

(ABP) ASSOCIATED BAPTIST PRESS

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Martin named interim news director of ABP

Nashville (ABP)--Dan Martin has been named interim news director of Associated Baptist Press, a new news service designed to report on issues of interest to Baptists at local, state, national and international levels.

Martin's appointment was announced Sept. 20 by Charles Overby, chair of the 15-member ABP board of directors, which was formed during a meeting in Nashville Sept. 11-12.

In making the announcement, Overby said, "The appointment of Dan Martin assures Baptist editors and the public at large that news about Baptists will be reported fully and fairly."

Martin, 51, has been contracted to coordinate news gathering for ABP until the end of the year. ABP will cover major news stories of interest to Baptists during that time, and will seek to provide a once-a-week news service during its formative period.

Plans to organize ABP were announced July 17, the day Martin and Alvin C. Shackelford were fired by the SBC Executive Committee as news editor and director of Baptist Press.

Martin pledged to cater to no political agenda--moderate or fundamentalist--in editing ABP. "I will try to report the news without fear or favor, and to tell the truth and trust the people," he said.

Martin, a native of Wichita Falls, Texas, is a veteran journalist. He spent 17 years working for daily newspapers in Texas and Colorado before entering denominational journalism in 1973. He worked for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and spent nearly ten years as news editor of Baptist press. Martin is a graduate of Midwestern University, Wichita Falls, Texas and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Both Martin and Shackelford will play a part in the formation of ABP. While Martin has been contracted to provide news coverage, Shackelford, 58, has agreed to serve on the board.

In addition to Shackelford, of Franklin, Tenn., and Overby, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, president of the Gannett Foundation, Arlington, Va., the ABP board includes three editors of state Baptist newspapers: Julian Pentecost, Religious Herald, Richmond, Va.; Don McGregor, Baptist Record, Jackson, Miss., and R.G. Puckett, Biblical Recorder, Raleigh, N.C.

Other ABP board members are James Pleitz, pastor at Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas; Judy Strother, attorney, Mountain Home, Ark.; Catherine Allen, Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.; Anna Olive Bannister, Augusta, Ga.;

Ardelle Clemons, Greenville, S.C.; Carl Kell, professor of communications, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Ky.; Raymond McDaniel, retired editor of the Shreveport Times, Shreveport, La.; Donald L Sharp, pastor at Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chicago;

Hal Wingo, news editor of People magazine, New York; and Dan Yeary, pastor of University Baptist Church, Coral Gables, Fla.

The ABP board also contracted with Floyd Craig, Craig Communications Inc., Nashville, for interim services, including managing ABP distribution.

In its inception, ABP will be provided to some 40-50 news outlets, including state Baptist newspapers and key religion writers across the nation. Plans are being formulated to provide the news service through an electronic bulletin board. Meanwhile, news will be disseminated by FAX and mail.

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Note: Interim news director Martin may be contacted at P. O. Box 251, Penland, NC 28765 or at 704-675-9206. News also may be provided to Floyd A. Craig, Craig Communications Inc., 4235 Hillsboro Rd., Suite 101, Nashville, TN 37215; phone 615-383-4560; FAX 615-383-4539.