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June 30, 1995

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Education Commission to ask
for time to phase itself out

By Tim Fields

Baptist Press
6/30/95

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Members of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, whose agency is slated for dissolution by the convention's comprehensive reorganization plan, voted to petition the SBC Executive Committee to allow the commission until the year 2000 to phase itself out of existence.

Commission members met on the heels of the Southern Baptist Convention where messengers June 20 approved "The Covenant for a New Century," which combines 19 agencies into 12 and calls for the total disbandment of the Education Commission and its programs. The commission, which was established in 1915, is charged with serving and promoting Southern Baptist-related colleges and schools.

Commission members spent nearly five hours discussing the reorganization plan and presented two resolutions directed to the SBC Executive Committee.

The first resolution petitions the Executive Committee "to allow the Education Commission until the year 2000 to phase itself out of existence in an orderly and businesslike manner in order to arrange for the continuation of its valuable and useful programs for the benefit of the Southern Baptist Convention and Baptists everywhere..."

The second resolution addresses the disposition of more than \$600,000 in loan endowments currently used to help professors at Southern Baptist-related colleges and schools pursue doctoral and postdoctoral education. The loans may be repaid in service and become scholarships if professors continue to teach at their institutions.

The commission approved the first resolution after hearing a report from Stephen P. Carleton, executive director, on his view of the time line for dissolution.

"The convention approved the Covenant in one vote this year," Carleton told commissioners. "The actual vote that must take place twice has to do with by-law 15 that changes the names of the agencies, and it must be approved again in June in New Orleans."

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Carleton said for some of the larger agencies the implementation of the Covenant might not be complete until the year 2000. "For the smaller agencies many convention leaders have been saying it will be over when the gavel hits the podium in June of 1997 in Dallas."

"The Covenant for a New Century says to dissolve the Education Commission and let the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools take on any of the programs that they may desire to," Carleton explained.

"This was a blow for all of us on the staff, and it has not been easy, but I think we were caught in the mood of change, which is strong. I wish we somehow could have stayed in operation, but I also understand the mentality that says no one likes to change and no one likes to be dissolved. We are going to do this no matter how painful it is."

"I'd like to think we can help the Association of Colleges and Schools as they find ways to try to pick up some of what the Education Commission has been doing," Carleton said. "The problem is the wide disparity between the \$500,000 now provided for this work by the Cooperative Program and the meager \$20,000 budget the association operates on from member dues of the 69 educational institutions."

Doug Hodo, president of Houston Baptist University and vice chairman of the commission, chaired the meetings in the absence of the chairman Jerry Henry of Selma, Ala., who was unable to attend due to a funeral in his church.

Hodo, whose school is a member of the Association of Baptist Colleges and Schools, told commission members "the administrative committee has already instructed our executive director and his staff to work on a plan which will prioritize the specific steps necessary to transfer the programs of the Education Commission to the Association."

Among those programs and services commissioners agreed should be continued is the Cooperative Services International Education Consortium which was strengthened last year by an alliance and financial agreements among the Foreign Mission Board, the Education Commission and 43 colleges and universities. CSIEC currently includes 300 educational exchange programs predominantly in what the FMB calls 'World A' countries where traditional missionaries are not allowed.

CSIEC is now directed on a volunteer basis by Dan Grant, president emeritus of Ouachita Baptist University. Prior to approval of the Covenant plan by the SBC Executive Committee in February the Foreign Mission Board was set to provide \$30,000 annually to help with CSIEC funding and the Education Commission had committed \$70,000 plus office space and staff support for a full-time director.

Commissioners discussed a wide-array of possibilities to keep CSIEC alive including asking the Foreign Mission Board to follow-through with the previously approved budget and even increase it.

Attorney John Rocovich from Roanoke, Va., said, "It looks like to me, for a very modest price, we could do a world of good (through CSIEC) especially in World A for the cause of the kingdom. I sure would try to see if Jerry Rankin, president of the FMB, would bless this program. Through CSIEC we can get teachers into countries where no missionaries can ever go. Many students have been led to the Lord through this program."

Lloyd D. Aycock, an elementary school principal and new commission member from Phoenix, Ariz., said, "Education is the foundation of our country. Southern Baptists colleges and schools are not only to service Christians but are mission fields. I am one of the results of a Southern Baptist College," he explained. "When I went there I didn't know what a Christian was and when I left I accepted Christ as my savior and it changed my entire life."

Aycock told commission members he was not against change but "If this commission is the cement that holds our schools together, we need to keep the programs intact."

Other programs members cited for transfer include a representative voice in Washington to speak to governmental issues such as student financial aid "without which the colleges cannot exist;" The Southern Baptist Educator, a publication sent to 11,500 faculty, staff and trustees of the schools and other convention leaders; a placement service that links qualified Christian teachers in a broad range of disciplines with the schools; workshops for professional faculty groups such as admissions, public relations alumni and campus ministers, and an annual meeting for presidents and academic deans of ASBCS.

M.O. Owens Jr., a new commission member from Gastonia, N.C., said although he basically had been in favor of the concept of the restructuring, "one of the things that has bothered me is the fact that action was taken without sitting down and working through all the problems that will be and are created."

Owens said he believes the Executive Committee would be responsive to the need for more time and an extension of the budget to work out a transition of these important tasks to other entities, especially since none of the Education Commission programs were being assigned to other SBC agencies as in the case of the other small agencies. "I can tell you they do not know what's going on (in the individual agencies). They have not taken into account all of the terrible things that can happen and are happening. We need to set down with them eye to eye and explain why we need this transition time."

Carleton told commission members another vital program that should be protected and preserved is the administration of several loan and scholarship funds "out of which some millions of dollars have been loaned over the past 20 years to teachers at Baptist colleges and universities who wanted to finish a doctoral program or do postdoctoral work," he explained.

"I was one of those teachers who was able to finish my doctorate while a professor at California Baptist college," Carleton said.

"I have a concern and a worry about the future use of those funds. It is pretty clear to me that the donors of those funds wanted to help people that were planning to teach at a Baptist college although some of that money has in recent years gone to seminary professors on sabbaticals."

"The SBC Executive Committee is really in control of those funds and over the years has simply assigned the administration of the funds to the Education Commission. In the case of Hester funds given directly to the Education Commission, the document calls for the funds to be transferred to the Southern Baptist Foundation if the Education Commission ceases to exist," Carleton explained, "but the Foundation is also going to cease to exist and will simply be a part of the Executive Committee."

"We have six seminaries that are all underfunded and always have faculty who need to go on sabbatical. When we are dissolved, the seminaries will be the only educational entities that have a place in the national ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention. If you were an SBC Executive Committee member and you had six to seven hundred thousand dollars that had been going to colleges, but now you have six seminaries that need it, I can imagine a strong plea being made."

"I think the Education Commission has used the funds exactly the way the donors intended, and I hope we can assure they would continue to be used that way," he said.

In response to Carleton's request, the commissioners appointed Attorney Rocovich and Thomas Kinchen, president of Florida Baptist Theological College, to draft a resolution on the loan fund.

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In their closing business session, commissioners approved the recommendation, which states in part "The Education Commission unanimously resolves that the Executive Committee, or its designees, in order to protect the Southern Baptist Convention from liability and in order to maintain its responsibility to the donors and in order to maintain its integrity, should continue to honor the donors' intent by providing these funds for the benefit of men and women enrolled full-time in doctoral or post doctoral programs, who are teachers at Baptist colleges and universities for the purpose of providing financial assistance to them to complete their doctoral degrees."

In other action commission members approved a budget of \$596,196 for 1995-96 which includes Cooperative Program income of \$493,530, and the remainder from reserves, and the sale of products and reimbursement of services. Included in the budget were provisions for staff outplacement, a severance package for employees based on tenure and a two percent cost of living adjustment in the salary base beginning Oct. 1.

Members approved a motion by Kinchen to encourage Southern Baptist schools in the promotion of intentional bivocationalism on the part of students in a wide array of professions who could be trained to serve churches that cannot support full-time pastors and staff.

Commission members elected Hodo as chairman of the commission; Kinchen as vice-chairman; and reelected Betty Joe Cooley of Chesnee, S.C., as secretary.

Members also passed a resolution commending Education Commission staff by name for "their positive Christian spirit which they have shown in this difficult situation and for the creative, sensitive and solution oriented manner in which they have approached their responsibilities."

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Court provides protection
for religious expression

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
6/30/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court struck twin blows against what it perceived as discrimination based on religion on the final day of the 1994-95 term, ruling in two cases the Constitution provides protection for religious expression equal to that afforded other forms of speech.

In a 5-4 decision June 29 in the *Rosenberger v. University of Virginia* case, the justices ruled a Christian magazine was entitled to student activities fees to pay for its costs if other organizations and publications also received such support.

The court ruled by a 7-2 vote in *Capitol Square Review v. Pinette* a state government could not prohibit a privately sponsored religious display on public land where other private displays are allowed.

In both cases, the majority said the First Amendment's clause prohibiting the government from establishing religion was not violated in permitting free speech or the free exercise of religion.

Advocates on both sides expressed dissatisfaction with the decisions, however. For some supporters of strict separation of church and state, the rulings were disastrous. For some advocates of government accommodation of religious expression, the opinions did not go far enough.

"I think the wall of separation between church and state took two direct mortar shots today in these two church-state decisions," said Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

"It was the iron curtain of religious intolerance that took two hits today, not Thomas Jefferson's wall," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "Strict separationists have erected an iron curtain of religious intolerance, and they want to pass it off as Thomas Jefferson's wall of church-state separation."

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The 5-4 vote in Rosenberger "means we are just one vote away from religious apartheid," Whitehead said. "We are one vote away from a judicial amendment to free speech and free exercise that singles out religious speech for censorship and discrimination, all in the name of church-state separation."

Steven McFarland of the Christian Legal Society expressed frustration the court did not provide more guidance for future cases. He cited Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's concurring opinion in Rosenberger in which she said a "Grand Unified Theory" in establishment clause cases is flawed.

"Consequently, that means that we are guaranteed years and years of additional litigation," McFarland said. "This is a lawyer's paradise, where the court is not going to blow the fog away. We're going to continue to have a case-by-case adjudication of where the government is stepping on free speech or stepping on the establishment of religion."

"And in the Pinette case, it's distressing that you can't get a majority of this court to bury once and for all this endorsement test, this idea that if somebody mistakenly associates private religious expression with the government's endorsement of that message, that therefore you can suppress that speech," he said. "If somebody hypothetically could get the wrong idea about what messages the government allows in a public place, rather than educating the misperceiver, you suppress the speech. That's nuts. It's got to stop."

In the more tightly contested case, the University of Virginia rejected a request from an approved Christian student organization to pay the printer of its publication, Wide Awake, because the group was religious. Using fees assessed from all full-time students, the university funded 118 groups and 16 other publications. Among the groups were Muslim and Jewish associations, but the university said it funded them as cultural, rather than religious, groups.

Both lower federal courts sided with the school. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the school's action violated free speech rights but said the discrimination was justified in order to maintain the separation of church and state.

In the majority opinion, Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy said the university would not establish religion by paying the Christian publication's printing bills.

"The viewpoint discrimination inherent in the University's regulation required public officials to scan and interpret student publications to discern their underlying philosophic assumptions respecting religious theory and belief," Kennedy wrote. "That course of action was a denial of the right of free speech and would risk fostering a pervasive bias or hostility to religion, which could undermine the very neutrality the Establishment Clause requires."

"There is no difference in logic or principle, and no difference of constitutional significance, between a school using its funds to operate a facility to which students have access, and a school paying a third-party contractor to operate the facility on its behalf."

The Supreme Court has upheld religious people's right of equal access to school facilities in cases such as *Widmar v. Vincent* and *Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches Union Free School District*.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist and associate justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas joined Kennedy and O'Connor in the majority. Thomas, like O'Connor, wrote a concurring opinion. Associate justices David Souter, John Paul Stevens, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer dissented, with Souter writing their opinion.

Ron Rosenberger, who formerly edited *Wide Awake* and brought the suit, said, "No longer will universities be allowed to treat religious students as second class students, religious speech as second class speech. The court has clearly upheld a free marketplace of ideas on our nation's campuses, and I'm delighted with the opinion."

CLC Executive Director Richard Land said, "I am delighted that at least five Supreme Court justices agree with our conviction and contention that the First Amendment not only doesn't require discrimination against religious expression but in fact protects religious expression and guarantees it equal treatment under the laws of the land. All the students at the University of Virginia were asking is that religious groups be treated no differently than other student groups. That's the Baptist way and the American way."

The CLC joined in a brief filed by CLS in support of the students. The Baptist Joint Committee, former church-state representative for the Southern Baptist Convention, filed a brief on the side of the university.

Calling his organization "very disappointed" in the Rosenberger ruling, BJC General Counsel Brent Walker said, "I think it cuts against the continued vitality of our religious liberty in this country. For the first time, the Supreme Court has expressly sanctioned the use of public dollars to pay for the expression of religion. (The editors of Wide Awake) are entitled to equal access to state facilities; they're not entitled to equal advancement through the expenditure of public tax dollars."

In the Pinette case, the Ku Klux Klan applied for a permit to place a 10-foot cross alongside a Christmas tree and a Jewish menorah, a candelabrum used to celebrate Hanukkah, in front of the Ohio capitol in Columbus. The state agency, Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board, refused to grant a permit.

A federal court overruled the board, declaring the capitol property a public forum which had been used for demonstrations and other unattended displays. A reasonable observer would not perceive the state endorses religion by allowing the display, the court said. The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the display did not violate the establishment clause.

After the court rulings, the Klan erected the cross with a disclaimer of state support, but vandals destroyed it after only a day. A council of churches received permission to place several crosses where the Klan's cross had been.

In his majority opinion upholding the earlier rulings, Scalia addressed only the establishment clause question, which is what the lower courts considered, and not the KKK's political views.

"Religious expression cannot violate the Establishment Clause where it (1) is purely private and (2) occurs in a traditional or designated public forum, publicly announced and open to all on equal terms," Scalia wrote.

"If Ohio is concerned about misperceptions, nothing prevents it from requiring all private displays in the Square to be identified as such. But the State may not, on the claim of misperception of official endorsement, ban all private religious speech from the public square, or discriminate against it by requiring religious speech alone to disclaim public sponsorship."

Joining Scalia in the judgment were Rehnquist, O'Connor, Kennedy, Souter, Thomas and Breyer. Writing concurring opinions were Thomas, O'Connor and Souter. Stevens and Ginsburg dissented.

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Rulings split lawyers
on need for amendment

By Tom Strobe

Baptist Press
6/30/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--Depending on which lawyer is speaking, the Supreme Court's recent opinions in two significant church-state cases either underscore the need for a constitutional amendment protecting religious expression or affirm such an amendment is unnecessary.

On the final day of the 1994-95 term, the court ruled in two cases the Constitution provides protection for religious expression equal to that afforded other forms of speech. In both cases, the majority said the First Amendment's clause prohibiting the government from establishing religion was not violated in permitting free speech or the free exercise of religion.

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Some organizations, such as the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and Christian Legal Society, which advocate government accommodation of private religious expression, said the decisions, while victories, reveal an amendment is needed. Other groups, such as the Baptist Joint Committee, which advocate a strict separation between church and state, said the opinions support the opposite conclusion.

"These decisions add to, rather than diminish, the urgency for a constitutional amendment," said Michael Whitehead, the CLC's general counsel. "Nine people keep giving their separate opinions or guesses about how to apply the 16 words of the (First Amendment's) religion clauses to modern cases of religious expression in public places. The American people should be telling government what religious liberty means, not asking judges or legislators to keep guessing. We should end the mystery and unpredictability of these cases and reduce the legal conflicts by a clear, simple amendment."

BJC General Counsel Brent Walker, meanwhile, said, "Today's opinions make it very clear that we don't need such an amendment. The present amendment, as interpreted by the court, is not hostile to religion. Indeed, in the Rosenberger case, it may be a little bit too helpful to religion."

In the Rosenberger v. University of Virginia case, a 5-4 majority ruled June 29 a Christian magazine was entitled to student activities fees to pay for its costs if other organizations and publications also received such support. In Capitol Square Review v. Pinette, the court ruled by a 7-2 vote a state government could not prohibit a privately sponsored religious display on public land where other private displays are allowed.

Steven McFarland, director of CLS' Center for Law and Religious Freedom, said the court's refusal to construct a new standard in establishment clause cases guarantees "years and years of additional litigation."

"And that's why we need a constitutional amendment to clear up that which the court majority cannot evidently bring itself to clear up," he said.

Rep. Ernest Istook, R.-Okla., has taken the lead in preparing a constitutional amendment protecting religious expression in public schools and other public places. Representatives from the CLC, CLS and several other religious liberty organizations have held meetings with Istook and each other to compose language for such a proposal, which has been called a "religious equality amendment." Final language has not been determined. Hearings in Washington and other locations remain to be held in July apparently before an amendment is introduced.

While separationists criticized the Rosenberger decision, McFarland said it was "hardly a resounding statement for religious equality."

Whitehead said, "The ACLU and other groups will doubtless argue that Rosenberger is limited to its facts. But what if the facts are different? What about grade schools and high schools? What about religious organizations like the Baptist Student Union? The opinion seems to imply that they could be treated differently. What about rental of school facilities by churches for long-term use? We'll just keep litigating case after case until the Constitution is amended to explicitly protect religious expression by private citizens from government discrimination."

The Southern Baptist Convention overwhelmingly adopted a resolution June 21 calling for an amendment to protect prayer and other forms of religious expression from discrimination in public, including public schools.

"Most Americans believe the time has come for such an amendment," Whitehead said. "Any American who tries to wade through the scores of pages of concurring and dissenting opinions, trying to find a clear rule of law, will also agree that the time has come for a clear, simple amendment."

**Evangelism campaign in
Haifa, Israel, 'best ever'**

By Mike Creswell

HAIFA, Israel (BP)--Forty-five Israelis prayed to accept Jesus Christ as Savior during a three-day evangelistic campaign in Haifa, Israel.

Messianic Jewish believers who organized the effort said it was the biggest campaign with the most results since such efforts began by Jewish believers a decade ago.

Campaigns with this number of decisions would not be news in many places, but this is Israel, where resistance to the gospel is high.

Leaders were cautious about statistics from the campaign, which ended June 18. They said it was the first time those 45 people had prayed in the name of Jesus, the Messiah. Only after a well organized follow-up program ends will the actual number of lasting decisions be known, they said.

During the campaign 200 Israeli believers and Christian workers, including several Southern Baptists, organized themselves into 14 teams. They shared the gospel with about 600 people in Haifa, a coastal city in northern Israel.

That record number also was considered a victory, since few Israelis have heard the full gospel unmarred by traditional distortions. Leaders were also elated that almost 100 Israelis provided their addresses for future follow-up.

"This is the best campaign we've ever had in every way," said Avi Mizrachi, an Israeli who coordinates evangelism among Jewish believers. Haifa's population of a quarter of a million people includes Jews, Arabs and Russian immigrants. Workers included believers from all three background.

They met at a Messianic Jewish conference center in Haifa for training and prayer before hitting the streets, united by their common faith in Jesus as Messiah. "We were in one heart united," Mizrachi said.

One campaign worker was taken in by Haifa police for questioning but later released. Two teams said city workers tried to intimidate them into stopping their witnessing by claiming it's illegal in Israel. But team members declined to stop, answering that several Israeli court decisions have ruled street evangelism legal. Campaign leaders said such harassment has declined in recent years, although Orthodox Jews opposed to Christian outreach still present problems in some places.

Workers also distributed more than 300 copies of the New Testament or gospel portions. Each team member was sent out with shoulder bags well stocked with materials in Hebrew, Arabic or Russian.

Mizrachi would not say revival is near in the troubled nation, but said he believes God has something big in the works for Israel.

"I believe we're seeing the first sparks of what God wants to do in this country," he said. "This is definitely the time and the situation is good. Israel is ready."

Many Israelis are worried about how the peace process is going for their nation, especially on the question of giving up the Golan Heights, he said. "The people are nervous. Many of them are searching. Terrorism has not decreased. It has increased. God is telling us to get ready, ready to evangelize, ready to disciple and ready to see growth in our congregations."

More than three dozen Messianic Jewish congregations are scattered across Israel and estimates of the number of believers range as high as 6,000. The congregations are mostly small and autonomous and meet mostly in homes. But many have developed house fellowships, extending their impact through communities.

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**Romanian Baptists projected for key
role in evangelizing Eastern Europe** By Don Martin

**Baptist Press
6/30/95**

ORADEA, Romania (BP)--Southern Baptists are strengthening ties to Romanian Baptists, who may play a key role in evangelizing Eastern Europe.

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Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin stressed this solidarity as he keynoted the 31st Congress of the Romanian Baptists in Oradea, Romania, June 15. Rankin challenged the Romanian delegates to share their evangelistic fervor, not only with Romania, but with Eastern Europe and the world.

"God is bringing about growth in your churches as never before. Could it be so that God can use you to touch the whole world with the gospel of Jesus Christ?" Rankin asked.

Rankin addressed several thousand Romanian Baptists, which included more than 800 Baptist delegates convened at Second Baptist Church in Oradea for the June 15-17 congress that meets every four years. Second Baptist is the largest church in Eastern Europe with a membership of more than 3,000 people.

"Why did God begin to plant the gospel in Romania through Baptists 75 years ago? Isn't it so you can become that apostle who shares the gospel with all of Eastern Europe?" Rankin asked. "God has called you to a mission greater than Romania alone. He's called you to be like Paul and have a vision to evangelize the nations."

Romanian Baptist leaders also view Rankin's visit as a significant step toward greater cooperation between the board and Romanian Baptists, explained Paul Negrut, rector of Emmanuel Bible Institute, a local seminary supported by Second Baptist Church.

"Dr. Rankin's presence here comes at a strategic time for Romania and all other Eastern European countries," Negrut said. "The great potential of the Southern Baptist Convention and the dynamism of the Romanian Baptist church have come together when there are so many God-given opportunities to share the gospel. I see this as a Macedonian call."

Second Baptist Church was an apt site for this year's congress. Not only could the church's facilities accommodate the large group, but signs of ongoing construction and drying concrete in the parking lot spoke of the rapid growth Baptists are experiencing in Romania.

Since the last congress four years ago, Romanian Baptists have constituted more than 400 new churches and launched several hundred mission churches. The current congress set a goal of starting 3,000 new churches by the year 2000.

Negrut also noted the importance of Rankin's visit extended beyond Baptist circles in Romania.

"Romania is in a time of transition, as are all other Eastern European countries," he said. "Democracy is still fragile. The presence of the leader of a Baptist body known as one that stands for religious freedom lends support and encouragement to those who pursue religious freedom in our country."

Religious liberty, however, was a minor issue compared to the number of times Rankin, Negrut and other Romanian Baptist leaders spoke of Romania's emerging missionary role in Eastern Europe.

"We do believe that Romania is at a point where it can soon become a missionary sending entity," Negrut said. "We do want to learn from the experience, history and skills of the Foreign Mission Board. So we want to learn from the mission board and work in partnership to develop a missionary movement in central Eastern Europe."

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(BP) photo (vertical) mailed 6/27/98 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press to be used with the story above or sidebar below. Cutline available on SBCNet News Room.

Sidebar
FMB riding second wave
with Romanian Baptists

By Don Martin

Baptist Press
6/30/95

ORADEA, Romania (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board is riding a new wave of involvement with Romania Baptists that many hope will spill into all of Eastern Europe.

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Romania saw its first wave of Southern Baptist involvement begin in the 1920s. Contributions by Southern Baptist missionaries focused mainly on opening a Baptist seminary in Bucharest in 1924. However, the outbreak of World War II forced Southern Baptist missionaries to leave the country.

The Baptist seminary was one of the few foreign-owned institutions to escape nationalization during the years of oppressive communist rule, said Paul Negrut, rector of Emmanuel Bible Institute in Oradea, Romania. The Emmanuel school, which opened with 60 students in 1990, is now the second Baptist seminary in Romania.

"When the Southern Baptist Convention began its ministries in Romania in the 1920s, it realized that Romania was an important mission field. It established a seminary in Bucharest, one of the few foreign institutions that the former communist regime never closed down," explained Negrut.

After the fall of the communist regime in 1989, Southern Baptists renewed involvement in the Eastern European country. At first, much Southern Baptist support came directly from churches in the United States. Later, the Baptist General Convention of Texas launched a partnership with Romanian Baptists.

The Foreign Mission Board has also helped channel nearly \$900,000 in designated funds to Romanian Baptists.

"You could say Southern Baptists are part of a new beginning here in Romania," Negrut said. "But I would say this second wave is greater than the first because it comes at a time when we have such a strong vision for church planting. Our vision is so much larger now.

"Our vision is to reach Europe, both East and West, the Middle East and the Muslim world for Jesus Christ. This is our missionary area," he said.

In support of this vision, the board has now rapidly expanded its personnel in Romania, said John Floyd, area director for the board's work in Europe. Twenty Southern Baptists are now assigned to Romania and requests for more personnel are in the works.

The board's restart in Romania is young. Of the 20 career and International Service Corps missionaries in Romania, only one couple has worked in the country for more than four years, said Floyd, who accompanied Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin to the 31st Congress of Romanian Baptists in Oradea.

Rankin challenged Romanian Baptists, in the congress keynote address, "to have a vision that looks beyond their own church and country and toward evangelizing the nations."

"Romanian Baptists are doing some incredible things here," Floyd said. "This congress allows us a chance to show our support.

"We're here to say that we're thankful for Romanian Baptists and we see the hands of God at work here," he said.

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1,406 professions of faith
reported during annual meeting By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
6/30/95

ATLANTA (BP)--More than 1,400 people prayed to receive Christ as Savior while Southern Baptists gathered in Atlanta for their annual meeting.

Of the 1,406 professions of faith, 372 were from neighborhood surveys, 558 from block parties, 47 from street witnessing and 73 from special evangelistic church services the Sunday prior to the annual meeting.

The total includes 356 professions of faith reported by messengers during the annual meeting. The witnessing efforts, called Cross Over Atlanta, also resulted in the gospel being shared 5,325 times.

Previously, evangelistic tracts were distributed at the Home Mission Board's booth in the exhibit area. Messengers used the tracts to witness to waitresses, taxi drivers and other people they met in the convention city. But messengers were not asked to report the results of their witnessing efforts.

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This year, the Home Mission Board evangelism section had a separate booth at a door to the convention center for distribution of tracts and reporting of results.

More than 45,000 tracts were distributed. One man told of meeting a new Christian who wanted to know how to share Christ with his friends. The messenger gave him the tracts and explained how to use them.

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Clinton blames extremists for defeat
of Foster; 'should be ashamed,' Land says

By Tom Strobe

Baptist Press
6/30/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--In the wake of the U.S. Senate's rejection of Henry Foster as surgeon general, President Clinton blasted what he called the "extreme right wing" for killing the nomination and the head of the Southern Baptist Convention's ethics agency said the president "should be ashamed of himself."

Two days after Foster supporters failed for the second time to halt a filibuster, Clinton used his weekly radio address to criticize pro-lifers and Republican senators who defeated his controversial nominee.

"The extreme right wing in our country wants to impose its views on all the rest of Americans," Clinton said in his June 24 broadcast. "They killed this nomination with the help of the Republican leadership, who did as they were told. And they're just getting started."

"There are some who believe that America now must toe their line and that every woman must live by their rules, even though the Constitution, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, says exactly the reverse," said Clinton, referring to the court's decisions in favor of abortion rights.

"They'll stop at nothing to get their way," the president said. "And this week it looks like the Republican leaders in Congress have given them the keys to the store. Looks like they'll vote for any bill, oppose any nomination, allow any intrusion into people's lives if they get orders to do so from these groups."

Clinton did not name any organizations during his speech, although pro-life advocates were united in opposing Foster. The president's attack followed by only three days a resolution against Foster's confirmation passed overwhelmingly by messengers at the SBC's annual meeting. Clinton maintains his membership in a Southern Baptist church in Little Rock, Ark.

"It seems that everyone who dares disagree with President Clinton is part of the 'extreme right,'" said Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, the SBC's ethics and religious liberty agency. "The majority of Americans had profound doubts about Dr. Foster and his suitability to be surgeon general. The most radical thing about this debate has been the president's rhetoric, which has been decidedly unpresidential. And the president should be ashamed of himself."

Land said, "President Clinton has been right about one thing -- the Foster nomination was, is and always will be about abortion. Dr. Foster is unacceptable as surgeon general because he has done abortions, defended abortion and worked for the largest pro-abortion advocacy group in America, Planned Parenthood. Dr. Foster is Joycelyn Elders with a smiley face."

Even before the president's radio speech, Sen. Dan Coats, R.-Ind., said Clinton needs to understand there are millions of Americans who opposed Foster's confirmation who "are not fanatics to be demonized. They are part of the responsible mainstream of American life.

"There is a message coming out of the White House ... that any opposition to the president, on almost any subject, is the work of right-wing extremists."

"I would suggest that the reality is different and deeper than the president suggests," Coats said.

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The SBC resolution acknowledged Foster's "impressive academic and professional credentials" but cited the following as some of the reasons for opposing his confirmation: his performance of abortions; his support for abortion on demand, including his position as a public policy advocate for Planned Parenthood Federation of America; his advocacy of the distribution of condoms and contraceptives to minors without parental consent, and his sterilization of mentally impaired women in the 1970s.

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R.-Kan., an opponent of Foster, brought the nomination to the floor June 21 with only a few days' warning. As promised, Sen. Phil Gramm, R.-Texas, used a filibuster in an attempt to block the nomination. A filibuster is a strategy used to delay or prevent a vote. Sixty votes are needed to invoke cloture, which ends a filibuster. Cloture votes were held both June 21 and 22, but Foster supporters gained only 57 votes both days. Dole withdrew the nomination after the second vote.

Eleven Republicans joined all 46 Democratic senators in voting to end the filibuster. The Republicans who voted to invoke cloture were: Ben Campbell, Colorado; John Chafee, Rhode Island; William Cohen, Maine; Bill Frist, Tennessee; Slade Gorton, Washington; James Jeffords, Vermont; Nancy Kassebaum, Kansas; Bob Packwood, Oregon; Alan Simpson, Wyoming; Olympia Snowe, Maine, and Arlen Specter, Pennsylvania.

Pro-life organizations warned senators the only vote which mattered was a vote on cloture, not a vote on confirmation.

It is not known when another nominee for surgeon general will be selected. The president suggested he might name Foster to another position in his administration.

Clinton nominated Foster to the surgeon general's post in early February after firing Elders in December. Clinton removed Elders after learning she had made comments seemingly in support of teaching masturbation. It was the final controversy in Elders' stormy 15-month tenure as surgeon general.

Foster served as dean of the school of medicine and acting president at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn., but was on sabbatical when Clinton nominated him.

Both Dole and Gramm are running for the Republican nomination for president in 1996. Some Democrats labeled the tactics by Dole and Gramm as political posturing to gain the support of conservatives in the Republican Party.

The CLC's Land announced the agency's opposition to Foster's confirmation in late February at Nashville. At the same news conference, SBC President Jim Henry said he opposed the nomination.

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Prayer answered with
a rose and a hug

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
6/30/95

ATLANTA (BP)--The 150th anniversary meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta was the first convention Wanda Kay Wigley had ever attended. A petite woman with a gentle voice, Wigley rarely ever had spoken in public when she stepped up to a microphone Wednesday and made two motions in front of 20,000 people assembled for the morning business session.

Her first request concerned prayer, asking the SBC to start a new work called prayer missionaries. Originally from Raymond, Miss., Wigley served last year as Mississippi's state coordinator for the National Day of Prayer. A member of Raymond Baptist Church, she also asked in her motion for messengers to the SBC to consider sponsoring one national day of prayer just for Southern Baptists.

Undaunted by her shaking knees and quivering voice, she proceeded to make another request, "because God put it on my heart to ask for this," Wigley said. She asked to be allowed personally to meet Jim Henry, SBC president, and Billy Graham, internationally known evangelist, scheduled to address the SBC in the final session Thursday morning, June 22.

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Although hundreds of such requests are received each year, she was touched by Wigley's earnestness and sincerity and responded to her final request without the usual convention procedures.

Wigley, a single mother, received a rose that evening. She is vice president for business and finance for the SBC Executive Committee. She also was given instructions for where to be at what time to meet with Billy and Henry the next day.

Thursday morning Wigley arrived at the entrance an hour early. "I just couldn't bear the thought of missing them," she said.

"When I was a teenager, people used to mock me as I testified for my Lord," Wigley said. "They called me Little Miss Graham."

"The Lord put it on my heart to ask to be allowed to testify. God wanted me to be able to tell Billy Graham how much he has meant to me. I am so thankful that God has answered my prayer in this way," she said.

Graham greeted Wigley with a hug and a quick kiss on the cheek just before he stepped onto the platform to speak for the final session of the SBC. Henry gave her a hug.

"I don't remember what either of them said to me. I was so in awe. I was so thankful to the Lord," she said. "I just know they were so kind."

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(BP) photo available from central office of Baptist Press

Dumpster to spotlight:
on preacher's journey

By E. Michael Caner

Baptist Press
6/30/95

ATLANTA (BP)--The young man sat quietly praying on the floor level of the convention center in Dallas. The 1985 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference had attracted more than 20,000 people, and Danny Akin, then pastor of a church, was among the throngs listening as each speaker exhorted the ministers to lead their congregations with renewed passion.

Akin shared their fervor, but while other men ascended to positions of prominence in the convention, he labored in relative obscurity.

"In 1985," Akin recounts, "I was a courier for a commercial real estate company. I resigned my position as associate pastor due to a church conflict. One summer afternoon, I found myself in a commercial shopping center cleaning out a dumpster. I remember praying to God in frustration. I had a master of divinity from Southwestern (Baptist Theological) Seminary (in Texas). I had preached in many Texas and Georgia churches. I had a wife, Charlotte, and four children, one of whom was three months old.

"I had been faithful and true to the call. Why did I find myself in a dumpster?"

By Akin's account, however, his time in anonymity was an essential component in his training. "The reason God had to take me on that journey was to teach me that without Christ, I am nothing.

"If he wanted me in a dumpster, then so be it. I was going to be faithful, even in the trash bin."

On Sunday, June 18, 1995, the same young man who was without a church position during the Dallas convention now stood up on the platform and preached before 13,000 fellow Southern Baptists attending the Pastors' Conference.

Having now stood in the spotlight, he pondered his journey. Dean of students and professor of theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., Akin now often counsels young men who feel insignificant after attending the Pastors' Conference and Southern Baptist Convention. His advice is not based on sympathy, but empathy with any who have had a difficult journey.

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The road after the Dallas conv ntion seemed long. Akin continued to focus on his education, and in 1989, he finally received his doctor of philosophy in humanities from the University of Texas in Arlington. In 1990 he became professor of theology at the Criswell College. In 1992 he became dean of students at Southeastern, since preaching in more than 20 states and coauthoring a volume with Richard Land for the New American Commentary by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman & Holman publishing arm.

For Akin, such a life lesson from God is seminal. "For those ministers who attend the SBC faithfully and become frustrated because of their comparative anonymity, I want them to remember that every minister began in relative obscurity. Ten years ago, I attended the entire convention. My friends and I were young, green and honored just to be able to attend. Now, I am humbled that I have had this opportunity."

Standing under the hot Texas sun taught Akin to look at things in a new light. "Preachers should have a dual perspective concerning prominence among our brethren. The same God who gave me this opportunity to preach in the Pastors' Conference also put me in a dumpster," he reflects.

"We should never be impressed with ourselves. He works in this manner just to remind us who we are, and who he is."

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Caner is pastor of Wood (N.C.) Baptist Church and a free-lance writer.

Prof says Americans
open to gospel witness

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
6/30/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--After seven years of dispatching seminarians to share their faith, a Southern Baptist evangelism professor has concluded Christians can expect a warm response to their gospel witness.

"People in the United States are interested in religion as a major aspect of their lives," said Harry L. Poe of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "Over the seven year period, students have expressed surprise at this fact and realized that they had always had opportunities to witness that they had never taken advantage of."

Poe has taught evangelism on the Louisville, Ky., school's campus as well as at Southern Seminary off-campus centers in Tennessee, Maryland, Massachusetts and South Carolina. He also taught for three years at a Baptist seminary in Minnesota. The experience of evangelism students was "startlingly similar" in every region, Poe said.

As part of his courses on evangelism, Poe requires all students engage in at least one conversation per week with a non-Christian with the intention of sharing the gospel. Students then present Poe a verbatim account of the conversations which are used as a basis for class instruction.

In a recent course, 27 students reported a total of 245 conversations with non-Christians. Of the 245 encounters, students were able to present the gospel on 131 occasions, resulting in 39 conversions. Many conversions came after several conversations with the individual.

The most important factor in presenting the gospel other than the Holy Spirit is style, Poe explained. "Most people aren't interested in a lecture or a debate," he said. "Yet they are open to talking about religion."

Poe does not restrict students to a particular plan for how to witness. Instead, he urges them to remember Christ's presence with them, draw from their experience as a believer and listen to the needs of the other person.

"I hold to the very simplistic assertion that 'Jesus is the answer,'" said Poe. "Our major concern is understanding the question they are asking so we can explain how Jesus is the answer."

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Poe noted students are surprised to find how often conversations about faith were begun by non-Christians. "They reported that they found themselves in a conversation and suddenly realized that they were talking about matters for which the gospel provides answers," he said. "Students who had been afraid to share their faith observed that once they were willing to talk with other people about their faith in Jesus Christ, the opportunities came to them."

About one-third of their conversations were with strangers, a third were initiated through ministry situations and a third through an existing relationship. That pattern has been the case in every class he's taught, Poe said.

In examining his students' reports, Poe has detected a "disturbing" number of interruptions encountered during the students' conversations. The students in the last class were interrupted unexpectedly in over 50 percent of their witnessing experiences, Poe said.

"In the 20th century it is so easy for us to ignore the possibility that Satan may actually exist and want to frustrate our efforts," he said. "A serious ministry of prayer for our witnessing efforts is the only and best response we can make."

In addition to a spirit of prayer and a non-argumentative style, Poe made three other observations from his students' experiences. He said believers who witness should:

-- Rely on the Holy Spirit as the primary figure at work in a witnessing encounter.

-- Be consistent in their witness since multiple conversations are often necessary before a person responds positively to the gospel.

-- Remember that people who do not have the gift of evangelism can still do the work of an evangelist.

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Eloise Glass Cauthen
dies in Richmond at 85

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
6/30/95

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Eloise Glass Cauthen, wife of the late Baker James Cauthen who led Southern Baptist foreign missions through some of its most dramatic growth, died June 29 in Richmond, Va. She was 85.

Cauthen was born in China to Southern Baptist missionary parents Wiley B. and Eunice Taylor Glass, and later returned to China as a missionary with her husband. The Cauthens lived in the Orient from 1939 to 1952, when they moved to Richmond for him to become executive director (now called president) of the Foreign Mission board. He retired in 1979.

After her husband's death in 1985, Cauthen taught English in China for a year at the invitation of a university in Yantai (formerly Chefoo), the port city where she spent her early years in boarding school.

At her death, Cauthen was living in Lakewood Manor Baptist Retirement Community, where she moved in 1989.

"She had a smile that showed Christ," said Dorothy Utley, a live-in hostess there. "You could just see the spiritual in her smile. It was one only a Christian could have."

Cauthen fell and slightly fractured her pelvis in the front yard of Lakewood Manor the afternoon of June 26 while she was plucking off dead lily blooms with another resident. But medical personnel told Utley the death appeared unrelated and apparently was the result of a heart attack or aneurysm.

"I think the Lord was just ready for her," Utley said.

Another retired missionary resident of Lakewood Manor, Catherine Walker, visited Cauthen just a few hours before her death. She took Cauthen's hand in hers, and prayed with her as she was leaving.

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"I know of no one here at the manor who has showed more love and interest in other people," she said.

Cauthen was a member of First Baptist Church in Richmond for 40 years, where she was very active in Woman's Missionary Union and taught Sunday school. In 1989 she left to help organize Gayton Baptist Church in Richmond where she was a member until her death. From 1983-84, after her husband's retirement from the Foreign Mission Board, the couple were members of Gambrell Street Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

Throughout her life Cauthen used speaking engagements, writing, and teaching of mission study books to share vivid memories and knowledge of foreign missions. She also maintained a keen interest in current foreign missions and attended Foreign Mission Board functions regularly.

She spent her childhood in China amid war and revolution, famine and starvation, religious revival and heroic Christian sacrifice. She attended English-speaking schools in China from kindergarten through university entrance exams. Her parents knew legendary missionary Lottie Moon well. In 1978 Broadman Press published "Higher Ground," Cauthen's biography about her father, who worked in China for 42 years.

Cauthen married in 1934. Her husband was a missions teacher at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth from 1935 to 1939. In their first assignment as missionaries -- with two young children -- they did evangelistic work in Kweilin, China.

In 1945, her husband was elected the Foreign Mission Board's secretary for the Orient, and after that the family lived in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo, before moving to Richmond in 1952.

She graduated from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, with the bachelor of arts degree, and from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with the master of theology degree.

During her husband's administration, the number of Southern Baptist missionaries increased from 908 to nearly 3,000 and the number of countries where they worked from 32 to 95. Missions funding grew from \$6.7 million in 1954 to \$76.7 million in 1979.

The Baker James Cauthen and Eloise Glass Cauthen Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va., is named in the Cauthens' honor.

Surviving Cauthen are her son, Ralph Cauthen in Greensboro, N.C.; two brothers, Bentley Glass of Boulder, Colo., and Bryan Glass of Stillwater, Okla.; two sisters, Trudy Chang of San Ramon, Calif., and Lois Glass, an emeritus Southern Baptist missionary, of Fort Worth, Texas; and two grandsons, Steve Cauthen of Atlanta and John Cauthen of Manassas, Va. Her daughter, Carolyn Cauthen Mathews of Santa Fe, N.M., died in 1991 after a long bout with cancer.

Her funeral will be at 11 a.m., July 3, at Gayton Baptist Church in Richmond, with burial alongside her husband in Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery. The family will receive friends in the chapel at Woody Funeral Home in Richmond from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., July 2.

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Mary Speidel also contributed to this story. (BP) photos (one mugshot and one horizontal) mailed 6/29/95 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Other photos from Cauthen's trip China will be mailed 6/30/95. Cutlines available on SBCNet News Room.

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