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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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95-80

TENNESSEE--Brister committee turns down WMU request to amend proposal.  
GEORGIA--Former KKK leader finds God and hope; photos.  
TEXAS--Holly opposes abortion, deploras killing doctors.  
DALLAS--Annuity Board: No rate hike in medical plans for 3rd year.  
KENTUCKY--Southern Seminary names 1995 distinguished alumni.  
DALLAS--First Baptist Dallas enters intensive media campaign.

Brister committee turns down  
WMU request to amend proposal

Baptist Press  
5/11/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A request by Woman's Missionary Union to amend the proposal to restructure the Southern Baptist Convention has been turned down by the Program and Structure Study Committee, which drafted the proposal set for an initial vote at the SBC in Atlanta in June.

An April 11 letter by WMU Executive Director Dellanna W. O'Brien to PSSC chairman Mark Brister requested an insertion of WMU's program statement in the restructuring proposal.

The proposal, according to the WMU, transfers two historical WMU assignments to other agencies: the promotion of the national mission offerings and missions education.

But Jerry Rankin, president of the Foreign Mission Board, disagreed with that assessment in a letter he has sent constituents who have written to the FMB about WMU's auxiliary status. WMU retains its involvement in the SBC's missions offerings and missions education, he wrote.

Rankin, noting 30 percent of SBC churches do not have WMU organizations, wrote the proposed restructuring simply gives the SBC mission boards greater responsibility for the offerings' denomination-wide effectiveness. WMU's missions education work remains intact, Rankin wrote, noting a new North American Mission Board would be assigned the same missions education responsibility the Brotherhood Commission has had.

Brister, meanwhile, said the WMU request is a "misunderstanding and misperception of the PSSC report as it relates to the WMU" and can be "clarified simply."

The WMU wanted its mission and ministries statements added to the report as an amendment. The PSSC report, acknowledging WMU's auxiliary status with the SBC, made brief mention of the WMU in its report but identified the Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board as responsible for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, respectively.

In a teleconference call April 25, members of the PSSC voted unanimously to "stand by our report," Brister said.

Brister said the "facts are that the FMB and HMB have had access and allocation of the mission offerings for years. Assigning the two mission boards primary responsibility for promoting the two mission offerings was done long before the PSSC report."

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In an April 25 letter to O'Brien, Brister wrote: "While we have profound appreciation for the WMU's initial promotion of these offerings and friendship supporting the offerings over these many years, the greater cause is the cause of Christ. The Program and Structure Study Committee believes that we will ultimately reach more people for Christ in our world desperately in need of Jesus if our beloved Convention maximizes the efficiency of our operations."

O'Brien had noted there is historical precedent for the WMU's request: In 1967, WMU presented its program statement to the SBC -- although not required to do so -- and the statement was approved by the SBC.

"This action on your part (amending the report) will calm the fears expressed by many that there is an attempt to alienate WMU from the cooperative efforts of the SBC," wrote O'Brien in her letter. "It will also serve to confirm your statements regarding the desire for the continued commitment of WMU in the missions cause."

But Brister told Baptist Press May 10, "Please ask the WMU leadership to produce their current non-binding program statements and show Southern Baptists where the mission offering responsibility now lies. The fact is the mission offerings currently are not assigned to the WMU. Dellanna O'Brien has been quoted as saying, 'Get the facts and vote your conscience.' The PSSC concurs."

Rankin, in a letter to O'Brien and state WMU presidents and directors, stated, "WMU has made several changes in the last couple of years to become more relevant and effective. Surely the SBC should not be denied that same opportunity and the effectiveness of our denomination diminished by being locked into past traditions and structures."

In his letter to constituents, Rankin noted, "This recommendation implies no change whatsoever in the way the Foreign Mission Board has worked with the WMU in the past, nor does it diminish the role WMU organizations will continue to have in promoting the offering and sponsoring the annual weeks of prayer. It would be foolish and counterproductive to even propose denying this role to the WMU. We are deeply indebted to the WMU for the success of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering which is projected to exceed \$85.4 million this year.

"There are those who assume the recommendations were motivated by a desire for power and control and a deliberate intent to discipline or alienate the Woman's Missionary Union. I cannot speak to such conclusions since there is no objective basis for these perceptions.

"Certainly the committee could have been more sensitive to the potential perception that programs of the WMU were being reassigned and made a point of affirming WMU's auxiliary role, but I believe this was an oversight rather than intentional."

Rankin, in an interview with Baptist Press, said he and Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis have talked about possible proposals to include an affirmation of WMU's work in the PSSC document to be voted on by the SBC, but to this point they have not reached the point of beginning the process.

In a story in The Alabama Baptist newsjournal, O'Brien was quoted as saying, "Despite the assurances that nothing has changed, it's quite clear that things have changed. People say we haven't been deprived of anything, but we have. Otherwise, there would be some statement in the report at least acknowledging WMU's contribution."

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Herb Hollinger and Art Toalston compiled this story, including reporting by Mark Baggett.

**Former KKK leader  
finds God and hope**

**By Rachel Gill**

DOUGLASVILLE, Ga. (BP)--A message on the New Georgia Baptist Church bulletin board startles residents of Paulding County, Ga., from their midwinter doldrums: "Hear former KKK leader Lyndon Terrell give his testimony."

On Sunday morning, the modern sanctuary is crowded. Many are curious to hear a voice from the past.

When pastor Roy Crowe introduces the former KKK leader, a hush falls on the room. Every eye follows the figure who rises from his seat on the fourth row and goes quickly to the podium. The keen-eyed, handsome 39-year-old man who turns to face the congregation is not a relic from the past. He is like them.

Secure, confident, friendly, Terrell is the picture of respectability. It is unbelievable that he could have been the Exalted Cyclops of a Ku Klux Klan Klavern. But Terrell plunges in, telling his story to demonstrate one truth: God is a loving, forgiving Father who gives the repentant sinner new life. It happened to him. And it's the most important thing in his life.

In the lower grades, young Lyndon was a good student. But with no encouragement from home, his grades fell. By the time he left high school, he was hooked on drugs. He became a dealer to support his habit. Considered one of four "black sheep" in his 32-member graduating class, he is now the only one of the four still living.

"I look back and ask why I did all those things. I think I was constantly looking to fill that emptiness inside me."

In 1982, a measure of stability came into his life when he met Sharon. "I married him," she says, "over my mother's strong protests. She said he'd never amount to anything."

In August of that year, Terrell found the announcement of a Ku Klux Klan rally tucked in a bag of groceries. Using a Scripture passage to support its message, it invited the "white public" to come and send a message to Washington. Something about it piqued Terrell's interest.

When he found the only qualification for Klan membership was to be "a white person who believes in God," he decided to join. Since he had never gone to church or learned what being a Christian meant, he had nothing to judge Klan teachings against. Each Klavern (a local unit) had a chaplain and every meeting opened and closed with prayer.

Terrell soon became a Klan leader. For the first time in his life, surrounded by men who cared for him, trusted him and believed in him, he began to feel better about himself. He was determined to do his best.

Terrell discovered he was a good administrator. His first months were spent working on the Klan's image. "They wanted to be seen as a suit-and-tie group that helped people in trouble and worked with young people. We were trying to convince the public we weren't a violent organization."

But the veneer of respectability was thin. Terrell had never seen himself as a racist, but Klan propaganda gradually convinced him of a conspiracy against white people. An emphasis on public relations gave way to more sinister activities.

"We went from a campaign of harassment to intimidation and finally to beating people," Terrell says. "The shocking part was that we thought we were doing it in the name of God."

On a raid with three other Klansmen, a white woman was punished for "having relationships with men of another race." Masked and armed with a shotgun, Terrell guarded the back door of her house with instructions to shoot anyone who tried to escape.

At a second raid, Terrell watched as the black husband of a white woman was hit between the eyes with a pistol. Before the man lost consciousness, he stabbed his attacker. "Within 30 seconds two men were lying on the floor severely injured, maybe dying."

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Leaving the black man where he fell, the Klan members fled, secreting their wounded leader to a hospital where they were not known. The knife wound was blamed on a chain-saw accident. With that experience, Terrell became disillusioned. He discovered that rather than carrying out God's will, the raids were payback for a Klan member's personal grudges.

At this point, both Lyndon and Sharon were holding positions of responsibility, he as Exalted Cyclops and she as secretary of a new Klavern. Although Sharon had joined Lyndon in his Klan activities, from the beginning she had feared the Klan's potential for violence. Now that her worst fears were realized, they pulled out completely.

A year later, Terrell came home from work one day to find four FBI agents at his home. Using inside informers, they had compiled 451 pages of reports on his Klan activities. "It was a complete shock," he says. "They knew as much about me as I did myself."

After several weeks of FBI harassment and intimidation, Terrell hired an attorney who advised him to cooperate with the investigation. Agents were threatening to put him and Sharon, who was expecting their first child, in jail. If he would be their star witness, Terrell was offered the security of a witness protection program to keep him safe from Klan retaliation. But he refused. The couple moved to a more secure location, but Terrell continued to work in the community.

When the story broke in the Atlanta papers, Terrell was tagged as the Klan leader who initiated the terrorist activities. "The headlines made me look like the leader of the national Klan."

The stress began to take its toll. Guilt over the things that had filled his life -- alcohol, drugs, sex, violence -- took hold of him. He became terribly depressed.

After work one day, he sat on the front steps of his small trailer home and began to sob. But the tears spilling down his cheeks could not wash away 28 years of pain, humiliation and misery.

"I don't know what to do but kill myself," he told Sharon, who could do nothing but sit beside him. Finally, she suggested they talk to the pastor of a nearby church. At the pastor's invitation, Terrell poured out a tearful, lengthy confession. When he finished, the pastor told him about Christ's love and invited him to pray to receive Christ. Terrell had nothing to lose.

"I prayed for Jesus to forgive my sins and to come into my life. That night I was born again," he says. "There's no way for me to describe the sense of relief and cleansing I felt. I was a completely different person. I knew God had given me another chance."

As a layman, he is faithful to his church, First Baptist, Douglasville, Ga., where pastor John Pennington encouraged him to develop his testimony for sharing in other churches. He loves his work as a drywall contractor and uses his many contacts on the job as an opportunity to witness.

And as a former Klansman, Terrell tells his story in African American churches, in white churches and in jails. His message is simple: God has the power to turn lives around so that love replaces hatred and the wounds of neglect and rejection are healed. It's not always easy.

"I do wrong things all the time," Terrell says. "But Christ forgives me. Now I can see beyond myself. I can see that other people are hurting and are without Christ and I can reach out and help them."

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Holly opposes abortion,  
deplors killing doctors

By Linda Lawson

BEAUMONT, Texas (BP)--A "rabidly pro-life" Southern Baptist physician has condemned the rising tide of violence in the anti-abortion movement in the United States that has led to the injuries and deaths of doctors who perform abortions.

"While Christians have the right and responsibility to work in the political arena to influence their country and their culture for Christ, they cannot do this by force or intimidation," writes Larry Holly in his book, "A Matter of Life and Death: What the Bible Has to Say About Violence in the Pro-Life Movement." It is scheduled for release in June by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman & Holman Publishers.

"I am rabidly pro-life and rabidly opposed to violence against abortionists," Holly, of Beaumont, Texas, told Baptist Press.

"We must protest the evil of abortion. We must publicize the evil of abortion, but we must not break God's law by disobeying the non-coercive laws of men," Holly writes.

John F. MacArthur Jr., a leading evangelical writer and speaker, wrote the foreword to Holly's book, commending it as "the best reply to pro-life extremism I have ever read."

MacArthur called on Christians to "with one voice condemn illegal violence and renounce those who want us to employ carnal weapons in this intensely spiritual battle."

BSSB President James T. Draper Jr. described the book as "provocative. Readers may not agree with every point, but it raises issues that must be faced by churches."

Draper said he hopes the book will "stimulate thinking, discussion and involvement in those actions which support legitimate pro-life activity."

Instead of picketing abortion clinics or engaging in rhetoric that might incite others to violent behavior, Holly stated, "... the proper place for activism by Christians is in the church and in the home to restore confidence in the God who created the heavens and the earth."

Holly conducted extensive research into violence in the anti-abortion movement in preparation for an October 1994 debate on the topic, "Is the killing of abortion providers just?"

Holly is particularly critical of the anti-abortion organization, Operation Rescue, which has picketed and conducted sit-in demonstrations outside abortion clinics in numerous cities.

"Subtly, Operation Rescue has assumed the world's agenda without knowing it by accepting the world's methodology of civil disobedience through social activism," he wrote.

Holly draws a strong distinction between what he terms the proper Christian response under current U.S. law, which allows abortion, versus law which mandates abortion in certain circumstances.

"If, as in China, abortion were mandated by law, a non-violent action similar to Operation Rescue would be the imperative response for all believers. In that abortion is not mandated -- no one is required to have an abortion -- our proper response is protesting, not picketing," he noted.

In an interview, Holly noted similar roots in violence against abortion providers and those who advocate violence against the government, leading to such acts as the bombing of Oklahoma City's federal building.

If the persons who planted the bomb in Oklahoma City instead had "blown up death row at the Oklahoma State Prison, it would have been as wrong as killing those little babies," he said. "The act is wrong by its nature, not because of the person it's perpetrated against."

People "don't have the right to cross the line from 'what you're doing is wrong and you ought to stop it' to 'what you're doing is wrong and I'm going to stop you.'"

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Holly also criticizes the silence of mainstream Christianity on anti-abortion violence and what he terms the failure of many churches to ground their members in doctrine and biblical truth.

"In many ways, the abortion mill in America is directly traceable, not to the church's failure to use force, but to the church's failure to be the redemptive body that God designed it to be," he wrote.

Holly proposes in his book a one-year experiment to test the kinds of anti-abortion activities that make the greatest positive impact on abortion providers and society in general. He proposes dividing anti-abortion activists into four groups: 1) those committed to confrontation and aggression; 2) those depending on the power of prayer; 3) those who combine sidewalk counseling with prayer; and 4) those who do sidewalk counseling.

"I am confident that the results would demonstrate the power of prayer, even in the face of abortion," he wrote.

In the final chapter, Holly lists seven ways Christians can affirm life: respect all people, reject racism, reject gossip, oppose child abuse, create crisis pregnancy centers, reject violence and "bring the spirit of Christ to the abortion clinics."

In an interview, he listed three specific actions Christians can take to curb anti-abortion violence, beginning with stopping violent rhetoric.

Second, he said Christians must "be more than anti-abortion; they must be actively pro-life." He described this as an expensive approach that will call for Christians to support and assist "women in complicated, difficult, unwanted pregnancies. We must embrace people, love them and help them through their dilemma."

Finally, he said churches must "clearly teach people how to make biblical, godly decisions in ethics and morals. We are sometimes so passionate about objecting to evil that we're forgetting Jesus said to overcome evil with good. Our responsibility is not to stop abortion. We must remove the need and desire for abortion."

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Annuity Board: No rate hike  
in medical plans for 3rd year

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5/11/95

DALLAS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Annuity Board will not increase rates for its Personal Security, Catastrophic and Seminarian Comprehensive Medical Plans, according to Joel Mathis, senior vice president of the agency's insurance services division.

The May 10 announcement marks the third year there has been no rate increase for the three medical programs.

Mathis attributed the continued cost savings to effective management by the Annuity Board and its carrier, Prudential, and to the medical plan's participants. The participants helped hold down costs by instituting wellness programs, using preferred providers when available and choosing generic prescription drugs. Savings resulting from reduced claims have been passed on to the participants through increased benefits and reduced deductibles and copayments.

"While health care costs continue to escalate nationwide, we have worked hard with Prudential, Baptist hospitals and our people to hold costs in line for another year," Mathis said. "We can now enter our fourth year without a rate hike."

For more information on the Annuity Board's Personal Security Program and Seminarian Comprehensive Medical Plan, call 1-800-262-0511.

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**Southern Seminary names  
1995 distinguished alums**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has named six graduates as its 1995 Distinguished Alumni.

The honorees are Charles T. Carter, pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.; Ted Sisk, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky.; Dan C. Stringer, executive director-treasurer of the Arizona Baptist Convention; John Lee Taylor, pastor of First Baptist Church, Gainesville, Ga.; and Arthur L. Walker Jr., retired executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission.

Jesse V. Bottoms Sr., who died in January, will receive a distinguished alumnus award posthumously. Bottoms, pastor of Green Street Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., for 35 years, was one of the seminary's first African American graduates.

The six will be recognized during the seminary's annual Alumni and Friends Luncheon at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta June 21 at 1 p.m.

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**First Baptist Dallas enters  
intensive media campaign**

By C.C. Risenhoover

**Baptist Press  
5/11/95**

DALLAS (BP)--First Baptist Church, Dallas, this year launched an intensive media campaign with the theme, "Everybody's Looking For A New Beginning."

That pastor O.S. Hawkins has revitalized the downtown church's ministry through media is no surprise to those who know him. During his first pastorate he used radio for evangelistic outreach. That was at First Baptist Church, Hobart, Okla.

Hawkins added television to his media ministry when he became pastor of First Baptist Church, Ada, Okla. He had a daily five-minute slot on the city's ABC-TV affiliate during the early days of "Good Morning America." And, of course, the church's morning worship service was carried live on radio every Sunday.

His early experience was good training for an unusual but effective media ministry when he was pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

"This area of Florida has one of the largest unchurched populations in the country," Hawkins said, "so we took a different approach. I did a 30-minute program called 'Lifeline' on Saturday nights that was telecast nationally by TBN. A cameraman would go with me to the beach, the strip, the emergency room of the hospital, wherever, and I would approach people and share the gospel with them. It was an interview-type program and I would often lead people to Christ on the air."

Hawkins said he did the "Lifeline" program for about four years. The church then began doing televised specials. He also had a weekly 30-minute radio program while at Fort Lauderdale, an edited version of the Sunday morning worship service.

However, it was not just the pastor who was involved in media while in Florida. His wife, Susie, had a 90-minute call-in talk show Monday through Friday called "Around the Table."

"She had great guests," Hawkins said.

Discussing the media ministry of First Baptist, Dallas, he said, "It's difficult to measure the full results of a media ministry. It can't be based simply on tangible results, though such results are important.

"We're on television in 30 states. And from the calls to our 800 number and the letters we receive every week, we know that people are being saved every week. When people call or write from outside our area, we try to put them with a Bible-believing church in the area where they live.

"What we're doing with our media ministry is simply being a New Testament church, responding in a positive way to the Great Commission and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ."

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Hawkins said to reach people in the Dallas area, First Baptist committed to a campaign of 30- and 60-second spots on secular television.

"We've run our spots on CNN, ESPN and all sorts of cable outlets. We've run spots during breaks in coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial and during breaks in Dallas Mavericks (NBA) games," he said.

"We've developed our spot advertising to appeal to people who may have been out of church 20 to 30 years," Hawkins said, "and the response has been tremendous.

"There are some real pluses to this type media approach, especially when the pastor is new to a city and takes a historic pulpit such as that of First Baptist. This approach provides an almost immediate identity with the public that without television would take years to develop.

"No matter where I am in the city or what I'm doing, someone will come up to me and mention seeing one of the spots on television. So the spots elevate visibility and provide opportunity for witness."

Hawkins said when a TV spot is properly produced there is no problem getting the message across in 30 or 60 seconds.

"I don't know how many of the younger generation are willing to watch a worship service on television," he said, "but they can, obviously, be reached with 30- and 60-second commercials."

The pastor said he thought the most powerful medium for ministry was radio. He gave as an example the ministries of James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, and Charles R. "Chuck" Swindoll, now president of Dallas Theological Seminary, both of whom use radio extensively.

"All our services are carried on radio," he said, "and we receive more mail as a result of our radio broadcasts than from anything else. It is our most effective media tool."

First Baptist owns KCBI (90.9 FM), a Christian radio station that covers much of Texas and Oklahoma 24 hours a day.

Although he is a fan of radio for ministry, Hawkins also is an advocate of a good media mix.

"A church shouldn't limit its media ministry," he said. "We need to use audio and computer graphics to reach children and young people. And the value of print media shouldn't be underestimated. One of the greatest outreach opportunities we have are newspaper personals. Many lonely people read them and for dollars spent they reach as many people as any media.

"The best way to get the gospel into the marketplace is one-on-one in the normal traffic patterns of life. But media does give you an entree."

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