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Fellowship wants to pick up
FMB missionaries in Europe

By Greg Warner

IRVING, Texas (ABP) -- The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship took a dramatic step into the foreign missions arena Jan. 11 when its Coordinating Council voted to hire Southern Baptist missionaries in Europe who no longer want to work for the Foreign Mission Board.

The Fellowship's move comes on the heels of a three-month controversy over Southern Baptist mission work in Europe, sparked by the decision by the FMB's fundamental-conservative trustees to defund a controversial European Baptist seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

Critics on both continents say the trustee decision jeopardizes Baptist mission work in Europe by imposing the trustees' brand of theological orthodoxy on European Baptists.

"Given what the Foreign Mission Board did in Europe, if we had not acted the way we acted, we don't have a reason to exist," said John Hewett, moderator of the Fellowship, which was formed last year to provide alternate channels of ministry for Southern Baptists disturbed by the way fundamental-conservatives are running the denomination's agencies.

Many council members saw the action as throwing a lifeline to Southern Baptist missionaries in Europe, many of whom are rumored to be uncertain of their own futures after the FMB's two top administrators for the region resigned in protest.

Isam Ballenger, 56, FMB vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Keith Parker, 55, area director for Europe, announced Jan. 7 they will take early retirement because, they said, board actions have rendered their work in Europe ineffective.

"What we need," Cecil Sherman told fellow council members, "is the nerve -- the faith -- to go to Isam Ballenger and to go to Keith Parker and say, 'You've got a place to land,'... and (ask them), 'Where are the good missionaries in Europe?' and we'll buy them too."

But the council's decision represents more of a commitment than a plan of action, since it came without specifics. It is unclear how much the fledgling Fellowship will be able to spend on the initiative and which projects and missionaries they would like to adopt.

Neither is it certain Southern Baptist missionaries will leave the FMB's fold to link up with the Fellowship, although several council members said they have heard from some who are ready.

The Fellowship is nowhere near ready to adopt the entire Southern Baptist mission force in Europe, which this year will cost the FMB about \$4.25 million to support, not counting personnel costs. The Fellowship had planned to spend only about \$1 million on all its global-mission enterprises in 1992.

"We know this isn't going to be an instant accomplishment," Jimmy Allen of Fort Worth, Texas, co-chairperson of the Fellowship's global-missions ministry group, told ABP. "In order to get started, we're talking about at least several million dollars. We will move as quickly as Southern Baptists fund this new vision."

"I can't project how long before we will begin funding missionaries, but it's not going to be a foot-dragging process," he said.

Fellowship leaders say the FMB's European debacle and their own initiative on the continent will inspire hundreds of Southern Baptist churches to shift their allegiance -- and financial support -- to the Fellowship.

Sherman, who made the motion to move into Europe immediately, told fellow council members the leap of faith would allow the Fellowship to "seize the moment" and would "galvanize" support.

"Once we have some missionaries, we will not let them starve," said Sherman, who a day earlier was asked to fill the Fellowship's top administrative role by becoming its first "coordinator."

"When we decide to go to work, some Baptists will come with us and some won't," said Sherman, who has not yet said if he will leave the pastorate of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and take the Fellowship job.

Sherman made the motion as the council concluded discussion of its new mission-strategy statement, which Sherman described as "lining off the playing field" for future Fellowship missions. He challenged council members to go further.

The Fellowship has to do more than "line off the field and wait for the players to come," Sherman said. "Why don't we make some news and say we'll pick up the European mission?"

His motion was that the Coordinating Council "offer to employ (some of) the missionaries of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in the European sector."

Council members debated the best way to put the plan into action, since the strategy statement adopted earlier committed the Fellowship to emphasize specific mission projects and short-term missionaries over employment of career missionaries.

Sherman's motion then was amended to "offer to employ the European Baptist missionaries who fit the criteria of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship strategy of missions." The CBF's global-missions ministry group, which had drafted the mission statement, was then asked to determine what missionaries and mission projects in Europe to support.

The amended motion was approved unanimously and greeted by applause.

The controversy over European missions erupted last fall when FMB trustees discovered what they considered new evidence of "liberalism" at the

seminary in Rüschtikon, which was founded by the FMB after World War II. Although the seminary was deeded to the European Baptist Federation in 1989, the FMB continued to provide 40 percent of the seminary's budget until all funds were deleted in October.

The trustees insist they should not support missionaries or institutions they consider "liberal," such as the Ruschtikon seminary. But moderate-conservatives, such as those in the Fellowship, say they are being unfairly excluded from missions because they don't measure up to the trustees' definition of orthodoxy.

"This is the thing that split Baptists before," Virginia pastor James Slatton told Associated Baptist Press, referring to the birth of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845 after Baptists of the North refused to appoint slaveholders as missionaries.

"It's 1845 all over again," said Slatton, pastor of River Road Baptist Church in Richmond. "The fundamentalists are saying, 'We will no longer appoint moderates.'"

The Fellowship's move into Europe would restore freedom to the missions enterprise, council members said.

Moderator Hewett denied that hiring missionaries was an indication the Fellowship is in fact a new denomination, however. "There are a lot of organizations that support missionaries, (so) that begs the question," Hewett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Asheville, N.C., told reporters.

The Fellowship received \$4.5 million from churches and individuals in 1991. Almost three-fourths of the money -- at least \$3.3 million -- went to support traditional Southern Baptist agencies, since many churches use the Fellowship as merely a channel to bypass the SBC Executive Committee.

Such "pass through" funding provided the Foreign Mission Board with about \$1.5 million last year, while the Fellowship's own missions efforts -- including some minimal projects in Europe -- received only \$261,000. That disturbs council members who are angry about recent FMB actions and anxious to see the Fellowship's own missions efforts get off the ground.

"The dollars your church sends to the Foreign Mission Board as undesignated are being used to cut the throats of our friends," charged Slatton.

The Virginia pastor said simply routing FMB money through the Fellowship is an ineffective means of protesting current FMB policy. "What we need to wake up to is that the message is not being heard," he said. "It is being ignored. It is held in contempt."

Slatton and Sherman said the European initiative will challenge churches to change that practice and divert their contributions from the FMB to the Fellowship.

Sherman said committing to fund the European missionaries will force churches "to have those votes we dread" -- namely, to vote to withhold contributions from traditional Southern Baptist causes.

Missions chairman Allen said he is confident that will happen. "The offer to employ (SBC missionaries) will stimulate the money to come in. I have more concern about doing (the mission strategy) right."

To do it "right," the council adopted a three-page "Purpose and Strategy Statement" from the global-missions ministry group, which Allen co-chairs.

In other business, the Coordinating Council:

-- Heard plans for Fellowship's general assembly April 30-May 2 in Forth Worth;

-- Heard a report from the ethics and public policy committee, which plans to give 45 percent of its 1992 budget funds to the Baptist Center for Ethics; divide 20 percent equally among six groups (Seeds, Bread for the World, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, Women in Ministry, the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, and Habitat for Humanity); use 20 percent as seed money for two ethics professorships in

honor of Foy Valentine (at the proposed Truett Seminary at Baylor University) and Henlee Barnett (at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond); and spend 15 percent to promote practical application of ethics;

-- Heard that the literature committee intends to develop special-emphasis materials on four topics (sanctity of life, race relations, world hunger and peace) and intends to promote literature and curriculum development but not to publish its own literature;

-- Approved extending financial support for fired Baptist Press employees Al Shackelford and Dan Martin for six months despite IRS complications associated with the Fellowship's "safety net" fund; and

-- Considered the possibility of establishing an annual mission offering.

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Trustee skeptical of CBF offer,
says FMB strategy unaltered

BURLINGTON, N.C. (ABP) -- The Foreign Mission Board will continue its work in Europe despite plans by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to hire away some of the FMB's missionaries, according to a top trustee leader.

Steve Hardy, chairman of the trustee committee that oversees FMB work in Europe, said the work will continue "regardless of what the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship does."

But he said he is skeptical the Fellowship can attract the money necessary to pick up the FMB's European mission work, which this year will receive about \$4.25 million from the FMB for non-personnel support alone. The Fellowship's entire 1992 budget for missions is about \$900,000.

Additionally, Hardy said, the Fellowship likely could not provide "accountability to those who pay the bills" and a workable strategy designed for Europe.

"I would question whether your turning it over to amateurs," said Hardy, pastor of Holly Hill Baptist Church in Burlington, N.C.

However, Hardy said he is "not surprised" the Fellowship is considering offering employment to Isam Ballenger and Keith Parker, the FMB's two top administrators in Europe who are resigning in protest of recent trustee actions.

Asked if the Fellowship would be able to woo away other missionaries in Europe, Hardy said, "I admit I've had a few missionaries call me and discuss with me questions they have because Dr. Ballenger and Dr. Parker resigned."

Hardy said he gave the missionaries the same advice offered by Ballenger and Parker in their resignation statements -- "to wait and make their decisions based on what happens rather than make an emotional reaction."

Trustee chairman Bill Hancock of Louisville, Ky, said he doesn't have any idea how many missionaries will leave their posts to join the Fellowship's initiative. "That may be dependent on what Isam Ballenger and Keith Parker choose to do," he said.

"It deeply grieves me that we've reached this position of divisiveness," Hancock said of the Fellowship's plans. "Yet I'm pleased there are options for those (missionaries) who may be discontented with their place of service and the present leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Hopefully, this diversity will provide opportunities for a more extensive proclamation of the gospel to the people of Europe by the CBF and the SBC," he added.

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-- By Greg Warner and Robert Dilday

Fellowship's missions statement
lays groundwork for global strategy

IRVING, Texas (ABP) -- A missions-strategy statement adopted by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's Coordinating Council Jan. 11 establishes the basic criteria for the group's future involvement in global missions.

"Our purpose is to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ," the statement says, "and to carry out the Great Commission through inclusive global missions in which all Baptists can participate."

"We start afresh in a world without borders, claiming the best from our free-church heritage," says the statement. Several "distinctives" are listed, including:

-- No distinction will be made between home and foreign missions.

-- "All ministries that point people to Jesus Christ as Lord" will be regarded as equally important.

-- Missioners will work "under the auspices of" and "in concert with" local and national church leaders."

-- Missions will be open "to all Baptists" and success "will be measured by quality."

-- Instead of emphasizing career missionaries, "missioners...will be sent as servant facilitators to do work for which they are uniquely suited and for specified periods of time."

The Fellowship will cooperate with the mission agencies of the SBC and other Baptist bodies, as well as with "other Christian organizations with like objectives," the statement says.

The document sets four priorities for the first five years, some of which overlap with Southern Baptist emphases: work in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics; ministry to internationals in the U.S.; a focus on people and locations with "no present access to the gospel"; and inner-city ministries.

The statement was proposed by the council's global missions ministry group and adopted unanimously by the council.

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Cecil Sherman offered
Fellowship's top job

By Greg Warner

IRVING, Texas (ABP) -- Texas pastor Cecil Sherman, one of earliest and most fervent organizers of the "moderate" movement in the Southern Baptist Convention, has been asked to become the first executive of the fledgling Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Sherman, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, was offered the newly created, full-time position of "coordinator" Jan. 9 by the Coordinating Council of the Fellowship, an Atlanta-based coalition of moderate-conservative Baptists.

It is not yet known if Sherman will accept the offer, which was approved without opposition by the 82-member council. However, the 64-year-old Sherman later told the council he is "inclined" to take the position and, after consulting with family and close friends, will give the group an answer within two weeks.

The Fellowship was formed last May by groups that have opposed the leadership of SBC fundamental-conservatives, who since 1979 have gained

control of the structure and agencies of the 15 million-member denomination. Sherman, as a founding member of most of those opposition groups, was touted as someone who can unite the moderate-conservative elements of the Fellowship, which has eschewed further political opposition in favor of starting alternative ministries.

Virginia pastor James Slatton, who chaired the search committee, described Sherman as the person "who effectively brought into being the network that became the moderate movement."

"He probably is the person who knows us best...", Slatton, pastor of River Road Baptist Church in Richmond, told the council, which met Jan. 9-11 near Dallas.

Sherman, who is a member of the council, was not present for the discussion and vote.

Members of the search committee and council praised Sherman's intellect, integrity, courage, energy and pioneer spirit and said he would serve well as spokesman for the Fellowship. But several also noted he has been viewed by some Baptists as "abrasive" because of his high-profile role in the SBC controversy.

Slatton acknowledged Sherman has "a little bit of smell on him, some bruises, some wounds," as a result of the SBC battles. But because of that, he said, Sherman is "someone who has currency in all our constituencies."

Other council members agreed Sherman's experience in the trenches did more to qualify him for leadership than to disqualify him.

"I think the wounds are important," said council member Richard Groves of Winston-Salem, N.C. "Credibility comes with that."

"He stood right there in the gap for us," said Carolyn Bucy of Waco, Texas, a member of the search committee.

"He has been in this struggle for a long time, but he also sees the future," said Houston pastor Daniel Vestal, who served on the search committee. Concerning Sherman's reputation as abrasive, Vestal said, "He has spoken the truth, even when we didn't want to hear it."

Vestal added that Sherman "has moved beyond his anger" to "a very mature and seasoned understanding of our day."

"The bottom line is that I trust him," Vestal said. "I trust his integrity. I trust his commitment to Baptist ideas and Baptist distinctives."

Vestal, who served on the search committee and who in August 1990 convened the first meeting of what would become the Fellowship, said what the new organization needs most is to maintain its spiritual focus and to develop competent administration. "I see Cecil being able to function very well in both those realms," he said, adding, "And make no mistake about it, we need executive leadership."

In 1991 the Fellowship distributed \$4.5 million to its own mission causes and those of the Southern Baptist Convention. Approximately 500 churches have contributed to the Fellowship and 1,500 churches were represented at the group's assembly last May in Atlanta.

Sherman is a native Texan who has served as pastor of churches in North Carolina and Texas, including more than 20 years at First Baptist Church of Asheville, N.C.

After the meeting, Slatton predicted Sherman's experience in both the Southeast and Southwest would help ease some of the Fellowship's regional tensions, such as those that exist between the Southern Baptist Alliance in the East and Baptists Committed in the West. "That was a consideration of the (search) committee," Slatton said. "He has currency on both sides of the (Mississippi) River."

Sherman was a founding member of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Baptists Committed, the Baptist Alliance, the SBC Forum and other opposition efforts among Southern Baptists. He also served on the SBC Peace Committee.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Baylor University, a master of

divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and doctorates from Princeton University and Southwestern.

The position with the Fellowship would pay Sherman \$100,000 a year in salary and benefits but require him to leave his pastorate and move to Atlanta. Council members later were asked to help raise designated gifts to pay for the Fellowship's operating costs in 1992, including the coordinator's salary.

Slatton said the search committee received 30 "formal applications" for the position and considered about a dozen other "self-evident" candidates. He said committee members interviewed three people in December before offering the job to Sherman, whom Slatton described as "our first and best choice."

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FMB trustees force
2 retirees out early

By Robert Dilday

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- Two top administrators of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, who are retiring early to protest recent board actions, will leave sooner than expected following reaction by angry trustees.

Isam Ballenger, 56, vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Keith Parker, 55, area director for Europe, announced Jan. 7 they would retire May 31 and July 1, respectively, because recent actions by the FMB's fundamental-conservative trustees are undermining Baptist work in Europe, where the pair have played key roles in FMB strategy.

Trustee response to their Jan. 7 announcement was swift, with some trustees calling for the immediate dismissal of the pair.

In a telephone conference call the next day, board chairman William Hancock and Steven Hardy, chairman of the trustee committee which oversees work in Europe, told FMB administrators that several trustees were insisting the retiring administrators leave much earlier than late spring and summer, Hardy told the Religious Herald.

Negotiations between Hancock, Hardy, FMB President Keith Parks and Executive Vice President Donald Kammerdiener resulted in an agreement permitting Ballenger and Parker to stay in their positions until Jan. 31 and as consultants through February, when they would vacate their offices, said Hardy. However, salaries and benefits would be continued to the retirement dates they cited, he added.

Neither Ballenger nor Parker were involved in the negotiations, although when subsequently told of the arrangement both accepted it.

"Under the circumstances, it was the best we could work out," said Parker, adding he did not regret his candid statement. "I feel that is what I had to do."

Ballenger said he is "grateful to have more time to prepare for my future," but added the earlier departure date indicates mission work is not taken seriously enough by trustees. "The reason I gave the specific date was to have time to close out properly and have someone in to replace me," he said. "We have a lot going on right now."

President Parks agreed the time frame proposed by Ballenger and Parker would have provided a "smoother administrative transition." "But given the reaction of trustees, especially as interpreted by the chairman (of the board), this middle road seems to be the best way to deal with the situation."

The resignations by Ballenger and Parker followed a three-month dispute

over the trustees' decision to defund a controversial European Baptist seminary in Rüschtikon, Switzerland -- a decision which critics on both continents say has jeopardized the FMB's work in Europe.

Ballenger and Parker charged the trustees with exporting the SBC's theological/political controversy by imposing fundamental-conservative standards of "theological orthodoxy" on European Baptists.

Hardy said the administrators' frank comments, delivered in a Jan. 7 press conference announcing their decisions, provoked trustees' anger.

"If this had been a straight retirement as others had been, there would not have been a problem," he said. "But the nature of the retirement, the news conference being held, the disappointments that were shared, things of this nature," made the retirements different, Hardy said.

"Many trustees felt that for them to continue in their positions for those months, that too many people might ask Ballenger and Parker to continue to elaborate on their disappointments and put us in a difficult position."

Trustee Paige Patterson of Dallas lamented the administrators' use of "a decision to retire as an opportunity to blast the trustees and the conservative resurgence" within the SBC. "It was made at an official news conference and no one was there to tell the other side of it and give a different perspective.

"It makes one wonder how these people can do anything but damage the work of the Foreign Mission Board by staying there and traveling and talking to missionaries."

Patterson expressed "deep respect" for both men and said he "enjoyed working with them," but described as "inappropriate" their use of a "public forum to call into question the motives of trustees."

Ballenger, who is based in Richmond, said he had hoped to "go back and visit the missionaries (in his region) and say farewell" but that trustees have refused to authorize such a trip. "They are afraid of what I will say."

Patterson confirmed the ban on a board-sponsored visit, but added: "If he wants to travel, no one can inhibit him from doing so. But the point is that nobody has to be charged the price of their own denigration, or to foot the bill for him to blast us and call into question our motives."

Parker, who is based in Switzerland, will return briefly to Europe to conclude responsibilities.

Whether a majority of trustees will support the modified retirement plan negotiated by two of their leaders is still unclear. Hardy, who described the arrangement as a "gentlemen's agreement," said no official action is expected until the next regular FMB meeting Feb. 10-12.

He added he has received "both positive and negative" trustee reaction to the change. Some trustees reportedly want immediate dismissal, while others would permit the two to follow their announced timetable.

In the meantime, at least some of the board's work in Europe and the Middle East is being postponed. Ballenger has cancelled plans to attend a conference of European Baptist Federation leaders in Dorfweil, Germany, Jan. 26-29, as well as a meeting in London to discuss evangelism among Iranians.

He also will relinquish the chairmanship of the Green Alert Task Force, which is coordinating the FMB's accelerated response to ministry opportunities in the former Soviet Union. Lewis Myers, the board's vice president for Cooperative Services International, will assume the task force's chair as quickly as possible, Parks announced Jan. 10.

Trustee suggests Parks
should have been fired

By Thomas Mullen

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- A trustee of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board said that if board President Keith Parks had been a businessman, he would have been fired for his recent actions.

Trustee Morris Mills of Memphis, Tenn., said Parks was wrong to allow two retiring employees to hold a Jan. 7 news conference at which they strongly criticized other fundamentalist trustees.

"If he was a corporate executive, he'd be subject to dismissal for that," Mills said in an interview Jan. 10. "I'm very anxious to see why he did that. I don't know what it accomplished. I'm very disappointed, and he shouldn't have done it."

"I'm wondering if he was trying to get himself fired," Mills added. "Several people have told me that he must want to be fired."

Parks was unavailable for comment.

Parks' future as president is becoming increasingly tenuous since two of his top executives -- Isam Ballenger and Keith Parker -- said they would retire early because fundamental-conservative trustees destroyed their careers.

During the news conference at which they announced their retirements, Ballenger and Parker blasted trustees and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Mills said allowing them to do that was a mistake, and another powerful trustee agreed.

A spokesman for Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas and a leader in the fundamental-conservative movement in the denomination, said Parks showed "bad judgment." Observers have said Patterson, whose own future at Criswell is cloudy, is interested in a larger role at the board.

The board's chairman, William Hancock of Louisville, Ky., said trustees should "keep their minds on supporting the current leadership." But he acknowledged that "will very definitely be a tough job."

Some of them (trustees) have fixed in their minds his retirement," Hancock added. "Add to that some of the personalities...it compounds the anxiety."

Earlier, Parks said discussions about his future will "intensify" during the next month or so. He said last year that he wanted to remain as president until 1995 to follow through on a missions plan he outlined last summer. He maintained that continuity of leadership was important for the plan's success.

However, sources said a coalition of trustees will present a plan next month to speed up a search committee for Parks replacement. That same coalition also will say that Parks' leadership is not needed for his mission plan to be successful.

Mills, the Tennessee trustee, said Parks might be thinking too highly of himself by saying his leadership is important to the mission plan.

"We can do it without him," he said. "If this is the Lord's work -- and I think it is -- it won't depend on one man. Sometimes when men get older they think things can't run without them."

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Drummond expected to announce retirement by late January

By Greg Warner

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (ABP) -- Lewis Drummond, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, is expected to announce his retirement at the end of January, according to seminary sources.

Drummond, 65, has been under pressure for some time because of worsening financial and academic conditions at the school, but he has denied he has plans to leave.

Speculation about Drummond's departure has increased since Southeastern was placed on probation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, one of its two accrediting agencies, Dec. 5.

A special meeting of the executive committee of Southeastern's trustees has been set for Jan. 30-31 at the Wake Forest, N.C., campus, during which trustees are expected to hear Drummond's proposal for his departure.

Trustee chairman Roger Ellsworth called the meeting to handle several matters related to accreditation, including a proposed revision in the faculty-selection procedure. But trustees also have been asked to deal with a "personnel matter," which trustee sources say involves Drummond.

Drummond would not describe the nature of the personnel matter on the trustees' agenda, saying only that it "remains to be seen." Despite persistent rumors, Drummond told ABP his departure is "not a foregone conclusion."

Drummond met with trustee and seminary officials in Nashville, Tenn., Jan. 9 to negotiate the terms of his retirement, according to trustee and seminary sources. Details of the agreement are not known, but the proposal is expected to be voted by the trustee executive committee Jan. 30.

Discussion of the "personnel matter" will be the first thing on the trustees' agenda Jan. 30, said chairman Ellsworth, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Benton, Ill. That part of the two-day meeting will be closed to the public, he said, but an announcement will be made after the meeting.

Asked whether the announcement would involve Drummond's retirement, Ellsworth said, "I can't comment on that at this time."

Although Drummond has been under pressure from some trustees, the retirement proposal is his own initiative, sources said.

He has been mentioned as a candidate for several teaching positions, most notably a chair of evangelism at the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. But no announcement of a new job is expected in connection with his retirement.

Since becoming president in 1988, Drummond and other administrators have been unable to resolve difficulties between the school's fundamental-conservative trustees and the faculty, most of whom have resisted the trustees' attempt to steer the school in a more conservative direction.

Faculty members say trustee-sponsored changes, such as hiring only biblical inerrantists for the faculty, violate academic freedom.

Drummond's predecessor, Randall Lolley, resigned in protest of those changes in 1987, setting off investigations by the two accrediting agencies and a swirl of controversy that has yet to subside.

Southeastern's other accrediting agency, the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, has since threatened to remove the school's accreditation.

Meanwhile, the school's enrollment has dropped steadily to less than half its former size, causing serious long-term financial problems.

If Drummond goes through with his plans to retire, trustees would be expected to name a search committee during their regular meeting March 9-10 in Wake Forest.

Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, is considered the leading candidate for the job. Trustees told ABP Patterson was seriously considered for the Southeastern post before, and some have said recently they would be pleased for him to succeed Drummond.

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Trustee skeptical of CBF offer,
says FMB strategy unaltered

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But he said he is skeptical the Fellowship can attract the money necessary to pick up the FMB's European mission work, which this year will receive about \$4.25 million in support from the FMB. The Fellowship's entire 1992 budget for missions is about \$900,000.

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"It deeply grieves me that we've reached this position of divisiveness," Hancock said of the Fellowship's plans. "Yet I'm pleased there are options for those (missionaries) who may be discontented with their place of service and the present leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Hopefully, this diversity will provide opportunities for a more extensive proclamation of the gospel to the people of Europe by the CBF and the SBC," he added.

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-- By Greg Warner and Robert Dilday

IRS issues alert to churches
in resolving Swaggart probe

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Churches and other tax-exempt charitable organizations should think twice before endorsing or opposing political candidates in 1992.

That is the clear message of a warning shot that the Internal Revenue Service recently fired directly at Jimmy Swaggart Ministries and broadly at all churches and charitable organizations that might be tempted to engage in partisan politics.

The Internal Revenue Code prohibits tax-exempt churches and charitable organizations from engaging in political activity and from devoting a "substantial" portion of their activities to lobbying. In concluding its investigation of the Swaggart ministry, based in Baton Rouge, La., IRS signaled its resolve to enforce the prohibitions.

In a public statement, the ministry organization acknowledged that evangelist Jimmy Swaggart's endorsement of Pat Robertson's presidential candidacy at a September 1986 church service, and a subsequent endorsement of Robertson's candidacy in the Swaggart organization publication, violated the prohibition against campaigning for or against political candidates.

As a condition of keeping its tax exempt status, the Swaggart organization agreed to refrain from political activities in future years and make structural changes, including the creation of an "audit and compliance committee," to ensure no further political activities occur.

Tax-exempt status allows churches and charitable organizations to receive contributions that are tax-free to the organization and tax-deductible for the contributor.

The message sent by the Swaggart case is that the IRS will be closely monitoring churches and other tax-exempt charities that engage in partisan politics, according to Oliver Thomas, general counsel at the Baptist Joint Committee.

"This is the first case of the IRS imposing sanctions on a church for political activity," Thomas said. "We had seen the revocation of exemption of parachurch groups in the 1960s, but until now, enforcement had not been directed at churches. I have no doubt the service will strictly enforce this provision during this election year."

Mark Owens, who heads IRS's Exempt Organizations Technical Division, confirmed that the settlement of the Swaggart investigation was intended as a warning to other churches and charities. One provision of the settlement allowed its details to be disclosed to the public.

Owens said the IRS was concerned that churches may not be aware of the law and the agency wanted to "get the word out" to help churches and charities avoid violating its prohibition.

"We'd like to avoid having to take action against any organization," he said.

While the prohibition against political activity by churches has been in place since 1954, until recently the only enforcement option available was to revoke a church's tax-exempt status.

In 1987, Congress approved additional sanctions, including the imposition of excise taxes against churches and charities that endorse or oppose political candidates. The 1987 legislation also authorized the IRS to seek a federal court injunction to prevent flagrant political expenditures by churches and charities.

The newer penalties were not available to the IRS in concluding its Swaggart ministry probe, which covered fiscal years 1984-1986.

Churches "should not interpret this IRS action as an attempt to stifle

their moral advocacy," Thomas said. "The rule of thumb is that a tax-exempt organization may speak out on issues but not on candidates for public office."

While partisan activity by churches and other tax-exempt groups is forbidden, individual ministers and other employees of charitable organizations are permitted to become involved in campaigns as long as no resources, personnel or facilities of the organization are involved and the individual makes it clear the involvement is not on behalf of the organization.

IRS considers endorsements made by a minister of a religious organization at an official function of the organization or made in the official publication of the organization to be an endorsement by the organization.

Also as part of the agreement with IRS, the Swaggart ministry agreed to pay more than \$171,000 in back taxes and interest on the sale of non-religious items in 1985 and 1986.

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Supreme Court sets review on religious solicitation

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- In a case that could have significant implications for evangelistic efforts on government-owned property, the nation's top court has agreed to decide whether solicitation of funds and distribution of literature may be banned from airport terminals.

The U.S. Supreme Court announced Jan. 10 that it will review a federal appeals court ruling that in-person solicitation of funds by a religious group can be banned in airport terminals but that distribution of literature, viewed as a less-disruptive activity, must be allowed.

Attorneys for the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) challenged a ban on solicitation and literature distribution implemented by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in terminals at the three major New York area airports.

After a lower court struck down the ban as unconstitutional, the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued the divided ruling, upholding literature distribution but allowing airport officials to prohibit solicitation.

The Supreme Court is expected to settle the question of whether airport terminals are considered public forums -- areas in which courts have been reluctant to permit limitations of free-speech rights.

In upholding the ban on solicitation, the 2nd Circuit held that airport terminals are not public forums, a ruling at odds with decisions by five other federal appeals courts.

Both the Port Authority and representatives of the Hare Krishna religion appealed the 2nd Circuit ruling. The Port Authority has asked the high court to review the decision allowing ISKCON to distribute literature inside terminals.

ISKCON attorneys contend that the airport terminals are public forums for First Amendment purposes and that the distribution of literature and solicitation of donations may not be banned. ISKCON argues further that activities may not be banned from non-public forums unless the activities are incompatible or interfere with the normal activity of a particular place.

In another free speech case, the Supreme Court announced it will review a federal appeals court finding that private organizations may be charged only a nominal fee for use of city streets and parks for First Amendment activities.

Rejecting a lower court's finding, a majority of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals struck down a Forsyth County, Ga., ordinance requiring advance payment of a fee of up to \$1,000 per day for private organizations or persons to conduct a parade or public meeting on roads or other public property.

The appeals court held that existing court precedents permit only nominal fees and that the Forsyth County ordinance exceeded that requirement.

Both free-speech cases, which are scheduled for argument in March, could have significant impact on the rights of religious and other groups, according to Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel Oliver Thomas.

"Airports should be able to place reasonable time, place and manner restrictions on evangelistic activities, but they should not be able to ban them altogether," Thomas said. "New York is seeking to create a First Amendment-free zone that has dangerous implications for all religious and political groups."

"The Georgia ordinance is equally bad. What religious or political group can afford to stage a public protest or demonstration if the fee is \$1,000," he said.

In a Jan. 13 order, the Supreme Court let stand a ruling by the Minnesota Supreme Court affirming the dismissal of manslaughter indictments against Christian Science parents whose child died after being treated through prayer and spiritual means rather than by conventional medical care.

Ian Lundman, 11, died in May 1989 from a complication of diabetes mellitus. His mother and stepfather, Kathleen McKown and William McKown, were charged with second-degree manslaughter in October 1989.

Minnesota's highest court held that it would violate the McKowns' due-process rights to prosecute them for manslaughter when the state's child-neglect statute specifically allows parents to rely in good faith on spiritual treatment and prayer. The court noted that the child-neglect statute failed to provide fair notice that parents might be prosecuted under other state laws if spiritual healing methods fail.

Since the death of Ian Lundman, the Minnesota legislature has amended its laws governing treatment of minors to require that practitioners of healing arts report to proper authorities if a lack of medical care may cause imminent and serious danger to a child's health.

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Far right hindering justice,
Self tells King celebration

By Gayle White

ATLANTA (ABP) -- Economic provincialism, "David Dukeism" and the so-called Religious Right are three "giants" blocking entry to the promised land of peace, justice and brotherhood, Bill Self told hundreds of Atlantans of different races and religions Jan. 12.

Self, pastor of First Baptist Church in the Atlanta suburb of Chamblee, preached at Antioch Baptist Church North at the 16th Annual Interfaith Service, the official kickoff of King Week 1992 in Atlanta.

In a sermon that received a standing ovation, he called the "trickle-down theory" -- that benefiting the wealthy would eventually also help the poor -- a "stupid economic theory."

"The trickle down hasn't trickled down very far," he said.

Of David Duke, the former Louisiana Ku Klux Klansman now running for president, Self said, "He got his politics from Prejudices Are Us."

He said the Religious Right is merely wrapping old prejudices in new

clothes and saying, "This is religion."

"I have seen it devastate my own family of faith," said Self, who has been active in the moderate-conservative movement in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Self, former pastor of Wieuca Road Church in Atlanta, urged worshipers to work for the day when people will "wage peace, wage love, feed the hungry without taking away their dignity...and be ecumenical naturally, not just at an event."

That, he said, "will be a promised land."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is a four-part series on teen suicide.
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Teen suicide: 'A real problem'
that churches, parents can change

By Mark Wingfield

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- More American teenagers will die this year at their own hands than from cancer, heart disease, influenza and pneumonia combined.

While many child-killing diseases have been cured in the past 30 years, the suicide rate among American teens has been steadily increasing, according to data from the National Center for Health Statistics.

Since 1960, the rate of children ages 10-19 dying of cancer has been cut in half, the number dying of heart disease has been reduced more than half, and deaths from influenza and pneumonia have been reduced 80 percent.

During the same period, however, teen suicide rates have more than tripled. Suicide is now the third most frequent killer of America's teenagers, behind accidents and homicide.

Nationwide, suicide rates are about 1.4 per 100,000 among youth ages 10-14, 11.3 per 100,000 for 15- to 19-year-olds, and 15 per 100,000 for 20- to 24-year-olds.

The casualty rate is highest among white males. Girls make more suicide attempts, but boys tend to succeed more often by using more lethal means.

Teen suicide is "a real problem," said Audrey Puryear, director of community services with Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children in Louisville.

"If we believe the report that one out of every seven youths has attempted suicide,...then we really need to sit up and pay attention," she said.

"I guarantee you, any youth group you go into, if you could get them to speak openly and honestly, you would find a significant number who are feeling depressed and you would find kids who are thinking about suicide. They may not have a plan, but they are at least thinking about that as a solution to their problems."

"There is little reason to believe the problem of suicide is diminishing," added Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn. "The factors in the home and in society that contribute to suicide all seem to be as strong as ever."

Both Ross and Puryear believe parents and church leaders should be prepared to deal with suicidal teenagers.

Ross said he has been reminded about the need for such counseling in churches by the overwhelming response to a Sunday School Board product called the "24-hour Counselor." Two components of this audiotope counseling series are titled "I No Longer Want to Live" and "My Friend May Commit Suicide."

About 500,000 teens have anonymously picked up the counseling tapes in their churches.

"I have received many letters and stories from teenagers on the verge of suicide who chose not to take their lives because of the counseling they received through an audiotope," Ross explained. "We have never put anything in print that teenagers would pick up by themselves on the subject of suicide. But by the thousands they are picking up the audiotapes on suicide."

Puryear said suicide is only one of many at-risk behaviors teens face. However, the risk of suicide increases as the number of other at-risk behaviors a teen has increases.

Research has identified four assets that significantly reduce such at-risk behaviors, she said. Those assets are good family relationships, a positive school environment, a good environment for community activities and involvement in a church or synagogue.

Children with all four assets in place would be least at risk, but even one positive asset can make a big difference, she said. The positive influence of a church can make the difference for a child with poor family relationships, a bad school and a bad community, she said.

Both parents and church youth leaders have roles to play in preventing teen suicide, Ross said.

"Church leaders definitely need to provide parent education experiences that help parents identify and respond to suicidal tendencies," he suggested. "Church leaders need to nurture relationships between teenagers and youth workers that make it more likely that teenagers will talk about significant personal issues with key adults."

"Church leaders need to deal with guilt and moral failure. Church leaders need to introduce lost teenagers to Christ as the ultimate reason for living."

Parents, on the other hand, "should begin at birth to strengthen within a child a biblically sound and healthy sense of self-worth," Ross said. "During adolescence, parents should work very hard at keeping lines of communication open."

Further, parents should "build their schedules and lifestyles to make communication more likely," he said. "If you stay at the office until 10 every night, you're probably not going to have a clue what's going on in your teenager's life."

Puryear and Ross said parents and church workers alike should be aware of common contributors to teen suicide and common warning signs:

-- Hopelessness. Ross said this is different from the depression all teens routinely experience. "Suicidal teenagers honestly believe that not only is life awful but it absolutely will not get any better."

-- Unhealthy family relationships. "About 80 percent of suicidal teenagers are living without one or both biological parents," Ross said. "Even in intact homes, unhealthy relationships within the home can contribute to a sense of hopelessness."

-- Guilt and moral failure. "The rate of suicide attempts among girls who have violated their own sexual values is high," Ross said. "Teenagers who have experimented with a homosexual style of life have a very high rate of suicide attempts."

-- Sense of rootlessness. Teens often feel alone in society, especially if separated from extended family who in previous generations provided strong support during adolescence, Ross added. "Parents who give almost total

attention to vocation often leave youths alone in a community without strong friendships or relatives to fill in the gap."

-- Isolation from friends.

-- Involvement with drugs and alcohol.

-- Neglecting personal appearance.

-- Unexplained changes in behavior, such as sleeplessness, undereating, overeating, abandoning long-term friendships, giving away prized possessions.

Someone simply listening to a teenager's concerns can be a positive step, Puryear explained. "There's a myth that if you talk with somebody who's having suicidal feelings it will cause them to actually do it. That's not true."

Suicidal teenagers who come to Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children seldom attempt suicide there, she said, because caring adults always are around. "Having a friendly, listening ear makes a difference."

Ross added one warning: "Church leaders who believe a teenager may be suicidal should invite the teenager to talk with parents or trained professionals. If a teenager refuses, it may be best for the church leader to talk with a professional or the teenager's parents even if this means breaking a confidentiality with the teenager. In many states, church leaders are legally required to inform appropriate adults concerning a suicidal teenager."

Ross also affirmed church youth workers by saying the ongoing ministry of the church is a preventative measure against teen suicide.

"James Dobson uses the analogy of a cliff. He says churches often become preoccupied with running ambulances back and forth picking up teenagers at the bottom of the cliff. But there is a greater need for someone to go up to the top of the cliff and build a fence.

"The fence at the top of that cliff," Ross said, "is the ongoing youth ministry of the church."

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Nothing warrants suicide,
teen says after 2 attempts

By Mark Wingfield

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP)--"There's nothing worth taking your life over, no matter how bad it is," says Mary, a 16-year-old high school sophomore who first attempted suicide when she was 13.

Although Mary is not her real name, the story she tells of twice attempting to kill herself is real.

Mary now lives on the Spring Meadows campus of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children in Louisville, where her counselors say she has made remarkable progress in just six months. She came to Spring Meadows last summer after her second suicide attempt.

Mary first attempted to kill herself by slitting her wrists when she was 13 after an argument with her mother.

"At that time, I thought that was the only way out. I told myself no one loved me."

Faced with a difficult family life and communication problems with her mother, Mary determined suicide was her constant alternative. "I didn't think of anything else," she recalled.

In retrospect, she said she believes she was crying out to her mother for help. "I was really just asking my mom to give me attention. I wanted someone to notice me."

But Mary's mother didn't hear her cry for help. She only heard constant fighting between the two and saw a daughter who was "mad at everybody."

Unknown to her mother, Mary had been the victim of repeated physical and sexual abuse by her father, older brother, two uncles, one aunt, two cousins, one baby sitter and one friend of the family.

Her father was an alcoholic and beat and raped her mother, she explains. "He also beat me."

In 1986, Mary's father went to prison for raping two girls. She went to see him in prison and told him about all the family members who had molested her. "He called me a liar," she said.

Mary never visited her father again. Her mother and father later divorced. However, her brother continued to abuse her, she says, and she and her mother continued to fight.

"I blamed her for everything that happened to me, but she didn't know about it."

One night when her brother attempted to rape her, Mary "finally got up the courage to scream," she explained.

Her brother was sent away for a while, then returned home. Two weeks later, Mary threatened to commit suicide and was sent away to a mental hospital for three months. "I didn't like the idea of my brother living with me again," she recalled.

After returning home, she attempted suicide again by taking 18 anti-depressant pills.

"I was just mad, angry and hurt," she said. "I felt like I had no one around me who would listen. I felt guilty. I felt nasty.

"I thought if I was dead everything would be better. I wouldn't have to worry about my problems."

So in the middle of a big fight with her mother, Mary picked up the bottle of pills and opened it. "I said, 'Mom, I'm going to take these pills,' and I took them in front of her."

Her mother rushed her to the hospital, where she was treated. That was an experience she hopes never to repeat. "I had to drink charcoal. It was nasty. It was terrible. I'll never do it again."

At that point, Mary's mother sent her to Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. There, she began counseling sessions with her mother and is now learning how to deal with her anger.

She spends weekends at home with her mother and two younger siblings and hopes to move home permanently this summer.

No matter how bad things look, "life goes on," Mary said matter-of-factly. "Why die? God will help you through it.

"I used to think God wasn't there, that he didn't care what happened to me. But now God is something in my life."

Mary says she also has been helped by caring adults in her church. "They talk to you and give you hugs, and that helps," she explained.

To other teenagers who might consider suicide as a way out, Mary advises, "Look at the good things and not all the bad."

Life can turn around "if you really work hard at your problems and want to get better," she insists.

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Research finds availability of guns
is key factor in success of suicides

By Mark Wingfield

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- Guns are twice as likely to be found in the homes of teenage suicide victims than in the homes of teens who attempt suicide but fail, the Journal of the American Medical Association reports.

"The availability of guns in the home...appears to increase the risk for suicide among adolescents," concludes the study by David Brent and his colleagues at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic in Pittsburgh.

Their study of 141 teenagers is reported in the Dec. 4, 1991, issue of the medical journal.

"The doubling in the adolescent suicide rate over the past three decades is largely accounted for by an increase in firearms suicides," the researchers state.

Subjects for the study came from Western Pennsylvania over a two-year period ending in 1988. The majority of suicide victims killed themselves with a gun (69 percent), but none of the suicide attempters who failed used a gun.

"The majority of suicide victims who had guns in their home used them, regardless of whether the guns were stored locked, separate from ammunition, together with ammunition or loaded," the study found.

"The physical presence of firearms in the home appears to be a much more significant contributor to suicidal risk than does the type of gun available or the manner in which the firearms were stored."

The study suggests that teens are not likely to substitute another method of suicide when guns are not available. This difference between teen suicide attempts and adult suicide attempts is attributed to the finding that teens are more impulsive in their attempts while adults tend to plan suicides more thoroughly.

Legal waiting periods for gun purchases would have little effect on gun use in teen suicides, the researchers state. None of the firearms suicides in the study were committed with guns purchased less than two weeks before the death.

"Instead, adolescent suicides may be prevented by increasing the proportion of firearms-free homes," the study concludes.

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Poll: 60 percent of teens know
someone who has attempted suicide

By Mark Wingfield

PRINCETON, N.J. (ABP) -- At least 60 percent of American teenagers say they know someone who has tried to commit suicide, according to the Gallup Poll.

Further, teens think the church should do more to prevent suicide.

These findings are drawn from Gallup Organization telephone and mail surveys of a representative national sample of Americans age 13-19. The findings were reported in the May 1991 issue of Emerging Trends, the newsletter of the Princeton Religion Research Center.

The survey found 27 percent of teens think most of their peers have thought about suicide, while another 35 percent think at least some have considered it.

As for themselves, 52 percent admit they have discussed the topic with friends, while 35 percent said they have thought about actually committing suicide. Only 6 percent claimed to have attempted suicide.

Teens surveyed said schools are doing more to prevent suicide than churches, but suggested churches could do more. More than 40 percent of respondents said schools are helping teens avoid suicide, but only 28 percent said churches and synagogues are helping.

Teens give churches most credit for offering activities and spiritual alternatives to self-destructive behavior, with 51 percent citing these contributions. Also, 20 percent of teens said churches help them talk about

avoiding suicide or other counseling.

Providing drop-in centers, counseling and alternative activities top the list of teens' suggestions for churches to help prevent suicide, the study found. More than 80 percent of those surveyed cited these three items as positive steps. Other suggestions include family counseling (79 percent), hot lines (77 percent), counselor training (56 percent) and teen shelters (50 percent).

Youths who are "very religious" are considered least likely to attempt suicide (4 percent), the survey found. Teenagers rate their peers who are neither strongly for nor against religion (41 percent) as most at risk.

For causes of teen suicide, respondents rated drug abuse (88 percent), trouble with parents (86 percent), problems in growing up (83 percent) and peer pressure (83 percent) most frequently. Other factors cited include satanic cults (71 percent), alcohol abuse (68 percent), school problems (65 percent) and teen pregnancy (64 percent).

Teenagers gave relatively less weight to AIDS (44 percent), gangs (44 percent), hearing other teens talk about suicide (40 percent), economic problems (36 percent) and heavy metal music (35 percent).

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