

April 8, 1964

Editors: The following question and answer material is intended to offer further information on the North American Baptist Fellowship, which will be discussed at the Atlantic City Convention.--Baptist Press

**Porter Routh Answers
Fellowship Questions**

1. In recent months there has been considerable publicity about a proposed North American Baptist Fellowship. What is this organization?

Actually, it is not an organization. It is to be a division of an existing organization, the Baptist World Alliance.

2. Is this a new idea?

No, it has been discussed by various Baptist groups since the last Jubilee in 1904.

3. Why is the word "Fellowship" used? What special character for the organization is implied by the word?

The term "fellowship" implies generally that it carries on no programs of its own. The proposed Bylaws state specifically that it shall not "undertake any work for which the member bodies are responsible."

4. Are there similar Fellowships in Europe, Africa, or Asia?

Yes.

5. What is the purpose of such a Fellowship?

The purpose as stated in the Bylaws is "to continue the gains and values growing out of the Baptist Jubilee Advance and to make possible opportunities for fellowship and the sharing of mutual concerns."

6. Are there any hidden motives behind this proposal? For instance, is the Fellowship intended in any way as a move toward ultimate organizational union with the American Baptist Convention or other Baptist bodies in this country?

One original purpose as stated for the Jubilee Advance was "it is an attempt on the part of Baptists in the United States and Canada, to see together the gigantic task before us. It is not, however, either a movement toward organic union or a program to emphasize, rehearse, or consider past or present differences."

7. Is this a move to get the Southern Baptist Convention into the National Council of Churches?

Definitely not.

8. Will Southern Baptists have to surrender any of their distinctives, programs, phases, activities or interests in order to enter the North American Fellowship?

No, none are surrendered because of our relationship to the Baptist World Alliance.

9. Will Southern Baptists have to curtail in any way their home mission work?

The Bylaws state specifically: "It shall have no authority over any Baptist Church." Certainly it will have no authority over any Baptist Convention.

10. Do you think SBC participation in the Fellowship would have dampening effect on the Convention's growth in the future?

Misunderstandings never make for real Christian growth. Understanding and Christian love are the basis for solid growth.

11. Would the Southern Baptist Convention be giving up anything to join the Fellowship?

No.

12. What would be gained?

We need to share in the spiritual insights of other Baptist groups. We need to keep channels of communication open.

13. Do you have any idea how much extra money will be required to maintain the organization?

The Bylaws state the work of the N.A.B.F. shall be financed within the framework of the Baptist World Alliance budget. There is no intent to set up any super-organization. Actually, the expenses should be less because only one meeting of the Committee is called for each year where there has been two meetings of the Jubilee Advance Committee.

14. Does the proposal for a North American Baptist Fellowship come out of the Baptist Jubilee Advance?

Yes.

15. What Baptist groups cooperated in the Baptist Jubilee Advance?

American Baptists, Southern Baptists, Seventh Day Baptists, North American Baptist Conference, Canadian Baptist Federation, National Baptist, U.S.A., Inc.

16. Are they supporting the idea of a continental Fellowship?

The matter will be presented to the participating groups this year.

17. Will other groups of Baptists be invited to join the Fellowship?

Some indication has been received that Mexican Baptists would be interested in becoming a part.

18. Does the proposed Fellowship have the approval of the BWA?

The Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee has approved the proposed Bylaws for presentation to the various groups.

19. Is the Fellowship mainly a proposal for contact among denominational leaders?

It is hoped that pastors and laymen can also be involved.

20. Will there be opportunities for laymen, pastors, and others from the various Baptist bodies to participate?

The proposed Southern Baptist Convention representation would have both pastors and laymen.

21. Who will handle the administration of the Fellowship, the Baptist World Alliance?

Yes.

22. Will there be a special staff employed for the Fellowship?

It is suggested that some member of the Baptist World Alliance staff would work with this Fellowship as a part of his responsibility. There would be no special staff.

23. How will Southern Baptists exercise any influence in the affairs of the Fellowship?

Southern Baptists will have thirteen and perhaps fifteen representatives on the committee.

24. Will the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlantic City act in any way on the proposed Fellowship? What effect would a negative vote by the Southern Baptist Convention have on the proposed Fellowship?

The SBC Executive Committee will propose a change in the SBC Bylaws to provide representation on this Fellowship Committee. The Fellowship does not depend upon Southern Baptists joining. If five other Baptist groups in North America join, it will become a reality. However, Southern Baptists are the largest group of Baptists in North America.

25. Several months ago a so-called "unity group" of pastors and others from the American Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention met at Virginia Beach to discuss matters of mutual interest. What connection, if any, does this group have with the proposed North American Baptist Fellowship? This "unity group" has said it will introduce resolutions at Atlantic City calling for the elimination of competition in home missions between the SBC and the ABC. Does this proposed action have any relation to the proposed Fellowship?

There is no relationship.

26. Any organization must adjust to changing conditions. How would the Fellowship reevaluate its purposes and activities?

The Baptist World Alliance of course is the parent group and it reflects the concerns of various Baptist groups. The actual Committee of the North American Baptist Fellowship would reflect the various cooperating groups.

27. Would Southern Baptists have opportunity in the future to reconsider the degree of their participation in it?

Southern Baptists can decide at anytime not to participate.

28. When would the Fellowship come into being?

When five North American members signify willingness to belong.

29. Is it being established on an experimental or permanent basis?

On a permanent basis.

30. Do you think such a Fellowship merits the participation and support of Southern Baptists?

The major objective is not to have any great mass meetings, although these might be held from time to time (every twenty-five or fifty years or as the occasion might require), but to provide a channel of communications between Baptists in

North America. We have great areas of common interest. There are differences, but these need to be faced honestly and in the spirit of Christian fellowship. Certainly, as Baptists, we need to know other Baptists in North America to understand something of their spirit of concern and compassion. We have something that we can share. We have something that we can learn.

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Porter Routh is executive secretary, Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

April 8, 1964

Budget, Operating
Changes Recommended

NASHVILLE (BP)--The 1965 budget and plans for distributing capital needs money between 1965 and 1968 are two of the major recommendations from the SBC Executive Committee to the 1964 Southern Baptist Convention in Atlantic City, N. J.

Another recommendation calls for a standing committee of the Convention to be known as the Committee on North American Baptist Fellowship.

Still others would make adjustments in the Business and Financial Plan of the Convention, authorize an agency to revise its charter, and outline the program structure for SBC seminaries.

Details of these recommendations were reported by Baptist Press at the time they were adopted by the Executive Committee at its February meeting. They must be approved by messengers at Atlantic City to take effect.

The record \$20,335,600 SBC budget for 1965 includes \$17,590,850 for agency operations, \$2,244,750 for capital needs and \$500,000 in the estimated advance section. The advance is entered when operating and capital needs have been paid.

Advance funds would be divided two-thirds for foreign missions and one-third for home missions, this also a revision of the previous policy of 75 per cent for foreign and 25 per cent for home missions.

The capital needs distribution for four years, beginning in 1965, reaches nearly \$9 million.

Second approval of a change in the SBC Constitution is requested. It would abolish the titles "senior secretary" and "secretary" of the convention and substitute "recording secretary" and "registration secretary."

Two votes are required to make the change final. First approval came from the 1963 Convention.

Another Executive Committee proposal is intended to help remove a possible conflict of interest in business matters between an agency and its employees and trustees.

A change in the Business and Financial Plan would define capital needs and say which capital needs projects get priority.

A trial run of the 1965 Convention in Dallas on a Monday night through Thursday night basis is suggested. In recent years, the Convention has run from Tuesday night through Friday.

The SBC Historical Commission would be permitted to change its charter provision for selecting an administrative committee.

The Executive Committee recommends it be allowed to employ an engineer or architect, at its discretion, "to study proposed capital projects or maintenance of present capital assets."

Another proposed change in the Business and Financial Plan deletes a statement permitting the Southern Baptist Foundation to solicit funds.

The September 30 end of the fiscal year for the Stewardship Commission is covered by another recommendation.

Filmette Stresses
West Coast Crusade

ATLANTA (BP)--The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention released here a 12-frame filmette stressing the West Coast Laymen's Crusade, a venture expected to take 1,200 laymen to the west coast July 22-29 for evangelistic services.

The filmette was distributed to Brotherhood presidents of Baptist associations throughout the states to help enlist men in the crusade.

The crusade is a joint effort of the SBC Brotherhood Commission in Memphis and the Home Mission Board, in cooperation with the state Baptist conventions in California and Oregon-Washington and state Brotherhood departments.

"Response from churches in the west coast states has been so great we urgently need additional men to participate," said Jack Stanton of Dallas, associate secretary of the evangelism division of the mission agency.

Stanton asked churches to request use of the filmette from the association Brotherhood presidents. It gives details of the crusade and explains how men can participate. He said it was short enough for assembly programs and detailed enough to be the basis for discussion groups.

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Earthquake Extra

(4-8-64)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (BP)--The Alaska Baptist Messenger here published an "Earthquake Extra" on red mimeograph stock March 31. The two-page (back and front), 8-1/2 by 11-inch special issue contained early reports from churches on damage. Pictures showed some of the damage to lighting fixtures and office equipment the earthquake caused.

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Need Doctors, Nurses
For Emergency Aid

(4-8-64)

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (BP)--Nurses and doctors are needed to be on call during the Southern Baptist Convention here May 18-22.

There will be a first aid room, staffed with a registered nurse at all times. The services of doctors and nurses on standby would be required only during an emergency.

Nurses and doctors who would volunteer for this duty are requested to write George N. Bagwell, 635 Oakhurst Avenue, Absecon, N. J., 08201, or register at the first aid room after arrival.

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