

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

Phone: (904) 262-6626 Fax: (904) 262-7745 CServe: 70420,73

October 28, 1993

IN THIS ISSUE:

- * Conferees say '90s-style racism takes more insidious forms
- * Race relations require long-haul investment, leaders say
- * Senate approves RFRA after 3-year struggle
- * Religious leaders united in hailing RFRA passage
- * RFRA: Chronology of a bill
- * Black Baptists in South Africa urge lifting of sanctions
- * ABP OKs fund drive, welcomes new associate
- * Holiday Inn boycott stirs debate among Missouri Baptists
- * Texas Baptists won't cut funds for Baylor, BJC
- * Congress approves legislation allowing DC to fund abortions
- * Clinton says lasting peace in Middle East attainable
- * Non-profit mail reform cleared for Clinton's OK
- * Correction, Note

Conferees say '90s-style racism
takes more subtle, insidious forms

By Greg Warner

ATLANTA (ABP) -- Racism has not disappeared but like a mutating virus is infecting a new generation of Americans in more subtle and insidious ways.

So say participants in a Baptist conference on race relations held Oct. 25-26 in Atlanta.

Some of those participants are veterans of the 1960s' civil-rights movement, which won legal freedoms for American minorities. But the victories of the '60s did not eradicate racism, they said, but merely forced it to take on socially respectable forms.

"I think I have seen a resurgence of racism in the last 15 to 20 years," said Cynthia Tucker, columnist for the Atlanta Constitution.

While the racism of the '90s is more sophisticated, many conferees said, the results are just as damaging.

The reality of racism has erupted on the public scene again, most notably through the Rodney King beating and other high-profile trials and race-related violence. That attention has reminded Americans of the tensions that lurk beneath society's veneer.

But racism in America does not present a simple picture, the conferees said. Instead it is a complex mixture of prejudice and power, poverty, economic pressure and political stalemates.

Battling racism is "like wrestling with an octopus in a phone booth. How do you get a handle on it?" said Don Sharp, an African-American pastor from Chicago.

Tucker said the insidious side of modern racism can be seen in laws against cocaine use, which mete out stiffer penalties for crack cocaine, used predominantly by blacks, than for powder cocaine, the drug of choice for whites.

"The assumption is a black man on crack is more dangerous than a white man on (powder) cocaine," she told participants.

Many such distinctions in society are not deliberate racism but instead are based on prejudicial assumptions that infuse the American mindset, said Tucker, an African-American and a regular commentator on PBS' MacNeil-Lehrer Report.

"Racism begins with the premise that you know something about another human being based solely on that person's racial or ethnic characteristics," she said.

Such thinking, she said, leads to prejudicial assumptions, "cruel notions" such as: all Jews are stingy; all blacks are criminals; all whites are racists.

"We pick up these notions by osmosis," she said.

Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, agreed racism is more subtle now. "We know overt racism is not socially acceptable, but covert racism is deep within the American soul," said Parham, whose organization sponsored the conference.

The two-day meeting -- "The Church's Challenge in a Multi-racial and Multi-ethnic Society" -- attracted 125 participants from nine states. Most were non-whites, representing African, Hispanic, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Ethiopian and Filipino heritage.

The group met at a church facility shared by two Atlanta congregations, one black and one white. The pastors of the two congregations -- Christian Fellowship Baptist Church and Second Baptist Church of College Park --- led participants in a communion service that emphasized the common bond Christians share in Jesus.

The unique church-sharing arrangement was one of several creative solutions modeled at the conference. "The Lord has allowed us to keep our identities, yet we work together like hand in glove," explained Emmanuel McCall, pastor of Christian Fellowship Church, the African-American congregation.

Parham said the conference tried to move beyond "the paralysis of analysis" and inspire creative thinking and practical, local involvement by Christians in the fight against racism.

The participants, mostly Southern Baptist clergy, reported on their own anti-race initiatives in a variety of settings -- urban, rural, church, government.

They told stories of confronting racial violence in rural south Georgia, forming a multi-racial Baptist association in North Carolina, and battling poverty and inter-racial violence in urban Atlanta.

While most said much progress has been made in race relations, they agreed much work remains to be done, and it's getting harder to do.

"Even well-meaning Christians are giving up on solving racism," said Tucker, who grew up as a Baptist in Alabama and now attends a Congregational church.

Several speakers pointed out Christianity has the antidote for racism -- the liberating gospel of Jesus. Yet they lamented a general lack of involvement by churches in the race issue.

"Racism can only thrive where the gospel is ignored," Tucker said.

Tucker quoted former U.N. ambassador Andrew Young of Atlanta, who insists, "Eleven a.m. on Sunday morning remains the most segregated hour in America."

The ministry of Jesus challenges Christians to confront prejudice, said Bill Leonard, chairman of the religion department at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

Leonard led a Bible study on respect, an attitude he said refuses to let stereotypes shape one's views. Citing the story of Jesus' healing of a blind man on the Sabbath, Leonard said Jesus showed respect for the man by treating him "as a human being rather than a statistic or theological object lesson."

On the other hand, he said, the skeptical Pharisees in the story discounted the man's healing, and his self-worth, because the miracle did not fit their preconceived, self-righteous view of God's activity.

"When genuine liberation occurs right in front of them, they prefer the safety of old formulas to the gamble of new grace," said Leonard.

"The people who know they can't see get liberated, and the people who think they see everything see nothing."

The story demonstrates God can use anyone -- even a blind man -- who is willing to admit his or her weakness, Leonard said.

"We need not get it all together to find courage to respect each other in Christ's name. And if we wait until we understand everything, have every question answered, we won't do anything for the gospel."

Atlanta pastor Jim Milner suggested that when Christians focus on meeting urgent human needs, racial differences become unimportant.

"The children are screaming -- my children, your children. They're frightened. They're carrying guns. They're joining gangs for security."

"We're not going to have time to worry about racial differences when all around our children are screaming, they're dying," said Milner, pastor of Christian Love Baptist Church, an African-American congregation.

He noted Christians will be judged by what they do, not what opinions they hold. Paraphrasing Matthew 25, he said, "The final exam will be: 'I was hungry. I was naked. I was in prison. Where were you?'"

Milner and other conferees noted racism is not limited to whites and blacks. Racial differences exist between other races and within the black community itself, they said. "Even among white Southern Baptists, you folks are so different," said Milner, who was led to the Christian faith by a white pastor.

Henry Jee, pastor of First Korean Baptist Church in Atlanta, said he has found no evidence of racism between blacks and Koreans, despite media attention focused on black vs. Korean violence during the riots that followed the first Rodney King trial.

"The only conflict between blacks and Koreans is (over) economic matters," said Jee, a businessman turned pastor.

Blacks and Korean-Americans often share the same neighborhoods, Jee said, and Koreans often operate retail stores in black communities. The resulting economic tensions appear to outsiders to be race-based, said Jee, who studied sociology and race relations at Georgia State University.

Some black participants voiced disagreement over how best to address racism. Fred Jeff Smith, a pastor from Baton Rouge, La., said blacks are not limited in their ability to overcome prejudice and succeed.

But other blacks said racism is systemic, and that social barriers must be removed to give minorities a fair chance in life.

"I have never heard such a frank conversation among blacks in a public meeting," Parham said later. "The fact that on the second day of the conference African-Americans could express sharp disagreement among themselves illustrates the level of trust that emerged in the meeting."

Better race relations require
long-haul investment, leaders say

ATLANTA (ABP) -- To improve race relations, Baptists must move beyond a once-a-year observance and begin developing ongoing relationships and hands-on ministries, according to Baptist leaders on the issue.

For years, the focus of Baptist attention on racism has been a February observance called "Race Relations Sunday." But the pulpit exchanges and increased awareness that resulted are not enough, according to participants in a race-relations conference Oct. 25-26 in Atlanta.

"Race Relations Sunday is like Groundhog Day, when whites and blacks come out of their hole and look at one another once a year," said Don Sharp, pastor of Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church in Chicago.

Real progress on the issue of race will await a deeper commitment from churches and Christians, the conferees agreed.

Participants in the two-day meeting summarized their conclusions during the last session. To make real progress on race issues, they said, Baptists must:

- Form ongoing sister-church partnerships among racially and ethnically diverse congregations to meet human needs.

- Urge churches to engage in scriptural confrontation with racism.

- Talk in Sunday school classes about congregants' earliest recollections of racism.

- Use Race Relations Sunday to involve one another in projects and dialogue, rather than simply preaching and teaching about racism and ethnocentrism.

- Encourage top leaders of state conventions and other denominational organizations to develop personal relationships with ethnic and racial leaders.

- Inspire accountability by having a follow-up conference within a year to assess what was accomplished.

The two-day meeting, sponsored by the Baptist Center for Ethics, attracted 125 participants from nine states. Most were non-whites, representing African, Hispanic, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Ethiopian and Filipino heritage.

-30-

Senate approves RFRA
after 3-year struggle

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- After three years, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act is about to become law.

The U.S. Senate Oct. 27 overwhelmingly approved the bill that is regarded as one of the most important measures affecting religious liberty since the Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791. The Senate vote was 97-3.

An effort to amend the measure failed 41-58.

In May the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously approved the bill on voice vote. But the bill will have to return to the House because the Senate version has some technical changes. Observers say the House could approve the minor changes to the bill this week.

President Bill Clinton endorsed RFRA and is expected to sign it.

The bill (S. 578, H.R. 1308) would restore a high level of protection the Supreme Court formerly required government to meet before it could restrict a citizen's religious practice.

Previously, government had to demonstrate a compelling interest, such as public health or safety, and use the least restrictive means of safeguarding that interest before it could limit religious exercise. But the high court virtually abandoned that test in its 1990 Oregon vs. Smith decision.

The Smith decision evoked a strong reaction from the religious community, as well as many constitutional scholars. That resulted in the formation of the Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion, a collection of 68 religious and civil-liberties groups representing nearly every point on the political and theological spectrum.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., a chief co-sponsor of the bill, acknowledged the diversity of supporting groups, "including the National Association of Evangelicals, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the American Civil Liberties Union, Concerned Women for America, People for the American Way, the American Jewish Committee and the U.S. Catholic Conference.

"These organizations don't agree on much," Kennedy said, "but they do agree on the need to pass the Religious Freedom Restoration Act."

Kennedy also quoted outgoing BJC General Counsel Oliver Thomas, a bill drafter and the coalition chairman. Kennedy pointed to Thomas' testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in which he described the devastating impact of Smith on religion.

"Since Smith was decided, governments throughout the United States have run roughshod over religious conviction," Kennedy said quoting Thomas. "Churches have been zoned even out of commercial areas. ... In time every religion in America will suffer."

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, a chief co-sponsor, described the measure as "one of the most significant pieces of legislation in support of religious freedom to ever come before Congress.

"This bill is important to our country because it restores to every American the precious balance conceived by our founding fathers between the interests of our government and the religious liberties of our citizens," he added.

With virtually every denomination in America behind it, the bill sailed through the House of Representatives. But it was stalled in the Senate when some state attorneys general claimed that RFRA would endanger the security in prisons by protecting inmates' religious rights.

Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., offered an amendment to exempt prisoners from the bill. Reid and Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., led the floor fight for the prison exemption.

A bill co-sponsor, Reid said he was concerned that "the situation in prisons is different. Prisoners should be treated differently."

Reid said he thought that RFRA's high protection for religious exercise would increase litigation by prisoners who would make bizarre claims. Reid said every warden and every prison director in every state supported his amendment, as well as a majority of state attorneys general.

Opponents of the amendment countered that U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno considers the prison exemption unnecessary, because safety and order in prisons would be considered a compelling governmental interest. While prisoners may make bizarre claims, they are unlikely to win them if they endanger society. They also noted that 13 state attorneys general opposed Reid's amendment.

Simpson -- the only member of the Senate Judiciary Committee to vote against the bill -- said the bill's "lofty title" does not live up to its

promise and that religion was being misused.

"The strangest part of our work here is that we do things, you either kill or pass a bill, based on a death blend ... of emotion, fear, guilt or racism," Simpson said, noting "now we can add the misuse of religion to the list.

"I support religious freedom," Simpson said. "Who does not? I always have. Any thoughtful person does. Yet, I have serious doubts about this bill."

He said inmates have used religious freedom to try to gain special privileges. "Inmates even have devised their own new religions with tenets tailored to obtain special favors and circumvent security regulations. However, courts are extremely loathe to find that a group claiming to be a religion is, in fact, not a religion."

Hatch disagreed, saying, "The First Amendment should protect the rights of every citizen, including prisoners, to practice their faith. Let us all be mindful of exactly what we are seeking to protect in this act. We are seeking to protect the right to exercise one's faith as a Baptist, Catholic, Episcopalian, Jew, Lutheran, Methodist, Mormon, Moslem, Presbyterian, Protestant and other of the diverse religions practiced in our society.

"It is clearly not our intention, as some might suggest, to protect the desires of those prisoners seeking everything and anything imaginable, like prostitutes, nunchucks or Harvey's Bristol Cream, under the guise of the (Constitution's) free-exercise clause, and this bill does not create the right to any such things."

After the amendment was defeated, Simpson joined 96 of his colleagues voting for RFRA. The three senators voting against the bill were: Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., Jesse Helms, R-N.C., and Harlan Mathews, D-Tenn.

-30-

Religious leaders united
in hailing RFRA passage

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Religious leaders hailed the U.S. Senate's Oct. 27 passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act as a major step toward guaranteeing the religious rights of Americans.

The Senate's 97-3 approval of RFRA capped three years of effort by an unprecedented coalition of religious and civil-liberties groups working for passage of the measure.

Because of minor changes in the bill, it now must go back for final congressional to the House of Representatives, which earlier approved the measure on a unanimous vote. If approved, it will go to the White House for President Clinton's promised signature.

The Senate overwhelmingly approved of RFRA after first rejecting an amendment that would have excluded prisoners from the scope of the bill's protections.

RFRA would restore the legal test abandoned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1990 that required government to have a compelling reason to restrict religious practice. In the court's Employment Division vs. Smith decision, a narrow majority said that in most cases, government could interfere with religion without a compelling reason.

The Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion, chaired by Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel Oliver Thomas, included virtually every major U.S. religious body, as well as an array of civil-liberties

organizations.

"It is a significant victory for the free exercise of religion and a massive tribute to Buzz Thomas and his associates who worked tirelessly in support of this measure," said James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee.

"Mr. Thomas, who chaired the coalition in the most amazingly diplomatic fashion, held together an unparalleled diverse coalition that spanned the entire spectrum of religious and civil-rights concerns."

Dunn said the episode shows "the great damage that can be done by a wrong-headed justice on the United States Supreme Court. The incredible judicial activism of Justice (Antonin) Scalia in referring to free exercise as a legal 'luxury we can no longer afford' has been appropriately reversed. Justice has been done."

Brent Walker, BJC general counsel-elect, called RFRA "the most significant piece of civil-rights legislation dealing with our religious liberty in our generation.

"I applaud the Senate for taking this bold step," Walker said. "After Smith, our 'first liberty' was not only not first, it was barely a liberty. It is a compliment to our democratic process that the legislative branch was willing and able to restore a fundamental right that the judiciary took away.

"Justice Scalia said that full-blown religious liberty is a 'luxury' we can no longer afford. The Congress has stated clearly that religious liberty is a right that we can ill-afford to live without."

After the vote, Thomas said, "We owe a great debt of gratitude to Sens. Orrin Hatch and Edward Kennedy, who made this happen in the Senate. We can also thank President Clinton for his timely endorsement.

"But most of all we can thank the 68 organizations who laid aside their deep political and religious differences to work for a common vision for the common good. I hope I will never again have to listen to anyone say that groups like the American Civil Liberties Union and People for the American Way don't care about religion."

While the viewpoints represented in the coalition covered the theological and political spectrum, its members were of one mind on the issue of restoring protection for religious freedom.

Conservative groups such as the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, the National Association of Evangelicals and the Christian Legal Society joined with traditional liberal organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union and People for the American Way to support RFRA.

"All defenders of religious liberty should be delighted at the passage of RFRA," said Christian Life Commission Executive Director Richard Land. "When President Clinton signs RFRA, we will have substantially rectified the terrible damage done to our First Amendment religious-freedom liberties inflicted by the infamous Smith decision. The passage of this bill shows that Americans still cherish and are ready to defend vigorously their constitutional freedom of religion."

Forest Montgomery, counsel for the National Association of Evangelicals, said: "This is an historic day for all to rejoice who treasure religious freedom. It is a day that would gladden the heart of Thomas Jefferson, America's foremost champion of religious liberty.

"And it is the dawn of a new day for the prisoner who can take heart knowing he or she has not been forgotten. Thanks be to God."

Steve McFarland, director of the Christian Legal Society's Center for Law and Religious Freedom, predicted the coalition's work will have lasting positive effects beyond RFRA.

"A significant byproduct of this campaign will be the bonds that have been forged between ideologically disparate groups," McFarland said. "It will be much harder to rely on stereotypes and simplistic pigeon-holing in dealing with one another."

The action also drew applause from groups normally at the other end of the political spectrum.

"Not since the adoption of the First Amendment has Congress done so much for religious freedom as it did with the passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act," said Robert Lifton, president of the American Jewish Congress. "The unanimous vote in the House and the all-but-unanimous vote in the Senate, crossing religious, party and ideological lines, are powerful and uncontroversial testimony to the importance Americans attach to religious liberty."

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said the Senate action "shores up legal protections for all religious groups," but warned that Americans should not be complacent about their rights under the bill.

"Even under the standard we are now enacting back into federal law," Lynn said, "the courts were often less than diligent in protecting the free exercise of religious minorities."

Walker applauded as an important step the rejection of the amendment sponsored by Sens. Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., to deny the bill's protections to prisoners.

"In defeating the Reid amendment, the Senate solidly affirmed that our 'first liberty' belongs to all of our citizens, including prisoners," he said. "Religion is one of the important influences for rehabilitation of prisoners. It should be encouraged, not discouraged."

-30-

RFRA: Chronology of a bill

April 17, 1990 -- U.S. Supreme Court virtually abandoned requirement that government show a compelling reason to restrict religious practice.

101st Congress

July 26, 1990 -- RFRA introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Oct. 26, 1990 -- RFRA introduced in the U.S. Senate.

Oct. 28, 1990 -- RFRA dies in House and Senate Judiciary committees as 101st Congress adjourns.

102nd Congress

June 26, 1991 -- RFRA reintroduced in the House of Representatives.

May 13-14, 1992 -- House committee hearings held on RFRA.

July 2, 1992 -- RFRA reintroduced in the Senate.

Sept. 18, 1992 -- Senate Judiciary Committee hearings held on RFRA; Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel Oliver Thomas testifies.

Oct. 9, 1992 -- House Judiciary Committee approves RFRA, but 102nd Congress adjourns before it can be considered by the full House.

Oct. 9, 1992 -- RFRA dies in Senate Judiciary Committee after Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., puts a hold on the bill just days before Congress adjourns.

103rd Congress

March 9, 1993 -- U.S. Catholic Conference endorses RFRA.

March 11, 1993 -- President Bill Clinton sends a letter endorsing RFRA as measure is reintroduced in both chambers of Congress.

March 17, 1993 -- A House subcommittee approves the bill.

March 22, 1993 -- House Judiciary Committee approves RFRA, clearing the bill for floor action. Senate Judiciary Committee vote on RFRA delayed to allow consideration of Bureau of Prisons concerns about the bill's impact on prisons.

May 6, 1993 -- Senate Judiciary Committee clears bill for floor consideration.

May 11, 1993 -- House of Representatives unanimously approves RFRA on voice vote.

Oct. 27, 1993 -- Senate approves RFRA by 97-3 vote. Reid prison amendment defeated 41-58.

-30-

Black Baptists in South Africa urge lifting of sanctions

WASHINGTON D.C. (ABP) -- Saying that the transition of South Africa from apartheid to democracy has reached "an irreversible stage," the black Baptist Convention of Southern Africa has called on the international community "to lift all sanctions against South Africa, and encourage massive reinvestment toward the development of their country."

"It is our firm belief that this action will facilitate the process toward lasting democracy," said Vincent Jones, acting general secretary of the convention, in a letter to the Baptist World Alliance.

The convention, made up of more than 35,000 Baptists, is one of two South African groups that hold membership in BWA. The largely white Baptist Union of Southern Africa, with more than 34,000 members, is the other.

"We are convinced that South Africa is surely moving closer to a democratic dispensation that will allow those formerly discriminated against to have a say in the running of their country," Jones said.

"The sons and daughters of South Africa are longing for justice and peace, and lasting solutions to the problems of our country," Jones told the BWA.

Jones praised all involved in South Africa's constitutional talks for agreeing on a transitional government and elections next April. The talks

primarily involve F. W. de Klerk, state president and head of the Nationalist Party, and Nelson Mandela, head of the African National Congress.

The two men share the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize.

In August BWA leaders approved a resolution calling for a non-South African peace-keeping force to ensure nothing is done to subvert the 1994 elections.

After the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa broke from the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, the BWA accepted the convention into membership in 1988.

"Acceptance into the BWA has given us a feeling of self-worth and human dignity towards which we had been painfully striving," said Gideon Makhanya, who was convention general secretary at that time.

-30-

-- By Wendy Ryan

ABP OKs fund drive,
welcomes new associate

By Barbara Denman

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP) -- The approval of a \$100,000 fund-raising campaign highlighted the business conducted during the semiannual board of directors meeting of Associated Baptist Press.

Throughout the Oct. 23 meeting, the directors spoke of ABP entering "a second stage of life" with the hiring of Bob Allen, editor of the Baptist True Union of Maryland-Delaware, as associate executive editor.

Implicit in that second stage was the need to formulate an employee policy manual, discover new revenue sources and provide some organization to the board itself.

Associated Baptist Press is a news service formed in 1990 by several state Baptist paper editors and others following the firing of two Baptist Press editors by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. Baptist Press is the daily news service of the SBC.

ABP directors also wrestled with their growing financial dependence on the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and their desire to remain an independent news service.

"So much is based on the Fellowship," said Hugh Greene, senior vice president for the Baptist Medical Center in Jacksonville. "It bothers me that we hinge on that."

Year-to-date revenues indicated that the Fellowship, an organization of moderate Southern Baptists, has provided 48 percent of ABP's income.

The \$100,000 fund solicitation campaign was one part of a proposal made by the fund-raising committee "to move with due haste to spread out revenue sources to support this organization," according to Carl Kell, Western Kentucky University communications professor.

Also authorized in that proposal was the hiring of a grant writer to solicit money from "amiable" foundations.

Some of the directors expressed a growing frustration with their inability to solicit funds for the organization. Greene said he has "approached dozens of people" sympathetic to ABP's function but who consider their CBF contributions sufficient as long as the Fellowship continues underwriting the news service.

The directors agreed to "jump start" the solicitation campaign through

their own donations and by approaching a "short list" of donors, said Kell. "This is something that we cannot avoid any longer in the time and life of this organization. Every organization is having to do this."

In other action, a proposed 1994 budget of \$254,000, which represents a 27 percent increase over the 1993 budget, was adopted by the directors.

ABP Executive Editor Greg Warner told the board ABP's financial picture was "in good shape at this point in the year," adding that ABP has "money in the bank."

"Income continues to grow at a slow and steady pace," Warner said.

Other than CBF, the news service receives contributions from three state conventions -- North Carolina, Texas and Virginia. These states are projected to contribute 30 percent of the budget in 1993. About a dozen Southern Baptist churches are expected to provide nearly \$12,000. Another 10 percent of income includes service fees.

During the meeting, the 20-member self-perpetuating board established staggered three-year board term limits. Three new directors were nominated: James Sawyer, a dentist from Little Rock, Ark.; Gracie Hatfield Hilton, a public relations professional from Arlington, Texas; and Judy Schmeltekopf of Waco, Texas. A fourth director will be named later.

Four directors were elected to a second term: Catherine Allen of Birmingham, Ala.; Ardelle Clemons of Greenville, S.C.; James Pleitz of Dallas; and Donald Sharp of Chicago.

Resolutions of appreciation were approved for two directors who resigned for personal reasons: Judy Strother of Mountain Home, Ark., and Anna Bannister of Augusta, Ga.

A proposal to approach the SBC Executive Committee for exhibit space at the annual SBC meeting in Orlando this June also was approved.

The directors heard a report that only 72 persons had subscribed to ABP's bimonthly newsletter "Baptist Newswatch." After some discussion the board decided to terminate the newsletter unless 250 subscribers are enlisted in the next 90 days.

In a report on production and usage, Warner noted that ABP published 549 stories from September 1992 through August 1993, which is slightly more than the 538 published the prior year. Reprints of ABP articles in state papers increased to 2,029 from 1,620. Nine state papers used more than 100 articles each.

Warner reported on a five-month study of ABP's content, which showed that stories about government and politics accounted for the largest portion of ABP (19 percent). The Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies accounted for 16 percent. The Fellowship accounted for 4 percent.

The board re-elected last year's officers to another one-year term. R. G. Puckett, editor of the Biblical Recorder, North Carolina's newsjournal, will continue to serve as board chairman.

Other re-elected officers include Kell, vice chairman; Jeff Mobley, an attorney from Nashville, secretary; and Don McGregor, retired editor of the Baptist Record of Mississippi, treasurer.

The next ABP directors meeting will be held May 5, 1994, in Greensboro, N.C., just prior to the CBF's annual meeting.

Holiday Inn boycott stirs debate among Missouri Baptists

JOPLIN, Mo. (ABP) -- Missouri Baptists debated whether hotels that provide in-room pornographic movies should be used for the annual meeting of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

On a ballot vote with a 100-vote margin, messengers approved a recommendation to use the Holiday Inn, Columbia, Mo., as the site of the 1996 annual meeting.

Opponents to the recommendation encouraged messengers to participate in a nationally sponsored boycott of Holiday Inns as "the single, largest purveyor of pornography."

Convention planners noted the proposed restrictions would limit the available convention facilities.

Messengers to the Oct. 25-27 meeting later defeated a motion to reconsider the recommendation. An additional motion that the convention not meet in the future in any facility which "provides pornographic movies on a regular basis" was ruled out of order.

The 1994 budget of \$15.2 million adopted by messengers is the same as 1993 but smaller than the one originally proposed. The state executive board had to reduce its planned \$15.5 million budget because of shortfalls in contributions during the second and third quarters of 1993.

Messengers narrowly defeated a presidential candidate openly endorsed by an organization of conservative pastors in the state. Hallsville pastor Ralph Sawyer, first vice president during 1993, lost by a 350-vote margin to T. O. Spicer Jr., director of missions for Spring River Baptist Association.

The convention overwhelmingly approved a recommendation to participate in multi-year partnership-mission projects with the Republic of Belarus and the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention. Both partnerships will begin in spring of 1994 and continue through June 1997. Belarus is part of the Commonwealth of Independent States and a former member of the Soviet Union.

The convention voted to go on record as opposing new federal health-care plans if they "mandate access to and payment for abortions." Messengers also approved a motion to prohibit the Missouri chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State from exhibiting at the annual meeting.

After considerable debate, messengers approved a resolution entitled "On Maintaining Trust with the Cooperative Program." The resolution, virtually identical to a resolution approved by the Southern Baptist Convention in June, affirmed the denomination's national funding plan "as the primary means by which the convention provides financial support for its agencies and ministries."

The resolution encouraged convention agencies and related personnel "to maintain support of Cooperative Program" and to avoid conflict of interest in any situation "which would compromise support of the Cooperative Program."

Attempts to amend the resolution by deleting references to convention personnel were defeated.

Other resolutions affirmed "True Love Waits," a national campaign promoting teenage sexual abstinence; opposition to homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle; retaining the mention of "God" in the Girl Scout promise; and support of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Texas Baptists won't cut
funds for Baylor, BJC

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP) -- For the second year in a row, Texas Baptists decisively rejected attempts to defund Baylor University and the Baptist Joint Committee.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas, which drew more than 5,200 registered messengers to the Dallas Convention Center Oct. 25-26 also elected officers backed by moderate Baptists -- Jerold McBride, pastor of First Baptist Church, San Angelo, president; Maurice Johnston of San Antonio, first vice president; and David Becker, pastor of University Heights Baptist Church, Huntsville, second vice president.

McBride, Johnston and Becker all had been endorsed by the moderate Texas Baptists Committed organization and the Baylor Alumni Association.

By an overwhelming margin, messengers defeated an amendment to the budget which would have reduced from \$4.05 million to \$1.78 million the allocation for Baylor University.

Three years ago, the Baylor board of trustees changed the university's charter to create a virtually self-perpetuating governing board. Under an agreement approved by the BGCT in 1991, the convention now elects 25 percent of each class of Baylor's governing board, and Baylor elects the remaining 75 percent.

Speakers who supported cutting Baylor's funding called the action "only fair," and speakers opposing the amendment said BGCT funding for Baylor is "a bargain for Texas Baptists."

After turning aside the amendment, messengers also rejected an amendment to the budget which would have deleted the \$63,000 allocation for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The Washington-based religious-liberty organization -- which has strongly opposed state-sanctioned public school prayers and parochial school vouchers -- was defunded in 1988 by the national Southern Baptist Convention.

In his post-election news conference, newly elected president McBride said Texas Baptists need to "stay on the right track and not get distracted" by controversy.

Of the 15-year controversy in the SBC, he said: "Don't mess with Texas. We don't need that here."

Texas Baptists should continue emphasizing the work of missions and evangelism, said McBride, and not worry about how churches support missions -- whether through the SBC or the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

McBride's church, First Baptist of San Angelo, supports the Cooperative Program, the SBC's unified budget. But members have the option of directing their missions money through the Fellowship.

"It's none of my business or my concern how your church chooses to give its missions support," he said.

"Don't fence me in," characterizes his church's brand of West Texas rugged individualism, McBride said.

He said he rejects any "top-down" church hierarchy. "The Texas Baptist Convention is not a farm team of the SBC. The SBC doesn't make Texas Baptists possible. Texas Baptists make the SBC possible."

Although he carried the endorsement of moderate Baptists, McBride rejected the "moderate" label, saying he could "out-fundamentalize any fundamentalist."

"I don't ever want to be considered anything other than a theological conservative," McBride said, adding, "I can work with anybody."

In other business, Texas convention messengers rejected a motion instructing the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission to rewrite its statement on abortion to bring it in line with the position of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

The Texas CLC abortion statement affirms the sanctity of human life but allows for abortion in such extreme circumstances as rape, incest, severe fetal deformity incompatible with life, and threats to the life and health of the mother. The Southern Baptist CLC condemns abortion in all situations except to save the life of the mother.

Texas Baptist convention messengers approved resolutions opposing the spread of gambling in Texas, commending bivocational ministers and their families, and opposing television programs that promote immorality and urging boycotts of the stations that broadcast and the advertisers who sponsor them.

-30-

Congress approves legislation
allowing DC to fund abortions

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- For the first time in five years, the U.S. Congress will allow the District of Columbia to pay for abortions for poor women.

Both houses approved a \$3.4 billion budget for the district that lifted the ban -- a controversial issue that has delayed the appropriations process. The bill is ready for presidential action.

The House of Representatives approved the measure Oct. 27 by a 225-to-201 vote, and the Senate approved the budget on voice vote the same day.

Congress initiated the ban in 1988. Prior to that time, the district used local funds to help poor women who wanted abortions but could not afford them.

Former President George Bush vetoed D.C. budget bills that did not include the ban, but President Bill Clinton is expected to sign it.

-30-

-- By Pam Parry

Clinton says lasting peace
in Middle East attainable

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- President Bill Clinton said Oct. 23 that he's determined to make peace in the Middle East "real, secure and enduring."

Addressing a religious ceremony marking the 150th anniversary of the Jewish group B'nai B'rith, Clinton said: "I am committed to building on the momentum we have created to achieve nothing less than a comprehensive settlement -- one in which Israel secures real, lasting peace with all her neighbors.

"The future for Israel and for the Jewish people is bright and full of promise tonight."

B'nai B'rith is the oldest national service organization in the United States. It was founded in 1843 in New York City to unite Jews of various

origins, religious viewpoints and economic backgrounds.

Clinton told the group at the ceremony on the steps of the Jefferson Memorial that the spirit they bring to their work "explains the sense of kinship Americans of every faith have always felt for the state of Israel.

"It explains the joy every American felt when the promise of peace for Israelis, for Palestinians, for all the peoples of the Middle East was made tangible on September the 13th in a single stunning handshake."

Acknowledging that lasting peace will require hard work, Clinton asked the crowd to take joy in what has been accomplished and to be committed to completing the task of peace.

The president, a Southern Baptist, said that the location of the ceremony held special significance for him because Thomas Jefferson is "the father of religious freedom in America."

Religious freedom is the major reason why in America "more people believe in God, more people go to church or synagogue, more people put religion at the center of their lives than in any other advanced society on Earth," Clinton said. "Our government is the protector of freedom of every faith because it is the exclusive property of none.

-30-

Non-profit mail reform cleared for Clinton's OK

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Most state Baptist newspapers will face a modest postal-rate increase in November if President Bill Clinton signs a bill recently approved by Congress.

The bill would result in a 12 percent increase for second-class non-profit publications. The hike would be phased in over a six-year period. Third-class non-profit publications would face about a 20 percent increase over the same period.

The first rate increase is expected to go into effect Nov. 21.

The spending bill for the Treasury Department and Postal Service includes reform legislation for non-profit mail rates that is known as the "Clay Compromise." Drafted by Rep. William Clay, D-Mo., the compromise was drawn after the Clinton administration proposed 150 spending cuts that included funding for preferred postal rates.

Non-profit mailers have benefitted from a preferred rate that reflected only the cost of handling that class of mail. Congress had appropriated funds to the Postal Service for the non-profit mailers' share of overhead expenses. In recent years, the subsidy has been reduced as government has attempted to cut spending.

While cutting the subsidy would have saved the government \$152 million over four years, it would have meant a 35 percent rate hike this year for non-profit mailers. The bill would reform how preferred rates are calculated, and commercial mailers would pick up part of the tab that the taxpayers used to pay.

Clinton is expected to sign the bill this week.

-30-

-- By Pam Parry

EDITOR'S NOTE: There was no ABP issue for Oct. 26.

***** END *****