
A S S O C I A T E D B A P T I S T P R E S S

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HMB declines to appoint
CBF leader as missionary

By Greg Warner

ATLANTA (ABP) -- Rebecca Waugh of New York City has been appointed as a missionary for the Home Mission Board, but her husband won't be because of his involvement with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Home Mission Board policy requires both missionaries and their spouses to be appointed. But HMB trustees made an exception to policy Oct. 13 in order to appoint Rebecca Waugh without her husband, David, who is on the Fellowship's Coordinating Council.

The Fellowship, which appoints its own missionaries, is an organization of Baptist moderates opposed to the conservative direction of the Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies.

Many SBC leaders consider the Fellowship to be in competition with SBC agencies for the loyalty and financial support of rank-and-file Baptists. Some agencies have tried to avoid any dealings with the Fellowship for that reason.

For the HMB, however, appointing Rebecca Waugh and not her husband was a workable solution.

"There was no logical reason not to appoint Mrs. Waugh," said HMB President Larry Lewis, "since she has no direct involvement with CBF and she has expressed strong support for the Southern Baptist Convention, the Cooperative Program and our agency. She appears to be eminently qualified for the position."

Waugh will serve as director of church and community ministries for the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association. Her husband is pastor of Metro Baptist Church in Manhattan. Both previously received HMB financial support as missionary associates, positions that do not require election by trustees.

The couple recently moved from Providence, R.I., to take their new jobs in New York, but they moved without any guarantee the HMB would fund Rebecca's position.



The money from the HMB, which was requested by the New York City association of churches, represents three-fourths of her support, Waugh said. "There were no resources at hand to make up that difference," she added.

Ron Holloway, HMB associate director of missionary personnel, said appointment of a missionary without the spouse "is not the norm, but it's not abnormally unusual."

"Our administrative guidelines state that the spouse will be processed," explained Holloway. The board has "periodically" made exceptions to that policy, he said, but he did not know how many of the HMB's 4,800-plus missionaries serve without their spouses.

Both Rebecca and David Waugh said the HMB staff was supportive throughout the process. "They were very concerned about us personally and about the work here," Rebecca said.

Approval by trustees, however, did not go so smoothly.

The issue was debated at length by the missionary personnel committee Oct. 12, said Marty King, HMB director of public relations. However, the committee meeting was closed and details were unavailable.

One source said some trustees on the committee tried to block or divert the appointment, but King would not confirm or deny that report.

"We can assume there was a broad spectrum of opinion and that all aspects were discussed," said King, who was not allowed in the meeting.

Holloway, as associate director of missionary personnel, was allowed to attend but also declined comment because "personnel matters are confidential."

The chairman of the committee, trustee Bob Curtis of Ballwin, Mo., did not return phone calls about the matter.

Curtis presented the committee's recommendation to elect Rebecca Waugh - along with eight other missionaries -- to the full board of trustees Oct. 13. He noted an exception had been granted to allow one missionary to be appointed without her spouse.

Jim Guenther of New York asked for an explanation of the exception, and Curtis noted the nominee's husband was a leader in the Fellowship. For that reason, he said, the committee declined to consider him for appointment.

Curtis added that Rebecca Waugh "meets all the qualifications for service with the Home Mission Board, and we did not see any reason either theologically or ethically for not appointing her."

The full board then approved all the appointments.

Rebecca Waugh said she is pleased with the decision. "It's a relief to have this resolved, and I'm delighted to be able to get on with what I feel called to do," she said.

"And it's a relief that those dealing with this could get to the other side and establish missions and ministry as the priority," she added. "I'm glad it was an occasion not for divisiveness but for affirmation of ministry and missions."

Rebecca Waugh will work with New York-area Baptist churches to establish a variety of social ministries and other programs. "There is a lot going on in New York City, and there's a lot more that could be done," she said.

Before moving to New York, both the Waughs worked under HMB sponsorship to establish churches in Montpelier and Woodstock, Vt., and Providence, R.I. All three churches later started mission churches of their own, said David Waugh, who also supervised church-planter apprentices for the HMB.

During that time, the couple served as HMB missionary associates, but neither was appointed as an HMB missionary.

David Wilkinson, communications coordinator for the Fellowship, said the HMB's decision not to appoint a Fellowship leader "is regrettable but not surprising."

"It's another illustration of the preoccupation of those in control of the SBC with the politics of exclusion and punitive reactions, rather than inclusiveness and encouragement," he said.

"The clear losers are Baptists in general and, in particular, New York Baptists and the people in the metro New York area whose lives are being touched by both Rebecca and David."

Asked if the Fellowship would exclude SBC leaders from missionary service, Wilkinson said, "I'd be astonished if that were the case."

"As far as I know, we don't ask whether they're in positions of leadership in the SBC. We're concerned that they are leaders and that they are pursuing God's call in their lives."

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Southwestern trustees discuss
relationship with Fellowship

By Toby Druin

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary inaugurated a new institute for church leadership and elected two new faculty members in their Oct. 11-13 meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, but they focused much of their time and energy on the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

A motion that would have instructed the seminary administration to discourage alumni gatherings at Fellowship meetings was postponed until the spring meeting, when the trustee executive committee is to report on a study of the CBF and how it relates to the seminary.

And presentation of one of the seminary's most prestigious awards to an Amarillo, Texas, couple was approved and then temporarily put in jeopardy because one trustee, asking that the approval be rescinded, said their connection with the Fellowship made giving them the honor "a mockery."

The motion to rescind subsequently was withdrawn.

The trustees participated in the inauguration of the Scarborough Institute, proposed by Southwestern President Russell Dilday and approved by the trustees a year ago. Headed by Daniel Sanchez, the institute will focus on research in church-growth issues and provide practical experience for students.

The new faculty members are Steve Lyons, former missionary to Venezuela elected professor of pastoral ministry, and Marcia McQuitty, elected assistant professor of childhood education.

The trustees approved a recommendation from their academic affairs committee for the study of the seminary's relationship with the Fellowship, an organization of Southern Baptist moderates.

The trustee executive committee -- the three trustee officers, chairmen of the four trustee committees and another member from each committee named by the chairman -- will study the matter and report next spring.

Along with it they will consider the matter of the alumni meetings at Fellowship gatherings.

The issue was one of two referred to the trustees by the Southern Baptist Convention last June. An Oklahoma messenger asked that "alumni associations of our seminaries which have exhibited at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship gatherings be discouraged from doing so" and that Cooperative Program funds be withheld from seminaries whose alumni continue to exhibit at the CBF.

President Dilday proposed a response that the seminary considers it "important to relate appropriately to all of our alumni across the world."

Don Taylor, trustee from Asheville, N.C., however, proposed a substitute motion instructing the administration to "discourage the alumni association from exhibiting at CBF gatherings."

Taylor's proposal said, "It is very apparent that the CBF exists for the purpose of maliciously creating a chilling and adversarial relationship within the Southern Baptist Convention for the purpose of depriving the SBC of the needed funds to finance the Cooperative Program missionary endeavors...."

Questioned about the seminary's participation in such alumni meetings, Dilday said "shared funds" from both the seminary and the alumni pay for them and that he "felt good about going wherever Southwestern alumni are."

Several trustees spoke against such participation. Paul Balducci, trustee from Mobile, Ala., said if such alumni meetings continue at Fellowship meetings, seminary funds should be withheld. Laura Lee Cogswell, trustee from Denton, Texas, said she felt the trustees should take a strong stand against the CBF.

The trustees finally approved with only a few negative votes a motion by Lee Weaver, trustee from Fort Worth, to table Taylor's motion until the trustee executive committee completes its study.

Another referral from the SBC was dispatched quickly. It asked that SBC agencies limit severance packages. Executive Vice President Scotty Gray said Southwestern has not provided nor does it plan to provide severance gifts contrary to the motion.

The trustees approved presentation of the B.H. Carroll Awards to C. J. and Ophelia Humphrey of Amarillo and Lee and Delores McKellar of Mount Pleasant. The award is given annually to recognize "outstanding contributions to the life of the seminary."

The Humphreys have been influential in funding Southwestern's evangelism practicum program, which sends students across the United States to lead revivals in pioneer areas of Southern Baptist work. He is a member of the seminary Advisory Council and president of the Panhandle Baptist Foundation, which has given some \$300,000 to the seminary. Ophelia Humphrey is a former president of Texas Woman's Missionary Union.

The McKellars, whose son has earned a doctorate degree from the seminary, are members of First Baptist Church of Mount Pleasant and have provided an insurance gift of more than \$100,000 for the seminary.

No opposition was registered to giving the couples the award. But later Lyle Seltmann, a trustee and director of associational missions from Michigan, raised the question if either of the couples was involved in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Miles Seaborn, trustee from Fort Worth, said the Humphreys' church -- First Baptist Church of Amarillo -- is an "open supporter" of the Fellowship. Wayne Allen, trustee from Carrollton, Texas, said he understood Ophelia Humphrey had spoken on behalf of Texas Baptists Committed. Seltmann then moved that the approval of the award for the Humphreys be rescinded.

Questioned if they knew of any such relationships with the CBF, Dilday and Jay Chance, vice president for institutional advancement, said the denominational political affiliation of persons receiving the awards is not considered.

"My appeal is to leave politics behind and move on with the Lord's work," said Dilday. He said the seminary should rejoice that it has people of different persuasions willing to support it and urged the trustees to operate on a "higher level."

"Giving the B.H. Carroll Award to these good people won't enhance the

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship," he said.

Action on Seltmann's motion was postponed until the following day to give time to determine if the Humphreys were supporters of the Fellowship. However, trustee chairman Damon Shook told the Baptist Standard the next morning that Seltmann had withdrawn his motion to rescind the action.

Ophelia Humphrey was a board member of the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, which preceded the formation of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. She currently is a member of the Coordinating Council of the Fellowship and a member of the advisory board of Texas Baptists Committed.

In other action, the trustees:

-- approved a 99-year ground lease with the Institute for Biblical Research for construction of a research library on Southwestern property. Dilday, hailing the decision, said the group "represents the kind of conservative evangelical scholarship we stand for at Southwestern."

-- approved a motion by T. Bob Davis of Dallas that the trustee executive committee meet with seminary administrators to update the job description of the dean of the School of Church Music and devise a profile for the new dean.

James McKinney, dean for 37 years, has announced plans to retire. Davis' motion also calls for the committee to review the selection process of deans and vice presidents.

Davis' motion at first asked the executive committee alone to be given the task, but when Dilday cautioned that such action could jeopardize accreditation, the motion was changed to have the committee work with the administration.

-- approved a motion by Ralph Pulley of Dallas that a special committee of the board "review and study all documents and files" the committee selects related to gifts made to Southwestern. He also requested that all future gifts involving "agreements, oral or written," be reviewed by trustees.

-- approved promotion of Roy Fish to distinguished professor of evangelism.

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-- Scott Collins, director of public relations at Southwestern Seminary, also contributed to this report.

Southern trustees meet peaceably
amid inaugural celebration

By Mark Wingfield

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- Trustees of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary enjoyed a newfound unity during their first meeting with a new president Oct. 12-13 but still found cause to go into executive session for one hour.

Closed meetings have become common practice for seminary trustees during recent years of conflict, as conservatives have replaced moderates in positions of leadership. This marked the fifth time in two years for trustees to engage in deliberations behind closed doors.

Trustee chairman Richard White of Franklin, Tenn., declined to say what had transpired in the latest closed-door meeting. However, he said it would be announced later in the week -- presumably during inauguration ceremonies for the seminary's new president, Al Mohler.

Trustees -- whose meetings usually last three days -- came to Louisville for five days of events this time, combining business with a variety of

inaugural celebrations.

However, unlike in the immediate past, trustees breezed through their agenda and concluded the business meetings a day early. The tension between trustees, and between trustees and the seminary community, that characterized most meetings in the past few years was absent from this fall's gathering.

This meeting was the first since Mohler took the seminary's helm from Roy Honeycutt, who retired July 31. It also was the first meeting with a trustee board virtually void of dissenting voices from Baptist moderates. Three of the board's handful of moderate holdovers resigned in April in protest of the board's new direction.

There was little debate or discussion on any item brought before the full board in plenary sessions -- the only portions of the meeting usually open to the public. Most of the trustees' work was done in committee meetings, from which brief reports were made to the full board.

One reason the workload was lighter this time may have been that no new faculty members were elected. In the past, debate over the theological and social viewpoints of prospective faculty members took several hours in each meeting.

However, the academic personnel committee did recommend -- and the board approved -- naming three professors to endowed chairs. This became a controversial issue after last spring's meeting, when three professors were not approved for chairs the administration had recommended for them.

One of those professors bypassed last spring was named to a chair at this meeting, but the other two were not.

Gerald Keown was named to the Martha and Talmadge Rogers Chair of Old Testament. The two professors not mentioned this time were Raymond Bailey, professor of Christian preaching, and William Hendricks, professor of Christian theology.

The chair for which Bailey had been recommended -- the Victor and Louise Lester Chair of Christian Preaching -- was given during this meeting to Craig Loscalzo. The chair Hendricks was denied was not filled.

Unrelated to the previous action, William Cromer was named to the Gaines Dobbins Chair of Church Administration and Leadership.

Carol Karkalits, chairman of the academic personnel committee, read a statement about "a misunderstanding by some persons regarding the nature of endowed chairs."

The goal of the new administration, he said, "is to secure funding so that every faculty person or every faculty position is funded as an endowed chair. ... Please be aware that election to a chair does not constitute a promotion."

Trustees also approved two resolutions proposed by the academic personnel committee regarding the Cooperative Program, the unified missions budget of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In one resolution, trustees affirmed their "eager and unequivocal support of the Cooperative Program."

The other "heartily encourages" faculty to "support the Cooperative Program and to encourage those churches of which they are a member to focus their giving through the Cooperative Program and to increase support of missionary causes through the Southern Baptist Convention and its Cooperative Program."

The latter resolution was an indirect reference to churches which allow members to give to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization of Baptist moderates. Many of the churches located nearest the seminary give through both the Fellowship and the Cooperative Program.

In other action, trustees:

-- Heard that the seminary spent \$120,000 more in the just-ended fiscal

year than it received in income, according to unaudited reports. Of that shortage, about \$90,000 was due to a shortfall in anticipated student fees and \$30,000 was due to expenditures exceeding budget, said T. J. McGlothlin, vice president for business services.

-- Learned that donor contributions to the seminary were down 20 percent in 1992-93 from the previous year. Part of this includes reduced funding from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and part includes a reduction in giving to the seminary's annual fund, McGlothlin said.

-- Approved purchase of a \$250,000 life insurance policy for Mary Mohler, the president's wife.

-- Designated \$175,000 from contingency reserve funds to be used at the discretion of President Mohler in the 1993-94 fiscal year. This item originally was listed as "transition expenses," but Charles Barnes, chairman of the seminary's financial board, later explained that some of the money would be used for items other than transition expenses.

Thomas Mabe, vice president for institutional advancement, said the special fund would be used for items such as renovations on the president's home, moving expenses for the president and inauguration festivities.

Business Vice President McGlothlin added that the funds also would be used to supplement the travel expenses Mohler will incur as he travels across the convention this year, as well as some non-transition expenses such as renovations in the seminary chapel.

-- Approved establishment of a fund to give Mohler the equivalent of accrued equity in a home at the time of his departure or retirement from the seminary. Mohler and his family live at no cost to themselves in a home owned by the seminary. The home was renovated extensively before the Mohlers moved in this summer.

-- Assigned an ad hoc committee to develop a policy on the "remunerative employment of faculty outside the seminary."

-- Approved a document outlining procedures to be taken if disciplinary action should be necessary against a trustee.

-- Elected three new members to fill the unexpired terms of trustees who resigned at the last meeting. The new trustees are Steven Corts, pastor of Citadel Square Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C.; Richard Holcombe, pastor of Mid-Rivers Baptist Chapel in St. Charles, Mo.; and John Pennington, pastor of First Baptist Church in Douglasville, Ga.

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Reorganization, budget top
Foreign Mission Board agenda

By Robert Dilday

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- Trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board approved wide-ranging changes in staff structure and elected discipleship leader Avery Willis to fill a recently-created top position.

Meeting Oct. 11-13 in Richmond, trustees also adopted a \$185 million budget -- the largest in board history -- for 1994 and added 32 missionaries to their nearly 4,000-strong overseas mission force.

In addition, they installed former missionary Jerry Rankin as president in a service attended by Southern Baptist Convention leaders. They also recognized 99 missionaries retiring from work in 50 countries.

Staff reorganization will streamline decision-making processes and decentralize the formulation of mission strategy, said Rankin, who crafted the changes in consultation with a joint staff-trustee committee.

Trustees unanimously endorsed the reorganization, the first major initiative by Rankin, who was elected last June.

Eliminated are the Global Strategy Group, which coordinated worldwide mission strategy, and the positions of five regional vice presidents, who administered the work of 10 area directors and about 3,900 missionaries.

Under the new plan, to go into effect Jan. 1, area directors will report directly to a newly created senior overseas vice president, the spot to be filled by Willis.

A missionary to Indonesia for 14 years, Willis has been director of discipleship training at the Baptist Sunday School Board. He will join the FMB staff Dec. 1.

Rankin, Willis and Don Kammerdiener, executive vice president, will comprise a decision-making troika to evaluate worldwide mission strategy.

Three of the five regional vice presidents -- Sam James, 61, for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa; Lewis Myers, 60, for Cooperative Services International; and William Wakefield, 63, for Asia -- have been asked to assume administration of specialized strategic assignments.

Although specific roles are yet to be determined, the assignments are likely to include advocacy of World A, the least evangelized portion of the world; ministry to international students in the United States; and development of church-growth surveys for the 172 missions, the organizations of missionaries in each country or region.

Billy Bullington, regional vice president for Africa, will assume another newly created post in the overseas division, vice president for overseas services, which will consolidate a variety of support functions for missionaries, including medical and family needs, media services and evangelism and church-growth consultants.

The fifth regional vice president -- for the Americas -- has been vacant since Betty Law resigned a year ago.

Oversight of two other departments -- volunteers in missions and missionary learning -- will be transferred from the office of mission personnel to the overseas division, although the transition may take most of 1994.

Trustees learned that Jim Furgerson, adult division director at the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, will become director of the volunteers in missions department. Furgerson, who coordinated volunteer mission activities for Brotherhood, succeeds Ron Boswell, who resigned to assume a Richmond pastorate.

Also affected by the reorganization is Clark Scanlon, director of the research and planning office, an entity whose functions will be absorbed by overseas services. Scanlon, 64, will serve as assistant vice president to Willis until his retirement some time within the next two years.

The 1994 budget, while totaling a record-setting \$184,967,000, is only \$457,000 more than this year's budget. The increase was approved despite anticipated drops next year of nearly \$2.2 million in contributions from the SBC Cooperative Program unified budget and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

Together, the two financial channels fund more than 82 percent of the FMB's ministries.

An increase in field-generated funds -- mainly rents and interest overseas -- and a return of funds allocated earlier but not spent are facilitating next year's larger budget.

As in prior years, more than 87 percent of the budget will be spent abroad, nearly 67 percent of it on direct support of missionaries.

Rankin told trustees about \$1 million was pared from other ministries funded in the budget in order to increase allocations for missionary support

because of an anticipated rise in missionary appointments next year.

However, he maintained, "This does not reflect any degree of diminishing effectiveness in ministries." Nationals in many countries are assuming the financial burden of some causes, he added.

For the first time in several years, trustees did not budget the entire Lottie Moon offering goal, which this year is \$85 million. The goal has not been reached since 1981.

Budgeting only \$83 million of the offering does not mean the FMB expects an offering shortfall, Rankin said, but only reflects an "obligation to prepare a budget in touch with reality."

"I fully expect to come to you next year asking you what to do with the \$2 million we received in excess of the \$83 million," he told applauding trustees.

A report of sacrificial giving by Kenyan missionaries prompted trustee chairman John Jackson to challenge trustees to give \$500 each to the offering this year and to urge church members to imitate them.

About 50 missionary families in Kenya gave an average \$700 each to the Lottie Moon offering last August, trustee Bob Clements of Austin, Texas, reported.

Trustee Terry Horton of Irving, Texas, announced he would give \$10,000 through his church to the offering to encourage other trustees' contributions.

The 32 missionaries named Oct. 12 brings to 3,948 the FMB's total mission force. They serve in 127 countries and carry out a Christian witness in about 40 more.

So far this year, trustees have appointed or reappointed 410 missionaries, and more will be named in December. Last year trustees approved a total of 414 missionaries.

Rankin told the board that a larger than normal number of "active" files being maintained by the personnel selection department could indicate a "banner year" in appointments next year.

SBC leaders praised trustees for their selection of Rankin during his installation service at a Richmond church one day prior to the board meeting.

Rankin "brings to this position sound principles of management and organization, as well as spiritual leadership," said Larry Lewis, president of the denomination's Home Mission Board.

"A new era is being born in the life of the SBC and it is going to be characterized by a spirit of cooperation," predicted Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

Mission leaders Dellanna O'Brien of Woman's Missionary Union and James Williams of the Brotherhood Commission offered prayers and support for Rankin.

Also highlighting the trustee meeting was the once-a-year recognition of retiring missionaries, who this year numbered 99. Eighty-six of them attended the service at a Richmond church.

The missionaries served a total of 2,785 years in 50 countries.

In other action, trustees:

-- Adopted an appeals process for missionaries disputing administrative personnel decisions, including termination. Prior to the trustee action there had been no formal guidelines for such a process.

-- Declined action on a request referred from the Southern Baptist Convention last June to send letters requesting religious liberty to the heads of state of each country which forbids missionary activity. Executive Vice President Don Kammerdiener said such public letters sometimes hinder rather than advance religious liberty and trustees urged staff to continue their practice of using a variety of government and private channels to

communicate concerns to foreign leaders.

-- Postponed action to delete a dedication to former FMB president Keith Parks to be included in a forthcoming sesquicentennial history of the board. Parks resigned last year, citing philosophical differences with trustees and now heads the mission arm of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a moderate organization which disagrees with the conservative thrust of the SBC.

Two committees considered the deletion but delayed action. Full board approval is necessary for the dedication to be excised. Final publication plans will be discussed at the December board meeting.

-- Asked trustee chairman John Jackson to "investigate" reports that Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union is distributing a book promoting the CBF missions program.

WMU announced in late September it will distribute a customized edition of "Operation World," by Patrick Johnstone. The CBF arranged with Zondervan Publishing House to print a customized version of the book. WMU leaders said then that promotion of the book would be handled by the CBF.

-- Learned that \$145,000 has been sent to Romanian Baptists for assistance in purchasing housing for seminary students in Bucharest. Administration action allocated the money from discretionary funds.

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Baptists differ on approach
to abortion, health reform

By Ray Waddle and Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Southern Baptists leaders say they're preparing to launch an unprecedented public-relations assault to keep abortion out of President Clinton's health-care reform plan.

Giving Americans greater access to abortion under the health-care package would be the greatest blow to the pro-life movement since Roe vs. Wade legalized abortion on demand in 1973, said Richard Land, director of the Southern Baptists' Christian Life Commission.

"We in the pro-life movement will exert a massive grass-roots effort to prevent this from happening," Land said.

Land and other Southern Baptist Convention public-policy advocates met Oct. 13 in Washington, D.C., to air their doubts about the sweeping changes promised by Clinton in his national health-care proposals.

"There can be little doubt that, in spite of the President's professed desire that abortion be 'safe and legal, but rare,' the killing of unborn children will vastly multiply as a result of his national health-care plan," Land said.

"It is unfortunate that the President is apparently so committed to the pro-abortion lobby that he seems willing to jeopardize the most significant social policy legislation of this century for a medical procedure which most Americans agree is elective, except in the rarest of circumstances."

Abortion-rights advocates say fairness demands that abortion be included in health care because poor women otherwise could not afford it.

The SBC Christian Life Commission is planning an assembly of medical, legal and religious experts in January in Washington to analyze the impact of Clinton's Health Security Plan.

Hillary Clinton and several congressmen also are invited.

The findings and recommendations of that meeting will be distributed to every member of Congress as well as to all 38,000 SBC churches.

Church members also will get pointers on how to write letters to Congress that express opposition to abortion being tied to health care.

But one Baptist doctor said targeting Clinton's health-reform package because of abortion is "very short sighted."

"For me, abortion is not an acceptable choice," said Jerry Hickson of Nashville, Tenn., "but I still can't say on the basis of that issue that I'm willing to throw out the whole system."

"What concerns me is that all of us can find a single element in any plan that we object to," said Hickson, chief of the division of general pediatrics at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. "If we all run off and refuse to cooperate because of single elements, we will never find consensus and have no chance of diverting what may be a national disaster."

Land and his staff concentrated most of their concern Oct. 13 on the abortion part of the Clinton plan. They stopped short of saying they want to torpedo the entire Clinton package, but they did express doubts that the quality of such a massive health-care plan would improve the lives of most Americans.

"Sadly, the American experience of bureaucratized social policy has not been very bright," said Ben Mitchell, director of biomedical issues for the CLC.

But Hickson told Associated Baptist Press that administrative costs consumed about a fourth of all money spent last year on health-care in the United States. "People complain about this fear of big government, but in Great Britain last year they ran their national health-care system on nine cents on the dollar."

The United States now spends \$840 billion on health care, or 12-to-14 percent of its gross national product, he added. At the current rate of growth, he noted, that will exceed one fifth of the GNP by the year 2000. "We as a country simply can't afford that."

Hickson, chairman of deacons at Woodmont Baptist Church in Nashville, spoke to a May conference on "The Churches Challenge on Health Care," sponsored by the Baptist Center for Ethics.

"The current system -- the way we finance and pay for health care -- has created a wonderful health-care system for those who can get in the door," he told ABP. "But increasingly we are finding that medical care is being denied because families do not have the funds to pay for it."

But Land questioned whether future health-care arrangements might force Christians "to see a doctor whose world view is clearly in opposition to the patient's deeply held beliefs."

Mitchell and Land said they also fear that a Clinton health-care plan would open the door for physician-assisted suicide as a method of cutting medical costs in the last days of life.

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Alabama layman who filed
suit against SBC dies

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) -- Robert S. Crowder, 83, who filed an unsuccessful lawsuit against the Southern Baptist Convention in 1985, died Oct. 13 in a Birmingham, Ala., hospital.

A deacon since 1932 in the city's Southside Baptist Church, Crowder and his wife, Julia, and several other plaintiffs claimed that SBC president Charles Stanley violated the convention's bylaws in 1985 by refusing to allow nominations to replace the Committee on Committees.

James Guenther, the convention's SBC attorney, argued in court that the civil courts lacked jurisdiction because the dispute was an ecclesiastical matter. The lawsuit was dismissed and two appeals denied, including one to the U.S. Supreme Court, which refused to hear the case.

The SBC Executive Committee reported in 1989 that \$243,000 had been spent defending the SBC.

Both before and after the 1985 incident, Crowder was a common figure at Baptist conventions -- both state and national -- frequently offering his opinion during debate and challenging rulings.

In addition to his wife, Julia, Crowder is survived by three sons, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

A memorial service is scheduled for Oct. 18 in Birmingham with a private burial to follow. The family requests that any memorial gifts be made to the food bank ministry of Southside Baptist Church.

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-- By Jack Brymer

U.S. House rejects
parochial aid plan

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. House of Representatives soundly defeated a measure Oct. 13 that would have allowed public tax dollars to go to private and religious schools.

By a vote of 130-300, the House rejected a school-choice amendment to the Goals 2000 -- Educate America Act (H.R. 1804). The amendment, offered by Rep. Dick Arney, R-Texas, would have authorized \$400 million for education, requiring 25 percent of those funds be used for so-called "choice" programs in public or private schools.

The bill, approved 307 to 118, includes the Clinton administration's Goals 2000 proposal that would establish a national framework for education reform.

For decades Congress has rejected plans to channel tax funds to religious schools, but in recent years the battle has been waged under a new banner -- parents must have the financial means to make a choice in their children's education.

"Monopoly public schooling is the Berlin Wall of education," Arney said. "It's going to fall. That is inevitable. The only question is which side are we going to be on -- on the side of government or on the side of freedom?"

"Let me clarify one important point. The Arney substitute does not mandate private school choice. It permits private school choice (as a) local community option."

Rep. Patsy Mink, D-Hawaii, said: "The problem with our education system is not that parents do not have a choice. The problem is that inequities in our education system continue to exist -- that the education a student receives in the disadvantaged areas is not equivalent to the education available in our affluent suburbs."

School choice will only exacerbate that problem, she added.

Rep. Cass Ballenger, R-N.C., countered, "The time has come to apply the principles of economic competition, proven successful in the business world, to education."

Rep. Jolene Unsoeld, D-Wash., disagreed, saying that diverting tax dollars from under-funded public schools to private schools isn't school

reform.

"Federal funding of private schools also threatens to weaken the constitutional separation of church and state," she said. "We all know the government has no control over the content of the curriculum in private school courses.

"But who is to say that private schools will not want to use public money to promote their own agenda and their own values?"

The Baptist Joint Committee, a religious-liberty organization on Capitol Hill, traditionally has opposed parochial aid. Recently, the BJC reaffirmed its opposition to all such schemes: "In Jefferson's words, it is both 'sinful and tyrannical' to tax people to fund the teaching of religion."

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Free speech claims
rejected by court

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- A California man who successfully challenged restrictions on handbill distribution at a Los Angeles park has lost his bid to get the U.S. Supreme Court to review other city and park regulations.

The high court declined Oct. 12 to review a federal appeals court's decision that the city's ban on distribution of handbills in certain areas of El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park and its policy requiring a permit to distribute handbills in other areas of the park violate the First Amendment.

The appeals court said the distribution ban and permit scheme were not valid time, place or manner restrictions on protected speech in a public forum.

But the appeals court rejected other challenges by the California man -- Jack Gerritsen of Monterey Park, Calif. The high court's refusal to review the case left standing:

-- an ordinance requiring applicants to obtain a permit and post a bond to hang a non-commercial banner across city streets;

-- a requirement that potential users post a bond to use the park's bandstand and sound system; and

-- the city's ban on all signs on city property except real estate signs.

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-- By Larry Chesser

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