

# Associated Baptist Press

Editor: Greg Warner  
Associate Editor: Bob Allen  
Phone: (904) 262-6626  
Fax: (904) 262-7745

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## **FMB trustees fill spots created in restructuring**

By Robert Dilday

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- A younger team of leaders will coordinate the work of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board following action of the board's trustees June 3.

Trustees approved 12 men as "regional leaders," new positions created in a restructuring of FMB staff adopted in April. Two more regional leaders will be elected later this summer.

In the restructuring, which becomes effective July 1, 14 regional leaders replace 10 area directors in overseeing the work of the board's 4,237 missionaries around the world.

Also changed is the role of Cooperative Services International, the FMB's humanitarian arm which has worked in areas of the world where traditional missionary methods were unwelcome. Under the new plan, CSI will no longer be a separate entity. Instead its methodology will be used "as appropriate" in each of the 14 regions.

A new associate vice president for strategy coordination and mobilization will guide CSI's integration. Trustees elected David Garrison, 40, a 10-year FMB staffer who developed the nonresidential missionary approach used by CSI, to that position.

The restructuring coincides with the agency's name change to the International Mission Board on June 19.

FMB President Jerry Rankin told trustees the restructuring is "designed to initiate a new mission culture ... , a revitalized freedom and empowerment to focus on the task, and a new spirit of global cooperation and synergy."

The regional leaders, whose average age is 48, are generally younger than the area directors they replaced, whose average age is 55.

The leaders and their regions are:

- Eddie Cox, 45, Western Europe. Since 1994, Cox has been field associate to the area director for Europe.
- John Floyd, 62, Central and Eastern Europe. Floyd has been area director for Europe since 1993.
- Mark Morris, 38, Central and Southern Asia. Morris has worked through CSI with an unreached people group since 1989.
- Bill Fudge, 52, East Asia. Since 1989 Fudge has worked in East Asia with CSI.

-- Tom Williams, 46, Western Pacific. Before becoming field associate to the area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific, Williams was a missionary in Thailand.

-- Clyde Meador, 52, Southeast Asia and Oceania. Meador has been area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific since 1993.

-- Larry Cox, 48, Middle East and North Africa. Cox has worked through CSI with an unreached people group in North Africa since 1994.

-- Bill Phillips, 53, West Africa. Phillips has been area director for West Africa since 1991.

-- Jon Sapp, 43, Eastern Africa. Since 1993 Sapp has been associate area director for Eastern and Southern Africa.

-- Gordon Fort, 41, Southern Africa. Before becoming associate to the area director for Southern Africa in 1996, Fort was a missionary in Botswana.

-- Ronald Wilson, 49, the Caribbean Basin. Wilson has been area director for Brazil and the Caribbean since 1991.

-- Robin Hadaway, 48, Eastern South America. Hadaway had been a CSI representative in Africa since 1989. Leaders for two additional regions -- Middle America/Canada and Western South America -- will be filled later this summer, said Avery Willis, the FMB's overseas vice president.

Only four of the 10 area directors received positions in the new structure: John Floyd, Clyde Meador, Bill Phillips and Ron Wilson. The other six may choose between returning to the field as missionaries or taking a year's furlough to consider other employment opportunities. A board spokesperson would not say if any of the six have been offered the two vacant regional leader spots.

The six are Joe Bruce, 52, Middle America and Canada; John Faulkner, 61, Eastern and Southern Africa; William Goff, 57, Spanish South America; Faye Pearson, 57, East Asia; Michael Stroope, 45, CSI; and Dale Thorne, 59, Middle East and North Africa.

Still unclear is the degree to which CSI methodologies will be utilized in each of the 14 regions. Some observers charge that ending CSI's separate status represents a setback for evangelism in "World A," that portion of the world least exposed to Christianity. Since most cultures in that region resist a traditional missionary presence, CSI's approach has been regarded as the most effective means of transmitting the Christian gospel there.

However, board officials counter that a broader use of CSI methods will prevail. They note that four of the 12 regional leaders -- as well as Garrison, the new associate vice president -- are former CSI representatives.

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## **Editor of suspended journal cries 'censorship' in book**

By Bob Allen

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- A decision last year by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary officials to cancel the seminary's scholarly journal amounted to "academic censorship," the journal's editor charges in a new book.

"Although such abuses of academic freedom have occurred at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary previously, never have they occurred so blatantly," editor Jeff Pool states in a prologue to the book, "Sacred Mandates of Conscience: Interpretations of The Baptist Faith and Message."

Pool, an assistant professor of systematic theology at the school in Fort Worth, Texas, was editor of the spring 1997 issue of Southwestern Journal of Theology which administrators suspended last year. Smyth & Helwys

Publishing in Macon, Ga., has published the rejected articles in a book that makes its official debut at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's annual assembly in June.

Seminary President Ken Hemphill said last December the issue of Southwestern Journal examining the "Baptist Faith and Message" statement had been canceled "in the best interests of Southwestern and the Southern Baptist Convention."

Among concerns cited by Hemphill was the selection of three writers -- William Hendricks, Bill Leonard and Molly Marshall -- all visible "moderates" in SBC politics and former faculty members at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a sister school in Louisville, Ky., which recently came under conservative control.

Hendricks heads the Baptist studies program of Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth. Leonard is dean of the theology school at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. Marshall teaches at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kan.

Hemphill said in December he was worried simply that the issue might be perceived as being unbalanced, adding he had not even read the disputed articles.

But Pool rejected Hemphill's argument that the decision was in the seminary's "best interests," defending both the selection of authors and the content of the articles.

"Is academic censorship ever right or in the best interests of an educational institution, especially when those who contribute to the academic enterprise, either by publications or by teaching, do so responsibly?" Pool asked in the prologue.

A seminary administrator strongly denied the censorship charge.

"The charge of censorship is totally untrue," responded Tommy Lea, Southwestern's theology dean.

Lea said that even though the seminary paid the authors, officials returned the articles rather than keeping them. "Dr. Pool was able to publish the book as quickly as he did because we did not practice censorship and allowed the writers to retain their articles," Lea said.

Pool also charged the seminary "systematically distorted" its explanation of why it pulled the journal and its justification for doing so.

Other factors cited by administrators were plans to redesign the journal, that the disputed writers were controversial, that contributors now serve in "non-SBC" schools, and a desire to avoid adversarial relations between the two seminaries.

Pool replied that the journal could have been redesigned before the articles were written and that the criteria about being non-controversial and working at an SBC school are not applied equally to conservatives in other areas, such as chapel speakers.

In a letter to Pool, Hemphill reportedly said he had "been making every effort to keep Southwestern out of the political controversy." In the book, Pool argued that the seminary had in fact sided with conservatives in the SBC controversy and that "political expediency" was the real reason for suspending the journal's publication.

Lea said that all the authors were competent scholars who carried out their assignments effectively but seminary administrators were concerned the issue did not contain articles by any "prominent conservative leader" to parallel well-known moderate authors like Leonard and Marshall.

Other articles in the book were written by Pool; William Estep, professor emeritus of church history at Southwestern; Warren McWilliams, a professor of theology at Oklahoma Baptist University; and Larry Baker of Pineville, La., former executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

## **Policies forbidding women pastors 'punish' churches, resolution charges**

By Bob Allen

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- The producer of a 1996 film critical of the Southern Baptist Convention's stance against female preachers is asking the convention to pass a resolution that would discourage policies which "punish" women ministers and the churches that ordain them.

Steven Lipscomb's film, "Battle for the Minds," describes a shift at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., from a faculty and administration that affirmed women in ministry to new leadership which says the Bible forbids women from serving as senior pastors.

Lipscomb, who lives in Los Angeles, has submitted a resolution on "Local Church Autonomy and the Issue of Women's Ordination" to the SBC resolutions committee. He has been elected a messenger to the June 17-19 convention in Dallas by First Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn., he said.

The Dallas Museum of Art will screen Lipscomb's award-winning film June 18 and 19 to coincide with the SBC meeting, Lipscomb said. The film is also scheduled to be aired nationwide on public television June 10.

In the resolution, Lipscomb charges that a supposedly non-binding SBC resolution on women adopted by the convention in 1984 has been used to discriminate against churches which interpret the Bible as leaving the door open for the ordination of women as ministers or deacons.

Lipscomb's resolution claims a "strong foundation of local-church autonomy" underlies Southern Baptist heritage. Contrary to that tradition, it argues, the Southern Baptist Convention twice passed resolutions attempting to influence local churches on the issue of women's ordination.

The first, in 1983, encouraged Baptists "to explore further opportunities of service for Baptist women." A year later, the convention reversed itself, passing a resolution limiting women to non-pastoral roles.

Convention agencies have acted on the 1984 resolution by passing policies which punish churches and individuals which support women's ordination, Lipscomb argues. In background materials, he cited a policy by the Home Mission Board which forbids financial support to churches with a woman pastor and a 1995 policy at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary that future faculty members must profess their belief that the Bible prohibits women from serving as pastors.

Those and other actions "have had the effect of frustrating and circumventing the autonomy of the local church," the resolution states.

The resolution asks the convention to affirm "the autonomy of the local church and the priesthood of the believer to decide matters of biblical interpretation on the role of women's ordination" and that nothing in the 1983 or 1984 resolutions "should be used to impose a uniform biblical interpretation on the issue of women's ordination among individuals and churches participating in God's work through the agencies and institutions of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Lipscomb said he hasn't lived in Knoxville since 1980 but has attended the church when visiting there. He does not belong to another church, he said. "That's where my letter is."

Lipscomb said the church voted to elect him a messenger and he will be the only messenger from the congregation attending the convention this year.

"For the last two years, I've continued to hear the rhetoric that 'we're not telling the local church what to do,'" Lipscomb said in an interview. "Time and time again I watch policies that are passed and actions that are taken by leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention punishing churches for exercising that autonomy."

"If the churches are still autonomous, that's wrong," he added. "If the churches are no longer autonomous, in the minds of the leaders at least, I'll bet the churches want to know that."

Lipscomb, a former attorney, says "Battle for the Minds," his first film, was inspired by struggles faced by his mother, Dixie Petrey. She is the third-generation Baptist minister in her family to attend Southern Seminary.

Lipscomb's great-grandfather, C. Oscar Johnson, was the long-time pastor of Third Baptist Church in St. Louis who held offices in both the SBC and what is now the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.

While the film has been praised for quoting people on both sides of the dispute at Southern Seminary, an official there said it was anything but objective. "The film uses classic propaganda techniques to slander the seminary's leadership ... ," said David Porter, director of public relations.

John Sullivan, chairman of the SBC resolutions committee and executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, was unavailable for comment.

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## **Town hit by twister mourns family of five**

By Dan Martin

GEORGETOWN, Texas (ABP) -- More than 950 people filled the sanctuary of First Baptist Church in Georgetown, Texas, to say goodbye to five members of a popular family killed in a May 27 tornado in nearby Jarrell.

Five silver-gray caskets lined end-to-end at the front of the auditorium contained the members of the Igo family.

John and Paul -- 15-year-old identical twins -- were on one end. They had sung in the choir at First Baptist Church in Jarrell and participated in basketball, football and track at Jarrell High School. They would have been sophomores next fall.

Next was Audrey, 17, who was practicing to become the church pianist. She would have been a senior at nearby Jarrell High School next year and was already planning to study music at the University of North Texas.

Mother Joan Topham Igo, 45, was next. A teacher in Jarrell public schools, she had been the leader of a girls mission group in her church.

Larry Igo, 46, who operated a plant in Jarrell that restored classic Chevrolets, was at the head of his family, in death as in life. Deacon, Sunday-school worker, music leader, do-anything worker, stalwart of the church.

The Igos died together when an "F5" tornado -- the strongest classification -- destroyed their home in the Double Creek Estates subdivision about a mile west and slightly south of Jarrell, a hamlet of 400 about 40 miles north of Austin on Interstate 35. The tornado killed 27 people in Jarrell and three in Cedar Park.

"I do not know of a thing good in our community that this family wasn't involved in," said Max Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jarrell. The Igos were members of the Jarrell congregation, but the small church building at the center of town was too small to accommodate the funeral, which was moved 10 miles away to Georgetown.

"Joan was not only a leader in the church but a leader in the community as well," Johnson said. "Whenever something was moving in our town, she was usually pushing it."

"This is a tough time, a tough time for all of us," said James Haskell, pastor of the Georgetown congregation where Larry Igo's mother and father are members.

"But we do not come today with the grief of those who do not have assurance in Christ Jesus. We come today with confidence. We come today with the joy and celebration ... . We come today to remember ... to affirm that which Larry and Joan and Audrey and John and Paul believed and stood for ... that they lived out in their lives.

He said that at some point in their lives, each of the Igos was presented with the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. "Each of them not only accepted, each of them not only applied the faith that they had in the Lord Jesus Christ, but their lives were different because of it."

Haskell said there are "a lot of questions being asked ... and to be honest, I don't know the answer to those questions. But I do know three things."

In measured tones, Haskell said: "I do know that God did not do what you saw happen in Jarrell. God is not a God who would perform such an act. Could God have detoured that tornado? Certainly. Why didn't he do it? I don't know."

"But God is not the author of that kind of tragedy."

The pastor said that while "God didn't do it, he was right there in the middle of it. In the last moments of their life on this earth, the Igos were not only together with each other, but they were there with God."

The third thing that "I can tell you for sure is that God offers [each of] you the opportunity of comfort and rest in him."

Johnson, pastor of the Jarrell church 17 years, called the Igos a "family of love," and said he has been asked how their deaths will affect the small church.

"It will affect the deacon leadership, the music leadership, Sunday school, the teaching, youth workers, youth group members, the quality of our solos, trios, quartets, quintets, the level of our volunteerism."

"This family represented Bible-study leaders, vacation Bible school, and the list goes on and on and on. Our church is small and we leaned on the Igos very heavily."

About 40 miles from Jarrell, the people of the Pedernales Valley Baptist Church attended services for Kevin Hielscher, who died in the same series of storms which devastated Jarrell.

Hielscher's funeral was held two weeks after his 25th birthday. He was the only fatality in Spicewood. His body was found outside his mobile home near Lake Travis.

According to the Austin American-Statesman, people who knew him remembered him mainly for his dedication to God. He had returned home a year ago after serving six years in the Navy, and only last March preached at a Baptist Men's gathering at the Pedernales Valley Baptist Church. Pastor John Rudd said he had "completely rededicated his life to God."

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