

imb_51903

May 20, 2003

Posted: 5/19/03

IMB trustees make budget cuts; Willis retiring

FRAMINGHAM, Mass.-International Mission Board trustees have restricted the number of new missionary appointments due to budget concerns.

At the May 6-8 meeting in Framingham, Mass.-at which trustees fired 13 missionaries for not affirming the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message-trustees grappled with a \$10 million budget shortfall.

Despite increases in giving through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, contributions have not kept up with the number of new missionaries being sent out.

Trustees approved several strategies proposed by staff to cover this year's \$10 million shortfall:

Two of the next three conferences for people interested in International Service Corps, Journeyman and Masters programs have been cancelled.

- ◆ The number of new short-term personnel will be limited to 400 this year and 300 in 2004, and the number of new long-term personnel will be kept at 350 this year. A total of 412 were appointed last year.

- ◆ Staff travel will be restricted.

- ◆ Production of some materials will be delayed.

In the past two years, the IMB has drawn from reserve funds to send out more missionaries than regular budget sources could support, IMB President Jerry Rankin told trustees. Seventy percent of the IMB's budget supports missionary personnel.

Trustees also learned of the impending retirement of Avery Willis, senior vice president for overseas operations. He will step down at the end of 2003.

However, he will continue to work on special assignments.

Doug Sager of Knoxville, Tenn., was elected trustee chairman. Mike Barrett of Pleasant Garden, N.C., was elected first vice chairman, and Bill Duncan of Honolulu was elected second vice chairman. Nedra Jackson of Social Circle, Ga., was elected recording secretary.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.