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April 24, 1995

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Clinton, Graham declare start
of healing, rebuilding, justice By Dave Parker

Baptist Press
4/24/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--If terrorists thought they could break the spirit of Oklahoma and the United States, they were wrong, according to President Bill Clinton and evangelist Billy Graham.

Those sentiments were expressed at "A Time to Heal" prayer service Sunday, April 23, at the State Fair Arena in Oklahoma City.

Terrorists bombed the Alfred Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City the previous Wednesday morning, using a rental truck loaded with an estimated 4,000 pounds of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil in an assault that has claimed dozens of innocent lives in the Oklahoma state capital.

The ecumenical prayer service, which also featured local religious leaders, drew a crowd that overflowed the 8,000 seats in the arena, the nearby "Made in Oklahoma" Building and All Sports Stadium. To help with the overflow crowd, area churches broadcast the service on big-screen TVs.

Many people attending the services clutched Teddy Bears provided by the governor of Illinois to honor the children killed in the blast. Many also carried roses donated by local florists and wore ribbons in honor of the victims. Blue represented Oklahoma; white, innocence; purple, the children killed or missing; yellow, the hope for survivors; and green, prayer.

The service was completely nonpartisan, with Clinton warmly received in a state that voted mostly Republican in 1994.

Clinton extended his sympathy to the families of those killed or wounded, to the people of Oklahoma City and the state.

"Hillary and I also come as parents, as husband and wife and as people who were your neighbors for some of the best years of our lives," the former Arkansas governor said. "We pledge to do all we can to help you heal the injured, to rebuild this city and to bring to justice those who did this evil."

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Of the federal employees housed at the Murrah Building, Clinton said "they serve us well and we are grateful. But for so many of you, they were also neighbors and friends. You saw them at church or at PTA meetings, at the civic clubs and at the ballparks."

Clinton quoted a young widow of Pan Am Flight 103 that blew up near Lockerbie, Scotland: "The anger you feel is valid, but you must not allow yourself to be consumed by it. The hurt you feel must not be allowed to turn into hate, but instead into the search for justice. The loss you feel must not paralyze your lives. Instead, you must try to pay tribute to your loved ones by continuing to try to do the things they left undone, thus ensuring they did not die in vain."

"You have lost too much, but you have not lost everything," he said. "And you have certainly not lost America, for we will stand with you for as many tomorrows as it takes."

"Though we share your grief, your pain is unimaginable and we know that," he added. "We cannot undo it. That is God's work." Clinton said his administration will work to "purge ourselves of the dark forces that gave rise to this evil. Let us teach our children that the God of comfort is also the God of righteousness. Those who trouble their own house will inherit the wind. Justice will prevail."

"As St. Paul admonished us, 'Let us not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'"

For his weekly radio address April 22, the Clintons spoke with a number of children of federal employees. One girl suggested Americans plant trees in honor of the children killed in the blast. Before leaving Washington for Oklahoma City, the Clintons planted a dogwood tree on the White House lawn.

"A tree takes a long time to grow and wounds take a long time to heal," Clinton said. "But we must begin. Those who are lost now belong to God. Someday we will be with them. Until that happens, their legacy must be our lives."

Graham said the "terrible and senseless tragedy" runs contrary to what Americans hold dear.

"That blast was like a violent explosion ripping at the very heart of America," he said. "But to those who masterminded this cruel plot and to those who carried it out: The spirit of this city and this nation will not be defeated."

Someday the wounds will heal and the perpetrators will be brought to justice, Graham said.

"The wounds of this tragedy are deep, but the courage and the faith and the determination of the people of Oklahoma City are even deeper," he said. "The Bible says in Psalm 147:3, 'He heals the broken-hearted, He binds up the wounds.' And so with this service today we stand together to say, 'Let the healing begin.'"

Graham said many people have asked him why God allows such tragedies to happen. He noted 3,000 years ago, Job asked the same question.

"I want to assure you that God understands those feelings," he said. "Why does God allow it? I don't know. I have to accept by faith that God is a God of love and mercy and compassion, even in the midst of suffering. The Bible says God is not the author of evil."

Such a tragedy can either make people hard and angry, and bitter towards God, or it will make them tender and open and teach them to reach out in faith, Graham said.

"Turn in faith and trust in God," Graham said. "It is better to face something like this with God than without him."

The tragedy had also provided a lesson of a community coming together, Graham said.

"What an example Oklahoma City and the people of Oklahoma have given to the world," he said. "A tragedy like this could have torn this city apart. But instead it has united you in a way that you have never been united before."

"This tragedy also gives us a lesson in comfort and compassion," he said, as help poured in from across the country and around the world. The city received gifts from as far away as South America and Saudi Arabia.

"Some of you today are going through heartache and grief so intense you wonder if it will ever go away," Graham said. "But I want to tell you that our God cares for you and for your family and for your city. I pray that every one of you will experience God's comfort during these days as you turn to him, for God loves you and he shares in your suffering."

Graham said there is hope for the future because of God's promises.

"Someday there will be a glorious reunion with those who have died and gone to heaven before us," he said.

Probably no one going to work April 19 realized it would be their last day on earth, Graham said, noting all people need to be concerned about their spiritual condition.

It was ironic the bombing happened just three days after Christians celebrated Easter," Graham said. "At the cross, Christ took on all of our suffering. He was saying from the cross, 'I love you and I know the heartache and the sorrow and the pain that you feel.'"

Graham received two standing ovations during his sermon. The audience earlier gave standing ovations to the rescue workers, to the dogs used to sniff out survivors or bodies, to Clinton, to Keating, to U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno and to the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Local Southern Baptist churches that provided overflow seating included Portland Avenue Baptist Church and Village Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, Trinity Baptist Church in Yukon, First Southern Baptist Church of Del City and Council Road Baptist Church in Bethany.

Other dignitaries presiding included Rod Masteller, pastor of Putnam City Baptist Church in Oklahoma City; Governor Frank Keating and his wife, Kathy; Archbishop Eusebius Beltran of the Catholic Archdiocese of Oklahoma City; Rabbi David Packman, with Temple B'nai Israel in Oklahoma City; Oklahoma City Mayor Ron Norick; and Carlton Pierson, with Higher Dimension Ministries in Tulsa.

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(BP) photos available upon request from the Baptist Messenger in Oklahoma City.

Seminarian waits for fate
of relatives in Oklahoma City

Baptist Press
4/24/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--The trauma in Oklahoma City continues to stretch across the country.

For Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary student Beverly Bradley, three family members are missing and two other relatives hospitalized following the April 19 bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City.

Bradley, a student at Southwestern's campus in San Antonio, Texas, said her 44-year-old sister, Cheryl Hamons, was in the federal building on personal business at the time of the disaster. Also in the building were Bradley's two nieces, 23-year-old Felicia Bradley and 20-year-old Dana Bradley.

Dana gained national media attention as the young woman whose leg had to be amputated so rescue workers could remove her from the building April 19.

The family members were accompanied in the federal building by Beverly's great-niece, 3-year-old Peachlyn Bradley, and a great-nephew, 4-month-old Gabreon Bruce, according to Beverly.

Hamons, Peachlyn and Gabreon were missing as of April 24.

Felicia, meanwhile, is in critical condition at an Oklahoma City hospital; Dana remains at another Oklahoma City hospital though she has been released from the intensive care unit.

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Rescuers found the body of Mickey Maroney, brother of Foreign Mission Board staff member Jimmy Maroney, early April 21 in the rubble of the building. Secret Service agents later identified Maroney's intact body, said his sister-in-law, Kay Maroney of Richmond. The family was told that Maroney apparently died instantly.

"They didn't feel he had suffered, and that was a big comfort to the family," Mrs. Maroney said.

Also confirmed in the death toll: Kenny McCullough, 37, a federal alcohol, tobacco and fire arms agent and son of the late Glendon McCullough, former president of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, and stepson of Marjorie Jones McCullough of Alexandria, La., Woman's Missionary Union president from 1986-1991 and a former Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria, Ghana and Brazil.

They were among the 79 people in the formal death toll the afternoon of April 24 -- a toll that could climb past 200 once the search of the building's remnants is complete.

Kenny's wife's name is Sharon and they have two children, Jessica and Patrick. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 26, at First Baptist Church, Edmond, Okla. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to First Baptist Church, 1300 SE 33rd St., Edmond, OK 73013.

Maroney, 50, was at work on the morning of the bombing on the ninth floor of the federal building in Oklahoma City.

"Evidently (rescuers) worked all night going through the rubble," said Kay Maroney.

Mrs. Maroney's husband, Jimmy, a 28-year veteran of Southern Baptist foreign missions who directs the Foreign Mission Board's Global Desk, planned to travel to Oklahoma City April 23 to join eight other siblings at an Oklahoma City memorial service for blast victims and their families.

Funeral services were scheduled for 2 p.m., April 25, at Council Road Baptist Church, 2900 N. W. 30th St., Bethany, Okla. 73008. In lieu of flowers, gifts to the Mickey B. Maroney Memorial Fund may be sent to the Council Road Baptist Church.

"With as many people around the world who are praying for the family, I feel like they're doing well, because the Lord is faithful to uphold his people in times of crisis," said Mrs. Maroney of her husband's family.

Mickey Maroney is survived by his wife, Robbie, and two grown children. At Council Road Baptist Church, he had taught a Sunday school class for university men.

Further details concerning McCullough's death were not available April 24.

Meanwhile, the injured son of FMB missionaries Mike and Kay Norfleet was released from St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City but faces more surgery. The son -- 29-year-old Michael Rand "Randy" Norfleet -- was in the U.S. Marine recruiting offices on the sixth floor of the federal building at the time of the blast. He suffered severe head and eye wounds but managed to walk out of the building. He later underwent plastic surgery and eye surgery to repair deep gashes and lacerations. More surgery will be required.

Doctors are most concerned about his right eye, damaged severely by glass and debris. As of April 21 he could distinguish light, raising hope that he will retain his sight.

Norfleet's wife, Jamie, seven months pregnant, went into premature labor when she heard the news of her husband's injuries. But doctors managed to stop the labor, and the baby apparently suffered no injury.

She and her husband live in Stillwater, Okla., where he is a Marine recruiter and they are members of First Baptist Church.

Norfleet's parents, from Marlow, Okla., are missionaries in the Ukraine, where they have served since February 1994. Earlier, they were missionaries in Taiwan, 1974-82. The elder Norfleet also was associate director of the Foreign Mission Board's missionary enlistment department, 1984-87. He has also been pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of East Clairmont in San Diego, Calif., and New Bridge Baptist Church in Richmond, Va.

On the day of the blast, retired FMB missionaries James and Libby Kirkendall of Oklahoma City were exercising in an exercise center at Baptist Medical Center of Oklahoma, about eight miles from the federal building.

"The (hospital) building shook" when the bomb exploded," said Kirkendall, who served as a missionary in Lebanon, Iran, Morocco and Belgium and now is affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

As the injured began arriving, the Kirkendalls offered their help to hospital chaplains, several of whom are members of their church -- Oklahoma City's Spring Creek Baptist. The couple spent about five hours helping to counsel patients.

"It's been rough. The whole city, the whole state is really shaken by this," said Kirkendall, who himself is no stranger to trauma. He was held hostage in 1970 by Syrian-backed Palestinians in Beirut and served in Iran during the revolution that brought Khomeini to power.

And, at the memorial service led by President Clinton and evangelist Billy Graham, Oklahoma City's Canterbury Choral Society sang "Alleluia," a piece composed by Ralph Manuel, Foreign Mission Board music missionary in Brazil. Manuel is from Oklahoma City. Rod Masteller, pastor of Putnam City Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, led in prayer.

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Art Toalston, Bob Murdaugh, Mary E. Speidel and Teresa Dickens contributed to this story.

Dead brother's notes help create
forgiveness for his bomb-blast death

Baptist Press
4/24/95

By Robert O'Brien

BETHANY, Okla. (BP)--His grief is acute, but the healing has begun for Jimmy Maroney following his brother's death in the April 19 Oklahoma City bomb blast.

The blast at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building took at least 79 lives, injured 400 and left another 150 missing.

Maroney's healing began as he read through the years of notes his brother Mickey, a 50-year-old Secret Service agent, had prepared to teach his Sunday school class for young people at Council Road Baptist Church in Bethany, Okla.

"Mickey kept every Sunday school lesson he'd ever written," said Maroney, 55, director of the Global Desk for the Richmond, Va.,-based Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"As I went through his book of Sunday school notes and looked at his inner life, I saw things I hadn't seen before -- and the spiritual maturity he demonstrated as he prepared lessons for his class," Maroney said in a telephone interview.

He also read his brother's daily journal compiled while engaging in "his quiet time with God" and was impressed with how deeply Mickey had delved into the Scriptures.

Jimmy Maroney and his wife, Kay, who accompanied him to Oklahoma, also read from Mickey Maroney's Bible.

The first part of 2nd Chronicles 16:9 in the Old Testament jumped out at them:

"For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His" (New American Standard Version).

"The Lord is removing the anger," said Maroney, a former Foreign Mission Board missionary, who has sought to minister to his three brothers and five sisters and other family members as they have arrived for memorial services and the funeral.

"When I picked up a newspaper and saw the picture of that young man (Timothy McVeigh being held on a bombing charge), I didn't feel any anger toward him," said Maroney, his voice moved with emotion.

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"It's been hard for the family to let go of Mickey," added Kay Maroney. "It's a matter of weeping and letting him go. Jimmy has been able to do this and Mickey's wife, Robbie, has also."

Mrs. Maroney said the family must still struggle with their grief and the temptation to give in to anger, but she feels the healing is well under way.

That was happening even as a fellow Southern Baptist, Billy Graham, urged 20,000 mourners at an internationally televised memorial service in Oklahoma City to move from anger and bitterness to love and forgiveness.

"The family feels no vengeance," Mrs. Maroney said. Those responsible for the death and destruction in Oklahoma City need God in their lives, she added. "They have hate there now."

She said her brother-in-law's wife, though grieving for her dead husband, "has been able to forgive because of what God has done in their lives."

Besides his wife, brothers and sisters, Mickey Maroney is survived by a daughter, Alice Ann Denison of Yukon, Okla.; a son, Mickey Paul Maroney, of Oklahoma City; and a stepson, James Darin Fisher of Oklahoma City.

Funeral services were scheduled for 2 p.m., April 25, at Council Road Baptist Church, 2900 N. W. 30th St., Bethany, Okla. 73008.

In lieu of flowers, gifts to the Mickey B. Maroney Memorial Fund may be sent to the Council Road Baptist Church.

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Michigan Militia leader
not a Southern Baptist

By Martin King

Baptist Press
4/24/95

ATLANTA (BP)--The leader of a paramilitary group linked to the investigation of the Oklahoma City bombing is said to be a Baptist preacher, but he has no links to Southern Baptists.

National news reports described Norman Olson, commander of the Michigan Militia, as the owner of a gun shop in Decker, Mich., and "a Baptist preacher." However, Norman Beckhman, director of missions for the Macomb Baptist Association, told Baptist Press, "He is not a member of any of our (Southern Baptist) churches. In fact, there are so few Southern Baptists up here, I'm sure none of our members are even involved in the militia."

Meanwhile, Phil Roberts, director of the Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department, said paramilitary groups often talk about God and country, "but they typically put country before God."

"These groups have very little to do with religious ideology. Their's is a political point of view, not spiritual," Roberts said. "Even though some of their members may be nominal Christians, the (military) organization often becomes their god. When a person sacrifices ethical and spiritual views to their political ideology, it can lead to fascism on the right and godless communism on the left."

Although some paramilitary groups exhibit manifestations of a cult, Roberts explained they are primarily political and social and probably have no religious creed.

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FIRST-PERSON

People of faith will make
a difference in Oklahoma City

By Jerry Pierce

Baptist Press
4/24/95

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--If the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building proved anything, it's that Christianity is wholly relevant for modern times.

As the national and international press poured into the city by the dozens Wednesday afternoon and night, local Christians were gathering to pray.

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Baptists joined Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans and many others as more than 70 ministers converged on the First Christian Church, about 30 blocks south of the bomb site, to offer support to grieving families and those seeking information about loved ones.

Ordinary citizens provided refreshments for rescue workers and helped charities such as Feed the Children pack sheets to be used as makeshift body bags.

As the week unfolded, the media began to notice the caring acts of local citizens, and the faith factor became a prominent theme in news stories.

I went to the First Christian Church Friday afternoon to write a story about a pastor who was volunteering there.

When I arrived, the press corps was eagerly waiting outside for anyone willing to tell their story about a missing family member or friend.

As a tearful Kansas City, Mo., man told of his missing brother, two female reporters, one from France, the other from Spain, stood beside me taking notes.

Jacob B. Moller, Washington bureau chief for Politiken, a Danish publication, stood at my right as the man talked.

When he finished, Moller asked me if I had a few minutes to discuss Oklahoma City. I gladly obliged.

He asked me, among other things, about the religious faith of the people here -- their Bible-belt reputation.

Compared to the rest of the world, many evangelical Christians live here, I said.

He nodded and asked if that were why everyone was pulling together so well.

I smiled and told him it probably was a strong factor.

He seemed sincerely impressed as he looked around at volunteers who were offering the media soft drinks and sandwiches.

We exchanged cards, he thanked me, and I moved on.

The next day, Carol Tucker, a pastor's wife who spent the week assisting the media at the First Christian Church, told me a French reporter had expressed astonishment at the Christian faith of several of the victim's families.

The reporter also was surprised civilians weren't seeking revenge, Tucker said.

Robby Criswell, a young pastor four years out of high school, told me of an atheist who said he's never experienced such love as was being displayed by clergy and others.

"It's going to be the church that helps to bring restoration to the lives of these people," Criswell observed. "It's going to be the hope that we bring them that makes a difference."

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Pierce, a member of Heritage Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, is associate editor of the South Oklahoma City Leader.

Brotherhood trustees decline
to 'embrace' restructuring plan By Trennis Henderson

Baptist Press
4/24/95

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Unanimously adopting a detailed "statement of concern" about the proposed restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, trustees of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission concluded: "We do not embrace or support the recommendation in its current form."

Trustees also instructed Brotherhood Commission President James D. Williams to "gracefully decline" to appear on a promotional video about the proposed "Covenant for a New Century." The video, being produced by the SBC Executive Committee, is scheduled to be shown to SBC messengers in June prior to their initial vote on the restructuring proposal.

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The trustees' actions came at the conclusion of their board meeting April 21-22 in Memphis, Tenn. The two-day meeting was dominated by discussion of the restructuring proposal which includes plans to merge the Brotherhood Commission, Radio and Television Commission and Home Mission Board into a new North American Mission Board (NAMB) to be located in Atlanta. The overall proposal calls for reducing the number of national SBC entities from 19 to 12.

Commending the Program and Structure Study Committee "for their commitment to a massive and challenging task," trustees also affirmed the proposed SBC mission statement and commended the committee "for developing a statement that propels the Great Commission into the 21st century and focuses on getting the gospel to everybody, everywhere."

Primary concerns expressed by trustees included the proposed structure of the initial NAMB board of trustees. The plan calls for a 75-member board to include 15 Brotherhood trustees, 15 RTVC trustees, 44 HMB trustees and the SBC president. Brotherhood trustees suggested the board "be composed of an equal number of trustees" from each of the three entities, with the remainder of the board to be filled by newly elected trustees.

"We believe the board should represent an appropriate cross-section of SBC life including laity, clergy, ethnicity, geographical location and gender," the statement of concern added. "We believe that such composition affirms the spirit of the Program and Structure Committee proposing the consolidation of the three agencies into one, and promotes the partnership necessary to the beginning steps of such a consolidation."

Trustees also voiced concern "that exclusive placement of men's ministries with the Baptist Sunday School Board and missions education with the North American Mission Board breaks the linkage that is critical to the success of both."

The document encourages the SBC Executive Committee to instruct the study committee to "authorize the North American Mission Board Mission Volunteers and Education Division to develop men's ministries approaches that encourage spiritual growth and participation in the mission of God in the world."

The trustees' third area of concern focused on the current leadership and ministry of the Brotherhood Commission. "We are concerned that the current entrepreneurial and progressive approach to missions education and involvement by the Brotherhood Commission will be diminished, that the Brotherhood Commission president will lose his empowerment for leadership, and that a significant number of key staff members ... will be lost in a relocation of offices to Atlanta."

They requested current Brotherhood Commission leadership "be retained and integrated into the North American Mission Board to provide a continuity of effective leadership and staff network."

The statement of concern also noted statements in the study committee report "regarding improved fiscal efficiency and more effective performance are not substantiated by any data included in the report. We therefore request further study, to include impact statements and standard business case documentation, to support claims of improved efficiency and effectiveness."

Insisting "the ministry of the missions volunteers and education division of the (NAMB) and the orderly transition to this new structure are contingent upon the satisfactory resolution of these concerns," the statement called on the SBC Executive Committee to reconsider the proposal "in light of our concerns," and to respond to Brotherhood trustees before presenting the restructuring proposal for messenger consideration in June.

Following the trustees' action, Williams told Baptist Press, "This represents the heart of the trustee body's concerns. It was developed by the trustees. I think it was an attempt by the trustees to help Southern Baptists clarify concerns and issues related to the 'Covenant for a New Century.'"

Williams said the trustees' action "does not in any way indicate the Brotherhood trustees are angry. They are concerned and they are calling on Southern Baptists to correct what they perceive to be weaknesses in the proposal."

"We are positive about the concept (of restructuring) but we have some concerns we've expressed to the SBC Executive Committee," agreed trustee chairman Donley Brown of Missouri. "There was a spirit of unity among our trustees to express this concern. ... It's our desire that they would hear our concerns and respond appropriately."

Prior to adopting their statement of concern, trustees heard a report from Williams, divided into three work groups to discuss possible responses to restructuring and participated in a question-and-answer session with study committee member Bob Sorrell, associate pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis.

Acknowledging the February report of the study committee "literally knocked me off my feet," Williams told trustees, "I was completely surprised by what was proposed for the Brotherhood Commission.

"I was hurt by the fact that both the administration and trustees were not more involved in the final decisions and in the shaping of the document," Williams said. "Anything affecting the missions future of the Southern Baptist Convention should have involved those of us in missions leadership."

Voicing concern "about the identity of our work ... (and) the important linkage between men's ministry and missions education," Williams said, "It's tough to be objective when faced with a decision like this. It's only natural to hold on to what you love."

Despite his personal concerns, Williams said he has "great respect for due process and certainly feel nothing but gratitude" for the work of the study committee and its effort to structure the SBC "for its Great Commission challenge."

"If God is for this, I must be too. If he isn't, then I must leave this in the hands of our Southern Baptist people who will pray, seek the Father's will and vote no if God isn't in it," Williams said.

"When the final vote is taken, the Brotherhood Commission will come down on the side of what is best to help Southern Baptists carry out the Great Commission," he declared. "Above all else, my desire is that this family of Baptists keep focused on getting the gospel to 'everybody, everywhere.'"

During the question-and-answer session, Sorrell told trustees, "I know I stand before you representing change -- at least potential change. Change never leaves us the same, for good or bad. ... One of the biggest problems we had was in determining how far we could go in making recommendations. I don't know that there is any one right answer."

Explaining the committee's goal in establishing the North American Mission Board was to determine "what resources could be pulled together to reach our country for Christ," he added, "There was no intent to curtail the programs you have in progress right now."

Responding to concerns about staff transition, Sorrell said, "Probably the most difficult decision (in restructuring and relocation) is the people involved -- it's not the methodology, it's not the structure, it's the people.

"We tried to extend the implementation process to be as people-sensitive as possible," he said, suggesting that with retirements and other attrition, relocating to Atlanta "would not be as massive an upheaval as you might think."

Concerning the specific recommendation to locate the NAMB in Atlanta, Sorrell said, "Atlanta is an international city with international travel capabilities; it is a media center of the United States."

Noting NAMB trustees will "still have the option of choosing a location," he said, "We did make a specific recommendation because it does possess the ingredients for a national headquarters. Ultimately that will be determined by the trustees and what is economically beneficial for the convention."

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During an interview following his presentation, Sorrell told Baptist Press, "I think every Southern Baptist ought to read (the restructuring proposal) carefully, pray over it and ask for God's discernment. That's the reason we put it out there. If it does not express the heart of Southern Baptists, it shouldn't be passed. If it does represent the hearts of Southern Baptists, it should be passed. We really believe it does.

"Southern Baptists are united in heart and purpose to reach this world for Christ," Sorrell noted. "All we're trying to do is provide a mechanism to help that happen."

In other structure-related actions, trustees:

-- instructed Williams to not participate in the Executive Committee's "Covenant for a New Century" promotional video. The restructuring proposal "should stand on its own merits and not be influenced by Dr. Williams or other agency leaders," Brown said.

"It would seem very awkward to express support if there were concerns coming from trustees," Williams agreed. Voicing concern about participating in "canned promotion," he added the decision was "a matter of conscience" for him and trustees.

-- approved the appointment of trustees Kenneth King of Texas and Bill Prince of Georgia to serve on a transition team chaired by Brotherhood executive vice president Mike Day. The nine-member team also will include staff members and state Brotherhood leaders.

-- heard a report from Day that such Brotherhood projects as a proposed name change, possible relocation in the Memphis area and a long-range corporate planning process have been placed on hold pending the outcome of the proposed restructuring.

"Focus shifts, whether deliberately or not, when something of this magnitude is introduced," Day acknowledged. "It is important that we maintain our momentum in our most basic assignment of providing missions education opportunities and materials.

"Our staff has been affected by the proposal, as should be expected, but their performance of their ministry and their commitment to their ministry has not been affected negatively."

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Brotherhood OKs record budget,
marketing/communications merger By Steve Barber

Baptist Press
4/24/95

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Brotherhood Commission trustees approved a record \$6 million budget for 1995-96 after President James D. Williams pledged to "keep the focus" on the agency's ongoing efforts "regardless of how or where we are structured" in the future, referring to the SBC Program and Structure Study Committee's reorganization proposal. "We cannot afford to lose momentum."

Williams also challenged every Southern Baptist church to keep its focus and "re-examine its commitment" to Southern Baptist missions education programs because "missions education and involvement belongs to the whole church" and should include every individual and family. "When pastors and church leaders see it as a priority, it will get the attention it deserves. It's hard work and must have the best leadership the church can enlist and train."

The budget, which led a full agenda handled by the trustees at their April 20-22 meeting, represents a 28 percent increase over the current year.

The budget also reflects a 2 percent increase in employee salaries for 1995-96, the first budgeted increase since a 2 percent hike in 1991-92.

For the first time, the budget includes funding for an in-house office of development to direct the agency's \$10 million Opportunity Now capital fund drive effort. Benjamin Kelley, who joined the staff in January as director of development, will continue to lead the fund-raising campaign.

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In related matters, the trustees approved a proposal to ensure all Opportunity Now contributions will be spent in the future as designated by donors. They also voted to end the agency's relationship with RDI International, Inc., of Springfield, Mo., a fund-raising consulting firm employed by the Brotherhood Commission before it established its own development office.

Following a trend seen at other Southern Baptist agencies, the trustees also approved merging the functions of marketing and corporate communications into a single work unit designated as the marketing/communications department, under the supervision of Jack Childs, vice president of support services. Directing the new department will be Larry Thompson, currently the agency's marketing director. Reporting to Thompson will be Steve Barber, communications coordinator, who currently reports to Michael S. Day, executive vice president. The transition to the new structure will be complete by Oct. 1, 1995.

The trustees also:

-- heard a report on the agency's involvement in the wake of the April 19 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, which to date has included provision of meals and crisis counseling for victims, rescue workers and cleanup crews.

-- heard an update on the agency's activity in coordinating volunteers for food distribution, water well repair and medical assistance in Haiti, which began last November.

-- reviewed plans for the agency's ongoing missions education and involvement work, including another expansion of the World Changers coed missions involvement option and a redesign of Missions Today, the monthly magazine for Southern Baptist men.

-- recognized retiring trustees C.A. Easterling of Kentucky, Robert Hill of Mississippi, Joe Lennon of North Carolina, Alan Todd of New York and John Whitman of Illinois.

-- elected Charles Brown of Aurora, Colo., to replace Whitman as trustee recording secretary and Don Valentine of Troutt, La., to replace Todd as vice chairman of the program services committee.

The next meeting of the Brotherhood Commission trustee executive committee is scheduled for Aug. 12 at Ridgecrest, N.C. The entire trustee board will meet again Oct. 20-21 in Memphis.

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(BP) photos of retiring trustees will be sent to state Baptist newspapers by the Brotherhood Commission.

**Mark Coppenger nominated
as Midwestern's president**

By Herb Hollinger

**Baptist Press
4/24/95**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--The nomination of Mark Coppenger as the next president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary will be voted on during a special called trustee meeting June 1-2 in Kansas City, Mo.

Coppenger, the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee's vice president for convention relations, if elected will succeed Milton Ferguson at Midwestern, one of six Southern Baptist Convention-sponsored seminaries. Ferguson, 65, has been Midwestern's president since 1973.

The announcement of Coppenger's unanimous recommendation by the trustee search committee was made on the opening day of the trustees' April 24-25 regular meeting in Kansas City.

In the trustees' opening session at the Airport Doubletree Hotel, they immediately went into executive session for an hour and 15 minutes. Afterward, trustee chairman Lewis Adkison, a Colorado Springs, Colo., pastor, announced the special trustee meeting June 1-2 to consider the search committee's recommendation of Coppenger.

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During the June meeting, the 35-member board of trustees will interview Coppenger, then vote. If approved, he will assume Midwestern's presidency Aug. 1, 1995, Adkison said.

In a news conference with media April 24, search committee members voiced an understanding that Ferguson's salary and benefits will be paid until his announced July 31, 1996, retirement.

Earlier, Ferguson in his president's report expressed his intention to cooperate with trustees. He said he still considers his official retirement date to be July 31, 1996, but made it clear, "I will respond positively and favorably to any change in the best interests of the seminary," Ferguson said.

Ferguson said he was told by the search committee three weeks ago it was ready to nominate a new president but said he learned the nominee is Coppenger the same time the rest of the trustees were informed.

He said he had anticipated his 1996 retirement would have provided ample time for closure, "but the shortened time frame brings a significant challenge to the seminary and me."

The approximate eight-week span for a transition to a new president is "a very short time frame in educational leadership," Ferguson said. Usually there is an overlap of 90 days or more, he said, but "we will reorder our priorities. We can do it and we will do it. My primary concern is the welfare of the seminary."

In their news conference, search committee members said they had held five formal meetings and received 24 recommendations. Their short list was pared from six to four, but Coppenger was the only one interviewed. Adkison said Coppenger "very clearly" was at the top of the list.

Said Coppenger, "I am humbled by the search committee's recommendation. My wife Sharon and I love missions and the Midwest and we see Midwestern Seminary as uniquely positioned to equip ministers to reach the Midwest and Great Plains for Christ. And of course Midwestern is a great resource to all Southern Baptists across the nation and world. If the full trustee board pleases, we will be gratified to serve."

Coppenger, 46, a Tennessee native who grew up in Arkansas, assumed his Executive Committee vice presidency in 1991 after serving as executive director-treasurer of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana for two years. Other previous positions include associate professor of philosophy at Wheaton College in Illinois, 1975-81, including the honor of junior teacher of the year for 1979-80, and pastor of First Baptist Church, El Dorado, Ark., 1983-88.

He was a trustee of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., 1987-88, and chairman of the SBC Resolutions Committee in 1989.

A 1970 magna cum laude graduate of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas, Coppenger earned a doctor of philosophy degree from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., in 1974, and a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, in 1983.

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Art Toalston contributed to this story.

New York church sues IRS
over loss of tax exemption

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
4/24/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--A New York church which lost its tax-exempt status for warning Christians about voting for Bill Clinton in 1992 has filed suit against the Internal Revenue Service.

The decision in the case could be precedent-setting, some religious liberty specialists said.

"This case will squarely raise important issues about whether the tax code can trump the First Amendment and free exercise of religion rights," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

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"If the IRS is successful in stifling the free speech rights of a church because it doesn't like the message, what's next?" asked Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, which filed the suit in federal court in Washington.

In January, the IRS informed the Church at Pierce Creek, which is in Vestal, N.Y., of the revocation of its tax exemption. The notice followed a two-year investigation of the church's advertisements in two major daily newspapers four days before the 1992 presidential election. The IRS said "the Church's advertisements specifically referred to the political candidacy of a particular political candidate in a particular campaign for public office."

In the Oct. 30, 1992, editions of USA Today and The Washington Times, the church and others sponsored full-page ads under the title "Christian Beware." It warned Christians not to "put the economy ahead of the Ten Commandments." The ad asked how Christians could vote for Clinton, citing his support of abortion, homosexual rights and condom distribution in schools, as well as Scriptures opposing such positions.

"The Bible warns us to not follow another man in his sin, nor help him promote sin -- lest God chasten us," the ad said. It did not endorse either of the other candidates, incumbent President George Bush and Ross Perot.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State asked the IRS to investigate the church and praised the IRS ruling.

"There's no gray area here," said Barry Lynn, Americans United's executive director. "This church was delivering a partisan political speech, not a sermon.

"When pastors turn their churches into smoke-filled rooms, the IRS is right to blow the whistle."

Dan Little, the church's pastor, said the ad "was not a political matter but a matter of moral judgment."

"We felt we had a right to address the Christian community in a scriptural way," Little said. "We wanted to issue a warning to the Christian community to let them know where Clinton stood on these very important moral issues."

Some church-state scholars believe it is the first time a church has had its tax exemption revoked for "partisan politicking," according to AU. A spokesman for IRS could not confirm that assertion but said there probably have not been many such revocations, if any.

The lawsuit charges the IRS action violated the church's right to freedom of speech, press and religion, as well as the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act. It also says the IRS selectively enforced its code and discriminated on the basis of viewpoint.

"Churches speaking out on social issues is the hallmark of religion, and those free speech rights must be protected," Sekulow said in a written release. "In this case, the IRS wrongly targeted this church and punished it because the church dared to speak out. The IRS action can only be described as censorship -- a dangerous development at a time which the role of religion in the marketplace is being debated."

Whitehead said tax exemption "should not be viewed as an act of government grace which can be withdrawn if you don't follow Caesar's speech code."

"Baptists have long believed that the power to tax is the power to destroy. If Caesar can tax the church, Caesar can try to destroy the church, or at least those churches whose prophetic voice is an irritant or an embarrassment to him."

The church "clearly violated the letter of the tax law," Whitehead said, "but RFRA demands that IRS show its refusal to allow an exception to its general rule" has a compelling governmental interest and is the least restrictive means to achieve its interest.

Whitehead, however, said churches need to remember the loss of tax exemption is not the only reason for caution about taking sides in political campaigns. Endorsement of or coziness with a politician can prevent a church from serving its prophetic function, he said.

As an example of his charge the IRS enforced its code unequally, Sekulow cited Clinton's endorsement of New York Gov. Mario Cuomo from the pulpit of Harlem's Bethel A.M.E. Church in September. "Has the Bethel A.M.E. exemption been revoked?" Sekulow asked, according to The Washington Times.

The IRS spokesman said he does not have that information and would be prohibited by law from commenting on cases under investigation.

Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry is a member of the Church at Pierce Creek.

RFRA, which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in November 1993, reversed the effects of the Employment Division v. Smith decision and restored a previous legal standard. In Smith, the court ruled government no longer has to demonstrate a "compelling interest" before restricting religious freedom. RFRA requires any government body to demonstrate a policy serves a "compelling interest" and is the "least restrictive means" in fulfilling the government's interest before limiting the free exercise of religion.

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Semester missionaries drop
anchor for America's Cup

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
4/24/95

SAN DIEGO (BP)--As international yachting crews set their sails for the America's Cup trophy, Tommy Hendricks and Mari Flores will drop their anchors on shore.

Hendricks and Flores are semester missionaries assigned by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to minister to America's Cup fans, sailors, organizers and reporters.

America's Cup is the "Super Bowl of sailing," Hendricks said. After months of qualifying competitions, the first of nine races to determine this year's winner will be May 6. Each race attracts thousands of fans, accounting for many of the 1 million tourists expected to visit San Diego this year.

Hendricks moved to San Diego last fall and began working as a volunteer in the America's Cup headquarters three days a week. His supervisors there were initially skeptical of the missionary's motives; one woman asked if he had a quota of souls to reach.

Through a servant's spirit, Hendricks earned their trust. He runs computer programs, answers phones at the switchboard and makes frequent trips to the airport to pick up or drop off guests.

Flores joined Hendricks in January and was assigned to the information center. There she answers phone calls about race results or how to get on a spectator boat.

The two semester missionaries are regularly asked why they are there, and both take the opportunity to share Christ. "If you're willing to talk, there are witnessing opportunities," Flores said.

Beyond the America's Cup headquarters, Hendricks and Flores help local churches reach their communities through creative arts. Several churches established puppet teams or clowning ministries under the direction of a US-2 missionary assigned to San Diego during the 1992 America's Cup races.

Church members trained in the performing arts comprise TEAM XA, with XA being Greek for Christ First. The team has performed at nursing homes, a woman's rescue mission, public schools and church-sponsored block parties.

A block party sponsored by Coronado Southern Baptist Church in March attracted more than 2,500 people, and five people made professions of faith. While guests stood in line for hot dogs and cotton candy, Hendricks juggled tennis balls and performed magic tricks.

One trick involved pouring water from a vase until it seemed empty. But every time Hendricks tipped the vase over, more water came out. He compared it to God's endless love and the friendliness at Coronado Southern Baptist Church.

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Meanwhile, Flores, dressed as a clown, shaped balloons into animal figures for children. As they watched her sculpt the balloons, Flores told children that God loves them and she asked if they attended church.

Their artistic skills have opened doors for further opportunities with America's Cup. The race managers asked TEAM XA to perform at a kick-off event for the races last fall and to entertain spectators during the spring competitions. Hendricks will play the piano during the America's Cup ball, a \$250 a plate dinner May 4.

Hendricks said he has been surprised at how his talents have been used in this ministry. "What they needed and what I could do fit like a glove."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Cutlines on SBCNet. Color slides available by calling the HMB news office, (404) 898-7523.

EDITORS' NOTE: This is the 11th article in "The Spirit of Southern Baptists, 1845-1995" series. The Historical Commission, SBC, will release one article each month from June 1994 to May 1995.

Southern Baptist women: behind
the scenes or ahead of pack By Sarah Frances Anders

Baptist Press
4/24/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--During this 150th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention, Southern Baptists will celebrate the history of a great denomination spanning three major techno-cultural periods. Emerging during the agrarian pre-Civil War era, our Baptist forebears were rooted in the land. They -- women and men alike -- were frontier folk liberated religiously by the revivalism of the earlier Great Awakening period. Since the denomination's formation in 1845, women have shared in the surge for religious liberty, the call to preach and public expression of faith.

Though not often social activists such as the Quaker preacher and suffragist Lucretia Mott, the Methodist evangelist Maggie Van Cott or Ellen Harmon White of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Baptist women had been avid supporters of the Sunday school movement, the missionary enterprise and church planting in newly settled areas.

During the Reconstruction Period, a new conservatism began to limit women's church roles to less visible and vocal expressions of faith than during the earlier frontier period, even though women had consistently constituted 55 to 60 percent of church congregations.

A half-century or more would pass before rebuilding and industrialization in the late 19th century would begin to lessen the cords of a kind of rural conservatism that bound women to helping the field hands, nurturing large families and being subordinate in worship and church leadership.

Southern Baptists would be well into their second century and anticipating a high-tech, metropolitan lifestyle before women would begin to demonstrate fuller use of their gifts and educational achievements in church life. Many talented women of Baptist faith would advance in professions, big business and political arenas in the mid-20th century before they would participate on major church committees, serve on denominational boards and be ordained for professional ministries.

Very early in Southern Baptist life, strong colleges for women were established across the South. A number of academies and colleges would follow Judson (1838) and Mary Hardin-Baylor (1845) founded on principles that would encourage literacy and leadership among Baptist women for professional, community and denominational roles.

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Today such women's institutions of higher learning have declined in favor of coeducational schools, but women students today more than equal men in undergraduate education and are represented significantly in their graduate programs. Women professors at the college and seminary levels serve as valuable mentors for both men and women students as they prepare to serve in secular and church-related vocations.

Women represent almost 40 percent of college faculties and about 10 percent of seminary professors. One-third of college and one-fourth of seminary administrative support staff are women. Southern Baptist women serve on academic boards, but do not equal the 38 percent of women trustees on the national level. Unfortunately, the contribution of women to Baptist higher education is still mainly in the classroom, not in higher levels of decision-making.

Baptist women had been involved in missions at home and abroad over a half-century before Southern Baptist women held their first convention-level women's meetings designed to further the organization of women's missionary societies.

These women supported local and foreign missions with the same fervor that the "female cent" and "female missionary" societies of the early 1800s had shown. Sometimes, as in 1868, women with "egg and quilt" pennies could accomplish far more than dreams. In that year, Lucinda Williams laid the foundation for a Baptist church through her persistence in establishing a missionary society and a Sunday school in the Texas town to which she and her husband migrated. By 1873, her work produced a church building that became the initial site for First Baptist Church, Dallas.

Prior to the formation of Woman's Missionary Union in 1888, Southern Baptist women had been foreign missionaries. The single Moon sisters (Orianna to Jerusalem, Edmonia and Lottie to China) followed in the creative pattern of the missionary wives. It was Lottie Moon's work in evangelism, church planting and letter writing that encouraged women's mission efforts and the phenomenal Christmas offering for foreign missions which has supplied hundreds of millions of mission dollars over the past century.

The gifted, devout Lottie Moon wrote, "What women want who come to China is free opportunity to do the largest possible work What women have a right to demand is perfect equality." The societies often dubbed as "women's work" grew and flourished into what Southern Baptists now consider a major enterprise.

Many women such as Annie Armstrong, Marie Mathis, Alma Hunt, Kathleen M. Mallory, Carolyn Weatherford and Marjorie McCullough have made Woman's Missionary Union strong. Thousands of women such as Wana Ann Fort, Faye Pearson, Martha Franks and Rebekah Naylor have followed in the wake of Moon.

Second only to going and sending money has been the contribution of women and WMU to missions education in the local church for children/youth and in special training schools adjunct to seminaries for women volunteers. The literature of WMU has given a prophetic voice to major social issues, women's church leadership and race relations. Woman's Missionary Union has inspired women from all walks of life.

In the 1940s and 1950s, women comprised from one-third to 40 percent of the professional support staff in Southern Baptist churches. Their training and non-ordained job titles were mainly in music, education and children/youth positions while Southern Baptist men, returning from war and moving back into church staff roles, had job titles that included the word "minister" and usually involved ordination.

Studies have indicated that women in church staff positions, regardless of title, have often had lower salaries but longer tenure in their service. Most of them have had equal or better education than their male colleagues.

Three decades have passed since Addie Davis became the first woman ordained for ministry by a Southern Baptist church, but the only pulpit open to her was outside Baptist life. Approximately 60 Southern Baptist clergywomen are active pastors now. At least 100 women carry the title of associate pastor.

Surveys and personal interviews have revealed that many trained and ordained Southern Baptist women have accepted roles other support ministries such as music, education or youth work. Yet, clergywomen represent only a small fraction of women church staff members. Some Southern Baptist clergywomen have gone to Methodist, Presbyterian and other denominations to follow their call to pastoral ministry.

One of the most rapidly growing professionals for Southern Baptist women has been chaplaincy which requires licensing or ordination. About 300 women ordained by local Southern Baptist churches serve as chaplains for the military, penal/correctional institutions, hospitals or nursing/retirement centers. While the ordination of women remains a controversial issue within the denomination, over 1,100 confirmed clergywomen represent scarcely 2 percent of the total Southern Baptist clergy.

The local church has always depended on the loyal, selfless work of women with a diversity of gifts. In most churches, these comprise a considerable majority of the teachers, youth leaders, communion committees, choir members, meal planners and servers, greeters or benevolence and social ministry groups. However, few women ushers take up the offering, serve on finance, building and personnel committees, become deacons and/or chair pastor search committees.

For a generation, women have served beyond the local church in state and national convention positions either as support staff or on volunteer committees of the SBC. In most areas, they remain in the background with respect to heading agencies (except WMU), state conventions and major policy-determining positions.

In this anniversary year, a celebration of the lives and ministries of Southern Baptist women is justified. What the future holds for Southern Baptists may well depend on the completely and equally shared talents of women and men in the local church, state and national convention life.

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Anders is professor emeritus of sociology at Louisiana College. To receive free guidelines and to purchase resources to help celebrate the SBC's 150th anniversary, write the Historical Commission, SBC, at 901 Commerce Street, Suite 400, Nashville, TN 37203-3630, or call toll-free 1-800-966-BAPT.

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