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Executive Committee asks WMU  
for 'exclusive relationship'

By Mark Wingfield and Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Woman's Missionary Union needs to affirm its "singular cooperation," "undivided commitment" and "exclusive relationship" with the Southern Baptist Convention and its mission boards, according to a resolution passed by the SBC Executive Committee Feb. 23.

The resolution was adopted in response to changes approved by WMU's executive board Jan. 10 that would allow WMU to provide non-financial support to missionary-sending groups other than the SBC's Foreign and Home Mission boards.

That change, one of many announced in a plan for WMU's future, has angered SBC conservatives who fear WMU is moving to support the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The Fellowship, a group of moderate Southern Baptists displeased with current SBC leadership, has begun its own missions program and has appealed to WMU for assistance.

Executive Committee officers met privately with WMU leaders Sunday night, Feb. 21, before the start of the Executive Committee meeting Feb. 22. That session was closed to the press, but participants later said concern about a WMU-Fellowship tie was the chief concern of the officers.

After the resolution was adopted, WMU leaders were reluctant to discuss or interpret it. However, to comply with its terms, WMU apparently would have to reverse its January decision allowing the mission-support group to work with the Fellowship or other non-SBC groups.

The resolution begins with seven paragraphs of affirmation for WMU's historic role in supporting SBC missions. It praises WMU for leading Southern

Baptists to pray for, financially support and send out home and foreign missionaries.

However, it also notes that WMU "was established originally for the express purpose of supporting the two mission boards of the Southern Baptist Convention, 'disclaiming all intention of independent action.'"

However, that disclaimer, an Executive Committee leader explained in a subcommittee meeting, was taken from the original version of the preamble to WMU's constitution. That line was removed from the document in 1890, two years after WMU was formed.

The second part of the resolution notes "deep concern" for WMU and its future relationship with the SBC.

"We call upon the executive board of the Woman's Missionary Union to make clear its singular cooperation with the convention and its mission boards and its undivided commitment to the Cooperative Program, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions," it states.

The resolution also says the Executive Committee pledges to continue supporting the WMU's relationship to the SBC as an auxiliary "so long as the Woman's Missionary Union pledges its faithful and solitary support of the mission offerings and mission programs of the Southern Baptist Convention and its mission boards."

Two amendments to the document were offered in subcommittee debate. One failed amendment would have changed the "call upon" WMU's executive board to read "respectfully request."

The other amendment, which passed, changed a line that described "a relationship of 105 years" between WMU and the SBC to read "the exclusive relationship of 105 years."

No WMU representative was asked to address the full Executive Committee during discussion of the resolution. However, WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien was asked three brief questions in the meeting of the program and budget subcommittee.

Asked if WMU plans to promote the missions offering of the Fellowship, O'Brien said simply, "No."

Asked if WMU intends to become a missionary-sending agency, O'Brien again replied, "No."

Asked what is different about WMU as a result of the plan adopted in January, O'Brien said WMU plans to broaden its work in distributing missions-education literature.

Although the subcommittee meeting was conducted under background rules, which prevent attributed quotations or identification of speakers, O'Brien allowed ABP to report her comments on the record.

In debate before the full committee, Ron Huffman of Middletown, R.I., appealed for the resolution not to be passed because it is "not needed." He explained that O'Brien had spoken to the subcommittee and he found her explanations "consistent with our goals as a convention."

Asked what would happen if the resolution were passed but WMU did not change its course, subcommittee chairman Guy Sanders of Lake Wales, Fla., said: "As with all other resolutions ... we're expressing ourselves on an issue. We're not codifying anything. ... We're clarifying where we would like to be in the future in our relationship with WMU."

James Morton of Grass Valley, Calif., said the resolution might be seen as "overreacting" to WMU's changes, which he suggested might not be any more radical than what the SBC Sunday School Board does by producing literature for non-SBC groups.

"We don't need to react to everything that comes along," Morton advised.

"We all need to let some things go."

Ultimately, the resolution was adopted with about four dissenting votes.

In a statement issued after the meeting, O'Brien said: "We appreciate the affirmation expressed by the SBC Executive Committee for WMU. There are several areas of the resolution which are ambiguous, and we will seek further clarification. The WMU Executive Board next meets in June in conjunction with the WMU annual meeting and the Southern Baptist Convention. This would be the earliest time this resolution could be considered by our board."

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A Resolution of Concern and Commitment  
on the Woman's Missionary Union and  
the Southern Baptist Convention

Whereas, the Woman's Missionary Union has served loyally and effectively as an auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention; and

Whereas, the Woman's Missionary Union was established originally for the express purpose of supporting the two mission boards of the Southern Baptist Convention, "disclaiming all intention of independent action;" and

Whereas, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Woman's Missionary Union have worked hand-in-hand for the cause of missions at home and abroad for 105 years; and

Whereas, the Woman's Missionary Union has led by precept and example in sacrificial support of the missionary cause, promoting and supporting the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions, in continual prayer support of Southern Baptist missionaries, and in the effective teaching and training of women and children for the cause of missions; and

Whereas, those offerings have produced millions of dollars in vital support for Southern Baptist missions and those prayers have sustained dedicated missionaries throughout the world; and

Whereas, the Southern Baptist Convention has respected and honored the contributions of the Woman's Missionary Union and seeks to work in close coordination and mutual trust with its auxiliary.

Therefore, be it resolved, that we, the members of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, hereby register our deep concern for the Woman's Missionary Union and its future relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention even as we affirm the long-established role of the Woman's Missionary Union and honor its unique and abiding contributions to this denomination and its missionary cause; and

Be it further resolved, that in light of the historically significant changes announced by the Woman's Missionary Union Executive Board on January 10, 1993, we call upon the Executive Board of the Woman's Missionary Union to make clear its singular cooperation with the Convention and its mission boards and its undivided commitment to the Cooperative Program, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions; and

Be it further resolved, that we express to the Woman's Missionary Union our urgent concern that the exclusive relationship of 105 years which has been so wondrously blessed by God be protected by mutual trust and loyalty; and

Be it further resolved, that we pledge our eager and glad-hearted

intention to work with the Woman's Missionary Union, to respect and honor its effective and praiseworthy work, and to affirm its status as auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, so long as the Woman's Missionary Union pledges its faithful and solitary support of the mission offerings and mission programs of the Southern Baptist Convention and its mission boards.

Be it finally resolved, that this Executive Committee prayerfully support each agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, each state convention, each state fellowship, and each local church as they decide their response to the changes announced by Woman's Missionary Union.

SBC Executive Committee approves  
settlement with Joint Committee

By Mark Wingfield and Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- The Southern Baptist Convention may finally have closed the books on its relationship with the Baptist Joint Committee Feb. 23 when a settlement was approved over a claim to a disputed \$300,000 fund.

The SBC Executive Committee agreed to give the BJC \$100,000 over a four-year period from reserve funds to avoid a potential lawsuit. Under the agreement, which still must be officially approved by the BJC, the BJC would agree to press no further claim against the SBC for the disputed \$300,000 fund.

That fund was designated in 1964 by the SBC to help the BJC purchase an office building in Washington, D.C. At the time, the SBC was one of several Baptist bodies cooperating in support of the religious-liberty agency.

However, in recent years the SBC has incrementally severed its ties with the BJC, ultimately giving its religious-liberty program assignment to the SBC Christian Life Commission, which now operates a Washington office.

Although the \$300,000 fund was set aside in the late 1960s, it never was spent for the designated purpose.

Since the parting of ways, the BJC has claimed the \$300,000 should be given to them since they were the SBC's religious-liberty advocate at the time the fund was designated. However, the CLC also has laid claim to the fund, explaining they are the SBC's current religious-liberty voice and the successor to the role held by the BJC at the time of the fund's origination.

The Southern Baptist Foundation, which has managed the fund, declined to decide the dispute and asked the SBC Executive Committee for direction. The Executive Committee recommended -- and messengers to last summer's SBC annual meeting agreed -- that the fund should not be given to the BJC but should be redirected to SBC causes.

That decision prompted the BJC to initiate legal discussions with the SBC Executive Committee. Although no suit ever was filed, both parties admit the possibility of the BJC filing a lawsuit over the disputed funds was real.

Finally, Executive Committee leaders -- including President Morris Chapman and Chairman David Hankins -- recommended the \$100,000 settlement, which was negotiated with the BJC's general counsel and chairman. It marks the first time the SBC has used its own money, and not that of an insurance company, to resolve a legal dispute.

The settlement is expected to be approved by the BJC executive committee

when it meets March 1.

"We have polled the members of our executive committee and they are willing to accept a cash payment in the amount of \$100,000 to settle the dispute over the Baptist Joint Committee account....," wrote BJC General Counsel Oliver Thomas in a letter to the SBC's attorney Feb. 16.

"This is not an easy decision for the BJC," Thomas continued. "We feel entitled to the entire \$300,000 corpus and are reluctant to accept any compromise settlement. Yet we are grateful for the support we have received in the past from the Southern Baptist Convention and, like you, wish to avoid a lawsuit if possible.

"We also look forward to the day the Southern Baptist Convention might again wish to participate in the work of the Baptist Joint Committee," Thomas added.

The agreement calls for the Executive Committee to pay the BJC \$25,000 annually for four years, beginning in April 1993. The money is to come from Executive Committee reserve funds.

Meanwhile, the Executive Committee plans to decide how to redistribute the \$300,000 fund when it meets next in Houston June 14.

The agreement also states that the officers and staffs of both the Executive Committee and the BJC shall "refrain from, and they shall make a good faith effort to cause their respective agents and members to refrain from, henceforth impugning the motives and integrity of the other party ... over the facts and circumstances surrounding this controversy."

The agreement also states the settlement "does not represent a division of the fund in dispute," which both parties acknowledge is "the sole property of the Southern Baptist Convention. ..."

Although the settlement was approved by the Executive Committee, it was not accepted without dissent. In subcommittee discussions and in debate before the full Executive Committee, strong objections were raised to accepting any kind of settlement.

Debate on the issue focused on two primary points. Those favoring the settlement, including several attorneys on the committee, argued it was wise to settle the matter quickly and avoid the uncertainty of litigation. Several attorneys also pointed out that from their experience people who sought to win court cases primarily on issues of principle usually lost.

But those opposing the settlement repeatedly cited the principle of the issue as the very reason the agreement should be rejected. Since the BJC holds positions detestable to many conservative Baptists, to give even one cent more to the agency would be indefensible, they said.

In a rousing speech before the full committee, T. C. Pinckney of Alexandria, Va., called the settlement "morally wrong."

"I would much rather spend \$300,000 defending a right position than spend \$100,000 to compromise with a wrong position," he declared.

Speakers on both sides of the issue cited Scripture, claiming they wanted to follow the biblical method of handling conflict between Christians or that they wanted to maintain purity and good stewardship of God's money.

One member, James Morton of Grass Valley, Calif., even suggested giving the BJC the entire \$300,000 fund, citing the admonition of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount to give the person who sues for your coat your cloak as well. "We could make a tremendous statement" of reconciliation, he said. "What a testimony it would be."

However, that suggestion was not made in the form of a motion and was not seriously considered.

Other speakers charged the BJC was holding the Executive Committee "hostage" by threatening legal action.

"I would like for the world to know ... that we are responding to a threat," said Eldridge Miller of Sallisaw, Okla. Miller said he predicts the BJC's threat will eventually backfire on them because they are "tearing the whole foundation out from under themselves."

Other Executive Committee members were ready to end the dispute, however.

"This has gone on far too long," said Ronnie Floyd of Springdale, Ark. "Because the Southern Baptist Convention has closed the books on the BJC (by severing all ties with the organization), it's time for the Executive Committee to quit opening them back up and close the books."

An amendment to the recommendation that would have settled the redistribution of the \$300,000 fund was rejected in favor of waiting until the June meeting to make that decision. The failed amendment would have assigned the fund immediately to the CLC for the purchase of an office building in Washington.

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Annuity Board asked to sell off stocks  
in companies that support abortion

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention asked the denomination's Annuity Board to sell any stock it owns in companies that support abortion.

Specifically cited in the Executive Committee action are those companies that contribute to Planned Parenthood "or any other provider or advocate of legal abortion."

The Dallas-based Annuity Board, which manages the retirement funds for Southern Baptist ministers and employees, has said it likely owns stock in some companies that fund abortion-related services, committee members were told. No Annuity Board official was present to confirm or deny the report.

The Executive Committee action, approved Feb. 23, asked the Annuity Board to identify any such stocks and present a plan in September for eliminating those holdings.

Meanwhile, the Executive Committee commended the Annuity Board for eliminating so-called "sin stocks," investments in companies involved in the tobacco, gambling, pornography and alcoholic-beverage industries.

In other business during the Executive Committee's Feb. 22-23 meeting:  
-- Committee members approved a resolution calling for the United States to break diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Southern Baptists have consistently opposed the exchange of ambassadors between the United States and the Vatican as a violation of the separation of church and state.

-- A broad study of theological education in the SBC was authorized, to be conducted by the Executive Committee in conjunction with the SBC's Education Commission and six seminaries. Committee members were told some issues facing theological education in the future could not be addressed as part of normal committee considerations. One example: relationships between the seminaries and Baptist colleges.

-- The Executive Committee voted to start a monthly tabloid magazine called SBC Life. The upbeat, four-color publication will replace the Baptist Program, which has promoted financial stewardship within the denomination. Committee members viewed a prototype of the magazine, which will cost about

\$400,000 a year to produce. SBC Life will continue the Baptist Program's free circulation to about 67,000 Southern Baptist churches and denominational employees and sell subscriptions to others.

-- The budget for distribution of an estimated \$138 million in Cooperative Program funds in 1993-94 was approved. The money will fund 19 SBC agencies and institutions. Most agencies will receive a slight cut in funding.

-- Committee members voted to charge the SBC Pastors' Conference \$38,000 a year for the next three years for the use of meeting space prior to the annual Southern Baptist Convention. The SBC had subsidized the pastors' meeting for years.

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-- By Greg Warner

State strategists meet  
again to exchange ideas

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- State-level Baptist strategists met again to compare notes on their continued efforts to extend fundamental-conservative control to the state Baptist conventions.

The state-level organizers met Feb. 24-25 at Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn., on the heels of the winter meeting of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee in Nashville.

The meeting gives state leaders a chance to "exchange experiences," said organizer and Virginia strategist T. C. Pinckney, who also serves as vice chairman of the Executive Committee's program and budget subcommittee.

Several members of the Executive Committee participated in a similar meeting last August in Memphis organized by Pinckney, a retired Air Force general from Alexandria, Va.

At the Aug. 20 meeting, 35-50 strategists from about 15 states met at Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis to share ideas about extending their influence at the state level. Adrian Rogers, three-time SBC president and pastor of the host church, delivered the keynote message.

Those strategies were put to the test at state convention meetings last November. Fundamental-conservatives gained ground in some states, like Kentucky, but not in others, like Florida.

Asked if he was pleased with the results in the state conventions last fall, Pinckney quipped, "I wasn't pleased with the results in Virginia," where fundamental-conservatives failed to elect him president. But, he added, the Memphis meeting "proved helpful for some" of the participants.

Fundamental-conservatives, who now control the Executive Committee and other agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention, want to repeat that success in the 40 Baptist state and regional conventions. Several state conventions already are under control of the fundamental-conservative movement.

Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers, could not be reached for comment.

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-- By Greg Warner

Parks outlines strategy  
for 'world without borders'

By Greg Warner

IRVING, Texas (ABP) -- Global missions as practiced by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will be a "significant departure" from business-as-usual missions, according to Keith Parks.

Parks, the Fellowship's global missions coordinator, spelled out the principles that will guide the group's missions program in a report to the Fellowship's Coordinating Council Feb. 18.

Among the key ingredients:

-- Missionaries will be assigned to ethno-linguistic groups, not countries, and may work with those people groups in several different countries over a period of years.

-- Missionaries assigned to the same or similar "people groups" will form teams of four to 12 people, even if they work on different continents, and be linked through a customized telecommunications network.

-- The leader of each team will report directly to Parks rather than up a chain of command -- a change Parks said will "flatten" the bureaucracy and make the strategy more effective.

Parks, who took the Fellowship position in February, said the new strategy is compatible with two significant worldwide trends -- globalization and ethnic resurgence.

On the one hand, he said, the world is "shrinking" because of instantaneous global communications, mobile populations and easy transportation.

On the other hand, and sometimes in tension with globalization, "there is a strong tendency toward ethnic identity," he said. People identify with others who share their ethnic heritage or language -- their "people group."

As an example, he said, a people group that is native to Southeast Asia may simultaneously have a significant population in Hong Kong and even Los Angeles. The team approach would allow 10 missionaries on five continents to coordinate their efforts to minister to the same or similar ethno-linguistic groups, Parks explained.

"We really do live in 'a world without borders,'" Parks said, borrowing a phrase from the Fellowship's mission statement. "And this will allow us to capitalize on that and take advantage of the technology. ... We could not have done this a few years ago."

The Fellowship strategy acknowledges the fact that ethnic and linguistic loyalties are stronger than "artificial" national boundaries, Parks suggested. "Nations have never developed along ethno-linguistic lines," he said.

He cited as an example the Kurds, whose homeland covers parts of Turkey, Iran and Iraq but who have never had the military or political power to establish their own country.

"Our missionaries will learn the language of a people group and move with them," he said.

Parks said the strategy he outlined for the Fellowship is a refinement of the non-resident missionary program developed in recent years by the Foreign Mission Board to take a gospel witness into countries where missionaries are not allowed.

Parks, 65, retired from the FMB last October -- three years earlier than planned -- in a dispute with conservative FMB trustees, whom Parks said were disrupting missions by trying to impose their theology on Baptists overseas.

Trustees deny the accusations.

When he took the missions position with the Fellowship, a two-year-old organization of moderate Southern Baptists, Parks said he wanted to focus the group's fledgling missions program on "World A," the one third of the world's population that has had no chance to hear the gospel.

Most of the Fellowship's 20 missionaries are assigned to Europe, where FMB actions prompted a spate of missionary resignations last year. Although the Christian witness is readily available in Europe, Parks said the Fellowship will not back away from its commitment to work there.

However, future expansion on the continent will be "directed toward peoples currently neglected by Christian witness," he told members of the Fellowship's Coordinating Council.

Among the other principles that will guide the Fellowship:

-- Fellowship missions will emphasize indigenous leadership, with missionaries serving as "models, enablers, catalysts" to the Christians with whom they work.

-- A non-profit organization with a name "not readily identified as Baptist, Christian or missionary" will be chartered to conduct sensitive international activities. The Foreign Mission Board has a similar organization.

-- Career missionaries will be "primary" in the Fellowship's strategy, but short-term personnel and volunteers also will be used.

-- Missionaries will receive approximately the same financial support as mission administrators. Parks and his wife, Helen Jean, turned down the Fellowship's offer of \$100,000 for salary and benefits and are receiving \$43,000 from the Fellowship in addition to their FMB retirement.

During their meeting, members of the Coordinating Council reviewed guidelines for the selection, appointment and compensation of missionaries.

The base salary for a missionary couple with no experience is set at \$16,800 a year, with built-in increases based on years of service. That does not include other compensation such as annuity, insurance, housing and a cost-of-living adjustment based on the location of service. The total support package for a U.S.-based missionary couple with no experience is \$36,702 a year.

-- Groups and individuals will be enlisted to provide financial support for specific Fellowship missionaries.

-- The global missions ministry group, a committee of the Coordinating Council, will decide, on the recommendation of Parks and his staff, who is hired as missionaries and to what people groups they are assigned.

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Fellowship hires Betty Law,  
nominates Crumpler for top post

By Greg Warner

IRVING, Texas (ABP) -- Leaders of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship hired one employee, authorized a committee to hire another, and nominated retired missions executive Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler as the organization's next moderator-elect.

The Fellowship's Coordinating Council, meeting Feb. 18-20 near the Dallas-Fort Worth airport, hired longtime missions administrator Betty Law as associate global missions coordinator.

Law, 64, is the Fellowship's second stateside missions staffer. She will

assist Keith Parks, who recently was hired as global missions coordinator.

Last October, after long careers with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, both Parks and Law retired earlier than planned, alleging FMB trustees were trying to impose conservative doctrine on Baptists overseas.

Parks was FMB president for 13 years. Law, the highest-ranking woman in the FMB administration, was vice president for the Americas when she left.

As the Fellowship's second-in-command for missions, Law will oversee budgeting, personnel and daily operations, as well as coordinate the work of mission teams and assist in mission planning.

The Coordinating Council also authorized the hiring of a director of communications. The communications work group was empowered to employ the person from a list of four finalists. The finalists were not named.

Crumpler, retired executive director of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, was nominated by the council to become Fellowship moderator-elect. Crumpler's nomination must be approved by the Fellowship's general assembly in May.

Crumpler, from Cincinnati, Ohio, will follow Hardy Clemons, pastor of First Baptist Church of Greenville, N.C., who in May will succeed Pat Ayres in the Fellowship's top elected position.

Fellowship coordinator Cecil Sherman, in his report to the council, said the two-year-old CBF is "here to stay" and not "a blip on the screen."

Many people keep asking when and if the Fellowship will leave the Southern Baptist Convention and form its own convention, Sherman said. "But that is not a high-priority item for many people, except for maybe a few in Nashville."

Morris Chapman, president of the Nashville-based SBC Executive Committee, made headlines late last year when he suggested the Fellowship should leave the Southern Baptist Convention as a matter of integrity.

Chapman is a leader of the fundamental-conservative movement that now controls the SBC and its agencies. The Fellowship, established by moderate-conservative Southern Baptists displeased with that control, diverts financial support away from some SBC agencies and toward its own programs.

"How we relate to the Southern Baptist Convention we will decide along the way," Sherman said. The Fellowship will leave the SBC when a majority of people at the group's annual general assembly vote to do so, he said simply.

Sherman said the general assembly, scheduled this year for May 13-15 in Birmingham, Ala., is the best opportunity the Fellowship has to define itself and attract new participants.

"Half to two-thirds of the people at the general assembly come from churches that have not sent CBF a dime," he said. Sherman's advise to the curious: "Go to Houston (site of the June SBC annual meeting) and go to Birmingham. Decide what kind of Baptist you are. Then let your weight down with them."

During two days of committee reports, members of the Coordinating Council heard plans for the general assembly, which will feature keynote speeches by Parks and former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, a life-long Southern Baptist who recently endorsed the Fellowship.

The three-day assembly, which will include 60 workshops and seminars, is arranged around the theme of "Faith and Freedom in Christ."

The council adopted a 1994 budget that anticipates receipts of \$12.7 million. As in the past, most of the money -- \$7.6 million -- is expected to go to selected Southern Baptist agencies and Fellowship-supported causes. The remaining \$5.1 million is targeted for the Fellowship's own ministries, with global missions receiving the largest portion -- \$3.9 million.

The previously approved budget for 1993 anticipates receipts of \$9.6

million, with \$3.7 million targeted for Fellowship projects. In 1992 the Fellowship took in \$7.3 million, a 62 percent increase over 1991.

In other business:

-- The council acted to formalize the Fellowship's relationship with the Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond by agreeing to nominate one trustee to the BTSR board of trustees beginning in October. The council also voted to consider trustee relationships with other organizations, such as the Baptist Center for Ethics, which has offered several trustee spots to the Fellowship.

Sherman said sending a trustee to BTSR does not imply control. "We don't own them; we invest in them," he said. "This is simply a voice and a vote."

-- The ethics and public policy work group will conduct an annual consultation beginning in 1994 a selected topic -- the first one is AIDS -- and produce a resource for churches. As with the respect-for-life resource produced this year, the group will present "a diversity of models" for churches to consider.

The Fellowship will use the consultations, rather than resolutions at the annual general assembly, to address ethical issues. As a result, the council did not act on resolutions on homosexuality and the environment which were referred from the 1992 assembly. A bylaw will prohibit resolutions at the general assembly, but it can be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the assembly, the council was told.

The ethics and public policy work group approved spending \$90,220 in 1993 to fund 11 organizations and projects, with the Baptist Center for Ethics receiving the largest share -- \$32,000.

-- The theological education work group announced plans to spend \$100,000 this year on scholarships and special projects. The largest share of the scholarships (\$35,000) goes to BTSR, with Baptist divinity students at Duke and Emory universities splitting \$25,000.

Increased funding for 1994 will provide not only scholarships but money for Baptist programs and projects at Duke, Emory, Princeton University, the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and the Appalachian Ministry Educational Resource Center.

-- The curriculum development work group will broaden its scope and change its name to the Christian education ministry work group. Among new offerings under consideration are summer training programs for children, youth and adults.

-- The Fellowship assumed responsibility for funding three mission projects formerly supported by the Alliance of Baptists -- an international ministry in Chicago (\$10,000), a homeless project in Phoenix (\$2,500), and a Cartersville, Ga., halfway house for terminated ministers (\$2,500).

-- The council agreed to consider forming a foundation to receive estate gifts and develop an endowment for the organization.

-- Minor changes in the constitution and bylaws were approved and will be considered by the May assembly.

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HMB study goes easy on Masons,  
but critics say it's not objective

By Ray Waddle and Greg Warner

ATLANTA (ABP) -- A Southern Baptist study of the possible evils of Freemasonry concludes there is no contradiction between the teachings of Masons and Christianity, but the unreleased study is already raising a stink.

Anti-Mason Baptists are calling for the dismissal of the Southern Baptist staffer who conducted the study after a letter surfaced in which he urged Masons to attend the June Southern Baptist Convention meeting in large numbers.

Gary Leazer, director of the interfaith witness department of the SBC Home Mission Board in Atlanta, has been "reprimanded" for writing the Jan. 17 letter, HMB President Larry Lewis told Associated Baptist Press. Lewis said he will consult with Leazer's supervisor and the HMB's trustee chairman to determine if further discipline is warranted.

Leazer also has been removed from the HMB committee studying Masonic teachings, Lewis said. The study will be presented Mar. 16-17 to HMB trustees, who will recommend action to the June SBC.

"They should scrap the study and start over," protested Larry Holly, the Beaumont, Texas, physician who is leading the fight against the Masonic presence in Southern Baptist life.

In a Feb. 23 letter to HMB trustees, Holly said trustees should reject the study and ask Leazer to resign.

"He's compromised his objectivity," Holly told the Tennessean of Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 23. "He needs to resign and find another job. Maybe he could work for the Masonic lodge, I don't know."

Holly -- who blames Masons for the fact his father, a Mason, rejects Christianity -- contends Leazer's letter shows the HMB employee to be favorable toward Masons and hostile toward their Southern Baptist opponents.

HMB president Lewis said much of Leazer's letter was "inappropriate," but he was non-committal when asked if Leazer had compromised the study: "That's the big question."

Lewis noted the study underwent some "radical revisions" after Leazer completed his work. "We are all satisfied this is a thorough, accurate and fair study," he told ABP.

The issue of Masonry is a difficult one for Baptist leaders because as many as 15 percent of Southern Baptists are Masons. Opponents say Masonic teachings and rituals are anti-Christian, racially segregated and even satanic.

Masons, members of the largest secret men's organization in the world, promote brotherhood and good deeds but have always insisted their group is not a religion.

At Holly's insistence, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention last year asked the HMB to conduct another study to determine if Masonic teachings -- and by extension Masonic membership -- are incompatible with Christianity.

Leazer's earlier promise to conduct an objective study has been questioned since discovery of his letter to Don Talbert, a Baptist Mason from Chattanooga, Tenn.

"James L. Holly is quite upset with me," Leazer wrote, "as I will not meet with him again to let him approve the report before it is submitted. He, of course, will explode when he sees it. I am reaffirming our department's 1986 position that Freemasonry is NOT a religion and recommending that the SBC take a stand neither for nor against Freemasonry.

"Of course, anything can happen between now and the SBC, as well as at the SBC in June. Holly already is marshaling his forces to counter-attack. It is essential that as many Southern Baptist Masons get to the (June) SBC as possible."

Leazer could not be reached for comment because his office was routing all inquiries to the HMB's communication's office.

HMB president Lewis said Leazer's encouragement to Masons to attend the

SBC was in response to questions from Masons who wanted to influence the outcome. "They were told, 'The only thing you can do is come to the convention,'" Lewis explained.

But Holly was not satisfied with that explanation. "The clear language of the statement ... is advocacy, not simply explaining a procedure," he wrote trustees.

Lewis also defended Leazer's decision to show the unfinished study to two Masons to verify its accuracy but not Leazer's decision to keep the FMB president uninformed he was doing so. Holly, however, said showing the study to Masons "compromised any semblance of objectivity."

"Why would the chicken farmer invite the fox to check the specifications for the construction of the henhouse?" Holly asked.

It is not known who leaked Leazer's letter. Holly got a copy from a pastor friend after it was "circulated indiscriminately" in Chattanooga, he told Baptist Press.

Masons have launched their own campaign to counter Holly's charges, devoting the February issue of their Scottish Rite Journal to the dispute with Baptists. Leazer was allowed to screen the issue in December.

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Free speech, student aid at issue  
in cases heard by Supreme Court

By Larry Chesser and Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Veteran church-state attorneys expect the U.S. Supreme Court to have little trouble finding that school facilities open for a variety of community purposes must also be available for religious purposes.

It's a much tougher call, they say, to predict whether the court will insist the First Amendment bars school districts from providing a paid sign-language interpreter for a deaf student attending a religious school.

In Feb. 24 oral arguments, the high court heard a challenge to a New York school district's policy barring after-hours use of school facilities for religious purposes and a challenge to an Arizona school district's refusal to provide an interpreter for a blind student who attended a Catholic high school.

Lamb's Chapel, an evangelical church, and its pastor asked the high court to reverse lower-court rulings that upheld the Center Moriches Free Union School District's policy against the religious use of its facilities. The church had sought to use the facilities to show the James Dobson film series titled "Turn Your Heart Toward Home."

The case is about censorship of Lamb's Chapel's speech, attorney Jay Alan Sekulow told justices.

While Sekulow insisted that the district's policy violated both the First Amendment's religion clauses as well as its free-speech clause, the court's discussion focused on the latter.

School district attorney John Hoefling said Center Moriches had established a "limited open forum" and that officials had restricted use of the facilities for commercial and partisan political purposes as well as religious reasons.

Sekulow said the school district could bar after-hours use of the facilities by all outside groups, but could not restrict religious use when

the buildings were available for a broad range of social, civic and recreational purposes.

School districts cannot open their facilities to drama and then exclude a religious play, Sekulow said.

Hoeftling said the district's policy is neutral because nobody with a religious viewpoint is allowed to use the facility.

Four church-state attorneys said the issues appear to be clear enough in the case that justices should find little problem in siding with Lamb's Chapel.

"The oral argument went extremely well," said Brent Walker, associate general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee. "The state's position was simply untenable.

"To say it's OK to allow secular lifestyle topics to be discussed, but not religious ones, or that anti-religious family values can be taught, but not religious values, borders on the absurd."

Walker was joined in predicting a victory for the church by Oliver Thomas, BJC general counsel; Steve McFarland, director of the Christian Legal Society's Center for Law and Religious Freedom; and Forest Montgomery, attorney for the National Association of Evangelicals.

"Lamb's Chapel is a slam dunk. ... I would not be surprised if the court was unanimous," Montgomery said.

McFarland noted that Lamb's Chapel will prevail because the school district "has discriminated on the basis of the viewpoint of the religious group."

At issue in the second case is whether the provision of an interpreter for a deaf student at a religious school unconstitutionally advances religion or entangles church and state.

The Education of the Handicapped Act authorizes federal funds for special services, such as sign-language interpreters, but the Catalina Foothills School District in Arizona refused to provide James Zobrest an interpreter because he attended a religious school. The district said it would have supplied Zobrest an interpreter if he had gone to a public or non-sectarian private school.

His parents, Sandra and Larry Zobrest, challenged that decision, and lower courts upheld the district's position that providing an interpreter would violate the First Amendment's ban on government establishment of religion.

During oral arguments, William Ball, Zobrests' attorney, said the court could reverse the lower-court rulings by holding that the benefit sought by the student does not violate the Lemon test. Lemon is a test used by the court to determine governmental neutrality toward religion.

The key issue is the second prong of the three-part test, he said, which requires that government neither advance nor impede religion.

Ball and William Bryson, acting U.S. solicitor general, said providing a neutral interpreter who merely translates a language does not advance religious beliefs.

Nothing in Lemon bars providing an interpreter, Ball added.

John Richardson, attorney for the Arizona school district, said using state employees as interpreters in religious schools would necessarily involve them in religion. Part of what goes on in Catholic classrooms is the exercise of religion, he said, and government employees must not be required to engage in religious activities.

Richardson pointed out the school district has paid for non-religious services, such as speech therapy, for Zobrest but draws the line at federal workers participating daily, essentially and involuntarily in religious

education.

Justice Antonin Scalia questioned the neutrality of the school district's approach, suggesting it could be a "disincentive" for parents to select religious schools. He also asked Richardson if the school district had considered sending the parents money to hire their own interpreter.

Richardson said the federal statute does not give the school district the authority to pay parents directly -- an arrangement that would not place state employees in a religious classroom.

Church-state attorneys present for oral arguments agree that the decision in *Zobrest* will be close -- perhaps a one-vote decision.

The BJC's Thomas said: "It's difficult to predict who wins this case, but we would like to see a decision that neither penalizes James *Zobrest* nor violates the separation of church and state. I think both can be accomplished."

If the court decides in favor of *Zobrest*, The BJC's Walker said, "it will show the *Lemon* test can be applied in a way that is flexible, not hostile, to religion and respects the needs of the student while not advancing religion by payment of money to parochial schools."

Walker cautioned that a decision in favor of the *Zobrests* could have a down side if it were used to open the door to aid to parochial schools.

The NAE's Montgomery said making court predictions is very hazardous but he thinks the court will side with *Zobrest* in a split decision, maybe 6 to 3. The court probably will not use either case to re-examine any basic precedents, he said.

McFarland of the Christian Legal Society said he couldn't predict the outcome in *Zobrest*. While he said the case has the potential for redrawing the line separating church and state, he said he "is not sure a majority of the court is ready to embrace a particular test, in which case, *Lemon* may by default remain fairly unscathed."

The Baptist Joint Committee and Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, along with several other religious groups, filed briefs on behalf of Lamb's Chapel and the *Zobrests* in the two cases.

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Supreme Court declines to review  
decision striking 'kosher' law

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Consumers and government share a stake in preventing fraudulent marketing, but protecting that interest can be tricky when the products at issue are prescribed by religious tenets -- as are kosher foods.

The tricky part is to provide consumer protection while avoiding excessive entanglement between government and religion.

That's no easy task, as is evident in New Jersey's attempt to bar misrepresentation of kosher food. That state's Supreme Court held in July that the state kosher regulations unconstitutionally entangled government with religion, a ruling the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review Feb. 22.

The New Jersey regulations, which defined kosher as "prepared and maintained in strict compliance with the laws and customs of the Orthodox Jewish religion," imposed complicated guidelines governing the handling of kosher food and set up a panel of 10 rabbis to advise the state attorney general on kosher matters.

The New Jersey court said the state regulations violated the First Amendment's ban on governmental establishment of religion by advancing

religion and failing to have a secular purpose but mostly by fostering too much entanglement between government and religion.

Three judges dissented in the case, arguing that the regulations served the state's interest in preventing consumer fraud in the marketing of kosher foods.

"The constitutionality of kosher food legislation presents very difficult and close issues," said Richard Foltin, director of governmental affairs of the American Jewish Committee, which did not take a position in the case.

Seventeen states have approved laws related to kosher foods. Foltin noted that the Maryland Supreme Court upheld that state's kosher foods statute.

Brent Walker, associate general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee, agreed with Foltin that the case presents difficult issues.

"The prevention of consumer fraud is certainly a legitimate secular concern," Walker said. "But it also puts government in the business of policing what are essentially religious standards of purity. This tends to advance religion and results in unwholesome entanglements between government and religion."

In other actions Feb. 22, the high court:

-- Declined to review an appeals-court decision upholding the constitutionality of a Hagerstown, Md., ordinance restricting adult businesses to certain commercial zones and preventing them from operating within 1,000 feet of a church, school, hospital, nursing home, park or public multi-family dwelling.

The appeals court noted that the First Amendment protected the sale of non-obscene, sexually explicit material but that government may impose reasonable restrictions on the time, place and manner of protected speech.

-- Disposed of two abortion-related cases in a manner consistent with the court's Jan. 13 decision in *Bray vs. Alexandria*. In the *Bray* case, the Supreme Court said that federal courts cannot use an 1871 civil-rights law to bar blockades at abortion clinics. In a New York case, the high court vacated an appeals-court ruling that used the 19th century law to stop efforts to block access to abortion clinics and returned the case for further consideration in light of the *Bray* ruling.

In a Missouri case, the Supreme Court refused to disturb an appeals court's dismissal of a lawsuit against the operators of a mock abortion clinic. The lower court said the clinic could not be sued under the 1871 law.

-- Agreed to decide whether the 1991 Civil Rights Act applies to cases pending when the law was enacted. The court will review lower-court rulings that the 1991 act did not apply in a sexual-harassment lawsuit filed by an employee of a Tyler, Texas, firm nor in a race discrimination complaint filed by two African-American mechanics against Roadway Express. When it approved the measure, Congress sent mixed signals about whether the bill was retroactive.

-- Declined to review a Tennessee Supreme Court ruling that a divorced man's right to avoid procreation outweighed his former wife's interest in donating "frozen embryos" to a childless couple.

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-- By Larry Chesser

Need for Freedom of Choice Act  
questioned at House hearing

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Since the U.S. Supreme Court declined last year to reverse Roe vs. Wade, why is Congress working on legislation to protect a woman's right to choose an abortion?

People on both sides of the issue answered that question differently in testimony before the House Civil and Constitutional Rights Subcommittee Feb. 23.

One witness said the Freedom of Choice Act (H.R. 25) is necessary because the court continues to redraw the lines by which states can restrict access to abortions. Another, whose state of Pennsylvania brought the issue before the court last year, said the lucrative abortion industry provides the impetus for the bill.

Frank Michelman, professor at Harvard Law School, said the court's decision in last year's Casey case upheld Roe vs. Wade but left the states with "a great deal of latitude" in regulating abortion. In Casey, a divided court upheld several Pennsylvania regulations, such as a 24-hour waiting period and parental notification.

"One lesson of Casey, then, is that numerous state hindrances to abortion will pass judicial scrutiny," Michelman said, adding that is part of the answer to those who ask why H.R. 25 is needed. The bill would limit the power of states to regulate abortion, he added.

And that is just what bothers Gov. Robert Casey of Pennsylvania, who also testified.

"Regardless of their position on abortion," Casey told the subcommittee, "most people can see the wisdom of parental notification and consent, of a one-day waiting period, of informed consent and limits on third-trimester abortions.

"This is what the Pennsylvania law calls for. This is what the vast majority of the American people support. And yet, this is precisely what H.R. 25 would outlaw."

The American people are not pushing for the bill, he said, adding that he is concerned that the abortion industry's lust for money is the engine behind the legislation.

Subcommittee chairman Don Edwards, D-Calif., said the bill is "just one piece of a reproductive-health agenda" that might be explored. Edwards, the chief co-sponsor of the bill, said it codifies the 1973 landmark decision of Roe vs. Wade. But opponents of the bill claim that it goes beyond Roe.

A companion bill (S. 25) has been introduced in the Senate.

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Proposed budget cut would  
impact Baptist state papers

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Non-profit mailers, including state Baptist newspapers, face a 35 percent rate hike Oct. 3 if an administration proposal to cut postal subsidies is enacted.

Funding for preferred postal rates is among the 150 spending cuts in President Bill Clinton's economic plan, which he outlined in his Feb. 17 State of the Union address.

The administration proposes to reduce "revenue foregone" appropriations

to the U.S. Postal Service. Revenue foregone reimburses the Postal Service for the non-profit mailers' share of overhead expenses. Non-profit rates reflect only the cost of handling that class of mail.

The proposal would save the government a projected \$152 million over four years. Revenue foregone has been steadily reduced for the past few years.

Neal Denton, executive director of the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers, said the message is clear: "Revenue foregone is a dinosaur. ... None of this came as a surprise to us."

The alliance, in its Feb. 19 newsletter, said it favors a legislative solution that would protect the preferred rates while reducing non-profit mailers' reliance on the federal budget. In November, non-profit mailers offered reform principles that would revise the method of determining and paying for overhead costs assigned to preferred rates.

Unless such a legislative solution is enacted, non-profit rates will go up 35 percent, Denton said.

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-- By Pam Parry

When Religious Right blasts Clinton,  
Carter says it feels like 'deja vu'

By Ken Camp

WACO, Texas (ABP) -- When Southern Baptist leaders and other conservative evangelicals condemn fellow Baptist Bill Clinton, former president Jimmy Carter says he feels an overwhelming sensation -- "deja vu."

"You know, I was the first target of the so-called Moral Majority," Carter said at a Feb. 22 news conference in Waco, Texas. "This is not a new thing, unfortunately, in the Baptist arena."

As a long-time Southern Baptist deacon and Sunday school teacher, Carter said he was "amazed" in the mid-1970s to see himself targeted by television evangelists "who would spend 50 minutes condemning me and 10 minutes asking people to send them money."

Although it was painful at the time, Carter now jokes about helping launch the national career of televangelist Jerry Falwell and living to tell about it.

"Jerry Falwell kind of made his reputation attacking me ... and I survived," he said, offering encouragement to Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, whom he characterized as "very fine Southern Baptist laymen."

Carter answered questions from the media prior to delivering an address to more than 3,000 people at the Waco Masonic Grand Lodge Auditorium as part of Baylor University's Robert Reid Distinguished Lecture Series.

In the news conference, Carter underscored his support for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and its new missions leader, Keith Parks. Carter will deliver the keynote address at the Fellowship's general assembly in Birmingham, Ala., on May 13.

"My wife and I have already asked our church treasurer -- I've been chairman of the finance committee for years -- to divide our contributions to the church between the Fellowship and one missionary family that represents our church," said Carter, a member of Maranatha Baptist Church, Plains, Ga.

Carter also outlined his four-fold vision for the United States in the post-Cold War era, characterized by:

- Using military force in peacekeeping, not adventurism,
- Promoting freedom and democracy.
- Elevating human rights globally and extending civil rights domestically, and
- Alleviating human suffering.

Unfortunately, the U.S. policy toward Haitian refugees violates that vision and is infused with racism, Carter said. He maintains Haitians are the only politically persecuted people in the world who are denied a fair hearing by U.S. immigration officials.

"I think Haitians should be treated like any other foreign nationals who are trying to come to our country to escape direct political persecution and threats to their lives," he said. "There has been a major element of racism in our Haitian policy."

During his 40-minute address in downtown Waco, Carter echoed many of the themes he first voiced last October, speaking at Stetson University in DeLand, Fla. Specifically, he challenged affluent Christian citizens to bridge the growing "chasm" between themselves and their poor neighbors.

"There's a chasm that exists in our society between those who are rich and our neighbors who are poor," he said. "By rich, I'm talking about someone who has a decent home, the prospect of a job, access to health care, and the belief that if we make a decision we'll make a difference, at least in our own lives, and who feel that the police and the justice system are on our side."

"The pre-eminent discrimination today is not based on race or religion, but it is discrimination of the rich and powerful against the poor and weak. It is a discrimination that we do not even acknowledge but which is insidious."

Carter said his work with Habitat for Humanity, a Christian organization that builds low-cost homes for the poor, and the Carter Center at Emory University has helped him to bridge the chasm and put his own faith into action.

"It's kind of a shock to us to realize that these kind of people to whom Christ reached out his hands and embraced are equally as worthy as we," he said.

He urged Christian Americans to "seek freedom through reaching out to others ... to those people to whom Christ would be ministering if he were here."

Following the formal address, Carter answered a broad range of written questions submitted in advance by the audience. Topics included:

- The role of the First Lady. Carter recalled that during his presidency, Rosalyn Carter received considerable criticism for sitting in on Cabinet meetings, but she made a valuable contribution, particularly on mental-health issues.

Carter said no one should have been surprised that Hillary Clinton would be an activist First Lady, and he expressed confidence in her ability to tackle reform of the country's health-care system.

"The person least likely to want to fail is Hillary Clinton. A Cabinet official or former president or other politician might could afford to fail, but she can't," he said. "Frankly, I think the American people got a two-for-one bargain when they elected Bill Clinton."

- Bosnia. The U.S. should support continuing efforts to build upon the framework for peace already in place. Carter said he would support military intervention only to enforce compliance with agreed-upon peace accords. He stressed that Europe should take the lead in providing troops and planes, but the U.S. should not shrink from a commitment to supporting human rights.

"We did not invent human rights," he said. "Human rights invented America."

-- Taxes. Carter voiced strong support for Clinton's deficit-reduction plan and praised his "great political courage" in proposing tax increases as part of the package. Carter also urged consideration of a tax on cigarettes, alcohol and other detrimental products as a potential source of revenue for health-care programs.

-- Political reform. The worst "affliction" in the political system is the "legal bribery" of congressmen by political action committees, and it should be made illegal, Carter said.

"Hundreds of thousands of dollars are offered to powerful members of Congress in exchange for political favors. This must be abolished," he said.

-- The Religious Right. Carter said he believes -- and hopes -- that the influence of right-wing evangelicals upon the Republican Party has reached its peak. While sympathetic to some concerns of the Religious Right, he expressed a clear distinction between their brand of fundamentalism and his own.

"I'm a fairly conservative Christian," he said. "I believe in the fundamentals of the Baptist faith. And one of those is the separation of church and state."

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