a few hundred dollars in the bank, said treasurer Milton Jones. So when funds started to accumulate, he knew God must have something planned, he said. "We have never had money like this before."

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With an average Sunday school attendance of 55 people, Friendship Baptist is by no means the best-suited to support the partnership missions effort, Miller noted. "There are many churches larger than Friendship that can do more and smaller ones that can do less. But each one can do something."

Despite their small financial resources, the church has a long history of missions support, giving 24 percent of undesignated receipts toward missions. And according to church records, Luther Rice spoke at an associational meeting at the church and received Kentucky's first offering for foreign missions.

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**BSSB to delay changing  
quarterly release dates**

**Baptist Press  
11/23/94**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Baptist Sunday School Board has delayed plans to change the quarterly release dates for its Sunday school, discipleship training and church music dated curriculum.

The board had planned in September 1995 to switch to a seasonal release cycle: fall, September-November; winter, December-February; spring, March-May; and summer, June-August. However, due to several business-related factors, the change has been delayed, at least until the 1996-97 fiscal year.

Gene Mims, vice president of the board's church growth group, said delaying the change "is the right thing to do for our customers and the Sunday School Board." Instituting the change in fiscal year 1995-96, he said, could place a financial strain on the Sunday School Board at a time when the agency is taking steps to improve its financial performance.

"We don't want to do too much too soon," Mims explained. "We invested heavily in major changes and improvements in our materials last year and they are being well-received by churches. But while we are succeeding in making our products more relevant by reducing production time, we've realized the need for a more efficient distribution system to get those materials into the hands of our customers in a timely manner. We anticipate having such a system in place by fiscal year 1996-97."

The Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union will begin releasing their missions education curriculum on a seasonal schedule in September 1996. Mims said a final decision about when the Sunday School Board will change its release dates will be made early next year.

"We apologize for any inconvenience this might cause our customers, but we made this decision with our top priority in mind -- providing churches with the high-quality, high-value materials they demand and deserve," he said.

In a related move, the Sunday School Board also has delayed changing the name of the Convention Uniform Series Sunday school curriculum to Family Bible Series. That change also had been set for September 1995 but now will be rescheduled.

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**Alabama convention defuses  
Samford, Mobile controversies**      **By Mark Baggett**

**Baptist Press  
11/23/94**

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--Despite a turbulent pre-convention atmosphere, a record number of Alabama Baptist messengers held a calm annual meeting, turning back drastic measures to deal with Samford University and the University of Mobile.

The 3,135 messengers meeting at Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile Nov. 15-16 left the major controversies in the hands of committees: a Samford Study Committee appointed to study Samford trustees' decision to elect their own successors and a special committee that had reached a compromise with the University of Mobile on its Nicaraguan campus.

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Messengers also elected Fred Lackey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Athens, president. The meeting celebrated partnerships with Hawaii and Korea, passed a record budget and received a report from a convention task force studying the structure and future direction of the convention.

The most potentially explosive issue was defused Monday morning when the state board of missions overwhelmingly approved a series of recommendations from the Samford Study Committee.

The 11-person Samford Study Committee recommended the convention approve a "Safe Zone" agreement with Samford to allow the convention and Samford time to negotiate a resolution without forfeiting their legal rights. The committee also recommended the convention ask Samford to reconsider its trustee action and that the convention continue funding for Samford.

Study committee chairman Ron Madison, pastor of First Baptist Church, Opelika, said the committee's work had been "bathed in prayer" and committee members had received "considerable pressure."

"More than one ad hoc committee has met and drawn up its own plans for dealing with Samford, and we regret that," Madison said.

Madison quoted a passage of Scripture from 1 Corinthians 6 to emphasize the committee's reluctance to file a lawsuit. However, he said the agreement with Samford -- drafted by James Guenther, a Nashville attorney hired by the convention -- would preserve all the convention's rights, including the possibility of a lawsuit, if the two parties could not reach a solution. Guenther also said the agreement protects the convention and delays the running of the statute of limitations period. Either side can cancel the agreement on five-days notice, he said.

Samford President Thomas Cortis said the university did not originate the agreement but "if there needs to be an agreement, we find this to be tolerable."

Some members of the state board questioned why the recommendations used the plural "entities," rather than specifying Samford only.

Madison responded the committee would study only the Samford issue but its ultimate recommendations might have implications for the other Alabama entities.

On Tuesday, the agreement and recommendations were presented to convention messengers, with both Executive Secretary Troy Morrison and Madison cautioning the convention to take "measured" steps.

Morrison -- who had urged the state board in October to move the convention meeting to Huntsville at a later date because of political divisions -- again pleaded with messengers "not to tear this convention apart about matters that will not matter 100 years from now."

Said Madison, "Preachers are sometimes accused of overspiritualizing, but we simply must not allow Satan to disrupt our fellowship and divide the body of Christ."

The ensuing debate was lively but not bitter. Arnold Mooney, messenger from Meadow Brook Baptist Church, Birmingham, proposed stronger wording, directing Samford not to "reconsider" but to "reverse" its action. Ralph McCollister, messenger from First Baptist Church, Birmingham, also opposed the recommendations, saying Samford trustees had broken trust with the convention.

David Bishop, pastor of Mulberry Baptist Church, Maplesville, said Samford's funding should be escrowed if its trustees refuse to seat the convention's slate of nominees for Samford's board.

"It is not good stewardship or good business that we have no authority nor control over the policies and teaching of Samford University and yet continue to fund the school," he said.

But other messengers spoke in support of Samford. "I believe in the trustees' integrity," said Mary Goodhue, messenger from First Baptist Church, Huntsville. "They love their school and the Baptist denomination."

After extending the time for debate, messengers finally approved the agreement and recommendations by a show of hands.

Later, Dale Wallace, a Birmingham attorney and member of First Baptist Church, Trussville, said he represented a group calling itself "Pastors to Protect Samford." Wallace said he believes Samford clearly violated Alabama nonprofit corporation law and that Alabama Baptists have no way of testing the validity of Samford's legal opinions.

"Our firm was retained by a group of concerned pastors who felt the legal position and historical precedent stated by Samford was incorrect," Wallace said. "They (Samford) said their legal position had been carefully researched. However, no legal opinion was ever issued, nor were the trustees given any specifics. To this day, we don't know who issued the opinion."

Wallace said the Alabama Code requires an educational institution whose trustees are elected by a sponsoring body to get approval of the convention before any change of its charter.

"Filing a lawsuit will be a difficult line for people to cross from a mental standpoint because of the dictates of Scripture and because of the basic conservative philosophy of most Christians," Wallace said.

But the Samford Study Committee's report was strongly worded, he said, voicing hope "that the leadership will devise a forum and process through which Alabama Baptists can voice their opinions. If the committee will work diligently to build the trust of Alabama Baptists by demonstrating an open process for discussion, then Alabama Baptists will follow the leadership of the convention. If the committee closes its doors for three or four months and takes a behind-the-scenes approach to Samford, we have lost the opportunity to build trust in our leadership, and they will have a difficult time controlling what will transpire at the next convention. The action of the committee has satisfied the initial first step."

Later on Tuesday afternoon, after most of the messengers had left, the name of Joe Godfrey, pastor of Taylor Road Baptist Church, Montgomery, was proposed from the floor as an additional nominee to the Samford University board of trustees.

Wayne Dorsett, pastor of Central Park Baptist Church, Birmingham, proposed Godfrey's name, saying the Committee on Boards and Commissions had recommended a slate of only eight nominees instead of the usual nine. President Cortis spoke against Dorsett's motion, explaining vacancies are often filled after the convention. Messengers rejected Dorsett's motion by a 481-263 ballot vote.

Afterward, Madison said the convention's action was positive. "They have affirmed the way we are accustomed to doing business," he said. "We have no set schedule, but we will be working regularly and diligently in dialogue with the Samford trustees."

The issue of whether the University of Mobile violated convention bylaws in opening its Latin American Branch Campus (LABC) in Nicaragua was handled quickly by the convention without discussion.

Glenn Slye, associate pastor of Huffman Baptist Church, Birmingham, and chair of a special committee appointed last year to study the LABC, said the issue had effectively been resolved in a compromise dated Aug. 19 between the representatives of convention leadership and the university. The agreement was adopted unanimously by the convention's executive committee and overwhelmingly by the state board.

The agreement requires the University of Mobile to submit periodic financial statements from its Nicaragua campus and to take out \$10 million liability insurance for the campus. The university and the convention also signed an agreement indemnifying the convention from potential liability arising out of the LABC.

In the election, Lackey defeated former Executive Secretary A. Earl Potts by a 53-47 percent vote to succeed Dewey Corder as convention president.

In a news conference after the outcome, Lackey attributed some of the tension surrounding the convention to first-time endeavors.

"These are new issues that we have not faced before," said Lackey, whose 2,800-member church gives 14 percent of its budget to the Cooperative Program. "We are crossing bridges we haven't crossed before, but we have made definite progress. I see the whole thing as solidifying us and keeping us together."

On the Samford issue, Lackey said while the trustees and President Thomas Corts felt justified in their actions, he believes the traditional way of electing the trustees through the convention has been effective.

He discounted the notion of a sharp break between moderates and conservatives, and said he and Potts were friends and "share the same vision of reaching people with the gospel of Christ."

Lackey emphasized his commitment to the Cooperative Program, but said he would not exclude churches that give to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship from the convention as long as they also contribute to the Cooperative Program.

Messengers approved a 1995 Cooperative Program base budget of \$28,885,000, up 1.2 percent, to be distributed 42.3 percent to Southern Baptist mission causes and 57.7 percent to Alabama Baptist causes, the same percentages as this year.

On Tuesday night, the convention recognized foreign and home missionaries and volunteers, heard a message from Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis and celebrated partnerships with Hawaii and Korea.

As a result of all evangelistic events in Korea under the partnership since 1992, a total of 6,065 first-time professions of faith were recorded by 124 persons in 35 Alabama teams, including simultaneous revivals, military rallies and city-wide crusades.

The convention also heard a report from a task force appointed in 1992 to study long-range plans and goals. Chairman Buddy McGohon, director of missions for the Montgomery Baptist Association, presented the report, which was organized into seven major directional thrusts and 32 specific recommendations.

McGohon emphasized the trends toward localization rather than the centralization of the past. As denominational loyalty declines and as "competition replaces cooperation," the task force recommended the convention emphasize a "customer orientation" model to adapt to the diversity of needs. The task force also recommended the convention tap the full potential of technology, and communication technology in particular, for its ministries.

Resolutions were passed reaffirming the convention's historical opposition to lotteries or casino gambling and the convention's 1993 statement supporting the Cooperative Program.

Outgoing President Corder, pastor of First Baptist Church, Trussville, alluded to recent state convention divisions in his address. "This isn't just a meeting," Corder said. "When the secular world reads about controversy, when the secular world reads about fussing and fighting, it drives another nail into the coffin of people who look and say, 'Hey, them folks supposedly love each other. They can't tell me anything.'"

Next year's annual meeting will be Nov. 14-15 in Montgomery.

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Michigan Baptists elect  
Collins to succeed Wilson

Baptist Press  
11/23/94

BURTON, Mich. (BP)--Messengers to the Baptist State Convention of Michigan annual meeting Nov. 8-10 elected Michael Collins as the convention's new executive director.

Collins, church services and business support director of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, will succeed Robert B. Wilson, effective Jan. 1, 1995. Wilson is retiring after 24 years as Michigan Baptists' executive director.

The 37th annual meeting of the convention was held at Eastgate Baptist Church, Burton.

After a period of messengers' questions for Collins, he was elected by a 188-11 vote, or 95 percent. Collins has served in Ohio 21 years.

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Wilson, prior to becoming executive director, had served as state missions director, as a director of missions and a church planter. He has led the state for 24 consecutive years to increase by one-half percent the percentage of its budget to national and world missions. Also under his leadership, the total number of churches in Michigan has increased from 114 to 260. In addition, Michigan currently has 49 chapels.

Other business conducted at the convention included the adoption of the 1995 budget. The total amount of the Cooperative Program portion of the budget is \$1,276,001, increasing to 32 percent the amount sent to world missions, reflecting the half-percent increase over 1994. With various Southern Baptist Convention supplements to the budget providing \$1,624,704.61, the total budget for 1995 was set at \$2,900,705.

Unopposed for election to the convention's offices were president, August Peters, interim pastor, Bethel Baptist Church, Adrian; first vice president, Bob Galey, pastor, Oakland Woods Baptist Church, Clarkston; second vice president, Ray Shelton, pastor, Friendship Baptist Church, Lincoln Park; recording secretary, John Harrison, pastor, Bethany Baptist Church, Lansing.

Registered at the convention were 341 messengers and 343 guests.

The 1995 meeting will be Nov. 7-9 at Gorham Baptist Church, Jackson.

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Union Univ. administrators  
announce retirement plans

Baptist Press  
11/23/94

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--Union University President Hyran Barefoot announced his retirement effective June 30, 1996, at the Nov. 22 meeting of the university's trustees. In addition, Maggie Nell Brewer, vice president for student affairs, also announced her retirement effective June 30, 1995.

"I want to express my sincere appreciation to all my colleagues at Union -- administrators, faculty, staff, trustees -- for their support and cooperation during these years I've served as president," Barefoot told the trustees.

Specifically addressing the trustees, he said, "At a time in Southern Baptist life when it is typical for there to be friction between the chief executive officer and the board, Union has been the exception."

Barefoot was inaugurated as the university's 14th president Oct. 16, 1987. He assumed interim duties in May 1986 following the resignation of President Robert Craig.

Barefoot pledged not to "coast out" until June 1996. "There is too much work still to be done and it will require everyone working full time to do the work -- including the president," he said.

Barefoot joined the Union University faculty in 1957 as associate professor of religion and Greek. He has served in a number of positions, as a teacher, a department and division chair, academic dean and vice president for academic affairs.

Under Barefoot's leadership, Union's enrollment has risen 26 percent from 1,764 students in 1987 to 2,370 in 1994. Other notable accomplishments during Barefoot's presidency include construction of the \$1.4 million Blasingame academic complex, adoption of a campus redesign master plan to accommodate university growth, completion of a 52,000-square-foot Student Union Building and addition of graduate studies in the disciplines of education and business administration.

Brewer began her service at Union in 1965 as the university's first dean of women. After eight years, she became dean of students for 10 years.

In 1984 when five vice president positions were created, Brewer was named vice president of student affairs.

The board of trustees will appoint a committee in the next few months to begin the search for Barefoot's successor. The process currently is under way to fill Brewer's position, with plans to have someone in place before June 1995.

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Penrose St. Amant, 79, dies;  
left legacy in church history

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — C. Penrose St. Amant, 79, Southern Baptist church history professor for more than 50 years, died Nov. 19 at his home in Bay St. Louis, Miss.

At his request, no funeral services will be conducted. Information on scholarship funds is pending, in lieu of gifts of flowers.

A memorial service for St. Amant will be held at New Orleans Seminary at 10 a.m. Dec. 2.

A specialist in modern and American church history, St. Amant taught at four of the six Southern Baptist seminaries, as well as at the Baptist seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, where he also served as president.

"Southern Baptists have lost their premier church historian," said Landrum P. Leavell II, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a former student of St. Amant. "Dr. St. Amant has influenced the lives of thousands of seminary students around the world. He will be sorely missed not only for his scholarship but also for his friendship."

After completing his schooling, St. Amant taught first at Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, Mo., for one year. He returned to his alma mater, Baptist Bible Institute (now New Orleans Seminary), to teach church history from 1943-59. From 1959-72 he was dean of the school of theology and professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. In 1972 he became president of the Ruschlikon seminary.

After his retirement from Ruschlikon in 1977, he taught church history on an interim basis at four of the six Southern Baptist seminaries: Golden Gate in Mill Valley, Calif., where he was visiting professor of church history, 1979-81; Southern, where he was senior professor of church history from 1982-92; Southwestern in Fort Worth, Texas; and at New Orleans Seminary, where he was teaching two classes as visiting professor of church history during the 1994-95 academic year.

"Dr. St. Amant described his return to New Orleans Seminary as 'coming home,'" said Daniel H. Holcomb, chairman of the division of theological and historical studies. "He spent his last days here doing what he loved most to do, teaching church history to seminarians. To the very end he was the consummate scholar, perceptive teacher, faithful seeker after truth, insightful interpreter of the rich panorama of the church's past and, as always, he gave the story wings. It was a remarkable and appropriate closure of the career of an extraordinary Christian gentleman and scholar. We have lost a beloved mentor and friend."

Born April 8, 1915, in Gonzales, La., St. Amant graduated from Louisiana College in Pineville, La., in 1936 with a triple major in history, English and education. He completed a master of arts degree in history with a minor in philosophy at Louisiana State University in 1937. At the Baptist Bible Institute in New Orleans, he finished a master of theology degree in 1940 and a doctor of theology degree, specializing in church history, in 1942. In 1952 he completed a doctor of philosophy degree in church history at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

A perpetual scholar, he used his vacations and sabbaticals to do additional study at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary in New York City, the University of Paris and Zurich University. Louisiana College awarded him the doctor of laws degree in 1955 and Mercer University the doctor of divinity degree in 1961.

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Throughout his life St. Amant was active in Baptist Student Union ministry, the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and Society and many other endeavors. He was a popular preacher, lecturer and writer. He wrote "A Short History of Louisiana Baptists," 1948, "Isn't One Religion as Good as Another?" 1958, and "Christianity on the World's Frontiers," 1986, as well as numerous scholarly articles and essays. He was area editor of the Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, 1958. By invitation he wrote "A History of Louisiana Baptist Student Union," 1956, and "A History of the Presbyterian Church in Louisiana," 1961.

"Penrose was my honored teacher and dear friend," said Claude L. Howe Jr., professor emeritus of church history at New Orleans. "He served faithfully for a half century as a historian's historian and as a teacher's teacher. His students are scattered around the world and they cherish not only his academic brilliance, but also his personal warmth and concern. His loyalty and love for New Orleans Seminary remained as he taught at other Southern Baptist seminaries and colleges. It was most fitting that he spend his last days teaching at 'The School of Providence and Prayer,' his alma mater."

St. Amant is survived by his wife, the former Jessie Davis of Brownsville, Tenn., who will continue to reside in Bay St. Louis, Miss. The St. Amants would have celebrated their 49th wedding anniversary on Nov. 21; they had no children.

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