

May 9, 1964

Oklahoma Votes
To Enlarge Building

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Directors of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma have voted to expand the Baptist Building here, site of administrative and department offices for the convention.

The enlargement would double the floor space used by the Baptist Book Store. It would also add more print shop working area for the weekly state newspaper, the Baptist Messenger.

The estimated cost of enlargement is \$140,000.

Approval of directors was given to construct a chapel-music building at Falls Creek Baptist Assembly near Davis, Okla. The \$60,000 building would be named for the late B. B. McKinney, music secretary for the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Directors also authorized borrowing \$800,000 for more diagnostic and therapeutic services at Baptist Memorial Hospital here during its current program to increase its patient capacity to 4000.

A special committee was appointed to study whether to extend the work of the convention's child care department into aiding unwed mothers and emotionally disturbed girls.

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Northeastern Churches
Plan For 3 Conventions

(5-9-64)

By Jim Shelly

LEVITTOWN, Pa. (BP)--Representatives from Southern Baptist churches and district associations in nine Northeastern states voted unanimously here to form three area conventions as soon as possible.

This changed the direction from their earlier thinking. Previously, they had intended for all nine states to be included in one geographically large regional convention which would attain "state" convention status in Southern Baptist Convention circles.

A natural geographical grouping divided the representatives into these three areas--(1) New England; (2) New York and northern New Jersey, and (3) Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey.

The New England area would include Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. Southern Baptist churches in Delaware would continue their ties with the Baptist Convention of Maryland.

Two existing state conventions of Southern Baptist work have churches affiliated in these nine states. They are Maryland convention and the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

Tension which arose early in the meeting here eased as the reason for having three separate conventions, rather than one larger convention, was discussed.

Observers believed the change in direction resulted from two things--first, the better functioning and financing possible with three smaller conventions, and second, reluctance of churches in Pittsburgh, Erie, Buffalo, Rochester and other cities in that vicinity to leave their Ohio affiliation for a nine-state regional convention.

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Several persons present praised the Ohio and Maryland conventions for aid given their churches. "We have never called upon the Baptist Convention of Maryland for anything, when they did not respond," said David Morgan, pastor of First Baptist Church, Brooklyn, N. Y.

New York-northern New Jersey representatives set 1967 as target date for their separate "state" convention. Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey Baptists said 1967 might be their target date also. New England representatives, however, said it might take longer for them to form an independent "state" convention.

At present there are 66 Southern Baptist churches and 29 missions in the nine-state area. They have a combined membership of 11,000. Population in the Northeast makes up about one-third of that in the United States, it was reported here.

Five district associations are affiliated with the Maryland convention. Two cooperate with the Ohio convention.

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Baylor To Award Two
Trustees Doctorates

(5-9-64)

WACO, Tex. (BP)--Baylor University here will award two graduates who are now among its trustees honorary doctor of laws degrees.

The degrees will go to Joe L. Allbritton of Houston, an attorney and deacon chairman at his church, and to Joe Weldon Bailey, pastor of Columbus Avenue Baptist Church in Waco.

Allbritton will deliver the commencement address, and Bailey will bring the baccalaureate address during graduation ceremonies at the Baptist school.

Bailey, who has been pastor of Baptist churches in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma, is a graduate of Baylor and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

Allbritton is partner in the Houston law firm of Allbritton, McGee and Hand, and is also chairman of the board of Pierce National Life Insurance Co. of Los Angeles; president and director of the San Jacinto Savings and Loan Association, Houston; chairman of the board, Mineral Oil Refining Co., Houston, and director of the Bank of the Southwest National Association, Houston.

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Louisiana Joins
Becker Opposition

(5-9-64)

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--The executive board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention in its annual spring meeting here unanimously adopted a resolution opposing the Becker amendment.

It was the opinion of the Louisiana Baptist executive board that misunderstanding and misinterpretation arose out of the U. S. Supreme Court decision in the New York Regents Prayer case.

This misunderstanding had created a reaction that could, in the name of religious liberty, imperil religious liberty, the board felt.

The executive board said the First Amendment to the Constitution has not only met the test of history, but also is the first charter of religious liberty in the world and that it must not be altered.

For Congress to adopt the Becker proposal would turn the clock back on religious liberty in America. It was also pointed out the First Amendment is a Baptist trophy in that Baptists had a great deal to do with its inclusion in the Bill of Rights.

The Supreme Court ruling in the Regents Prayer Case, as viewed by the Louisiana board, did not disallow voluntary praying and Bible reading in schools. It did rule out compulsory and school-controlled prayers.

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B. Gray Allison Returns
To Seminary Teaching

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--B. Gray Allison will return to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here in September as professor of evangelism.

His return, according to Seminary President H. Leo Eddleman, means that "for the first time, evangelism course work will be the responsibility of a professor who has no other academic responsibility."

Allison taught in the church history and missions department here for five years before entering fulltime evangelism in 1960. He served as visiting professor of evangelism at the seminary two years ago.

"This faculty addition also recognizes the present campaign among alumni and friends to establish the Leavell Chair of Evangelism," Eddleman said.

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Baylor Trustees Approve
\$5 Million Campaign

(5-9-64)

HOUSTON (BP)--Baylor University trustees, meeting here, authorized their development committee to begin a new effort to raise \$5 million for construction of four major building projects at the Baptist school's main campus in Waco, Tex.

The projects include a \$2.8 million library; \$1.5 million natural science building; a new wing on Waco Hall, the main campus auditorium, and air conditioning and new seats for the Waco Hall auditorium.

The development program will cost almost \$5 million total. Half of that amount is either in hand or "forseeable," the board was told.

The trustee development committee pledged \$133,000 toward the \$5 million expansion program during the board meeting. And the Moody Foundation had earlier given \$1 million for the new library.

Construction on the new science building will probably be started by Sept. 1, 1965, with completion expected by Jan. 1, 1966. The building will house departments of biology, geology, mathematics and psychology.

Committee recommendations approved by the board called for construction on the new library to begin not later than Sept. 1, 1966, with completion by Jan. 1, 1968.

Funds for the new wing on Waco Hall are available from a "conditional gift," which stipulates that the auditorium must get new seats and air conditioning. Construction on the new wing, which will house classrooms and offices of the Baylor school of music, should begin by Aug. 1, 1964.

The board met here at the Baylor University college of medicine.

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Church Leaders Argue
For First Amendment

(5-9-64)

By Nona Saturday
Baptist Press Staff Writer

Clergymen, representatives of citizens groups, and individual witnesses differed markedly on the Supreme Court decisions outlawing required Bible reading and prayer in public schools. Some held the decisions are a safeguard for religion while others charged they "established agnosticism and atheism."

At hearings on proposed "prayer amendments" held in Washington by the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, witnesses testified both for and against a constitutional amendment to reverse the court decisions.

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William F. Creighton, Episcopal bishop of Washington, D. C.; J. Brooke Mosley, Protestant Episcopal bishop of Delaware; Irvin M. Blank, Synagogue Council of America; Fredrik A. Schiovoz, president, the American Lutheran Church; and Seymour Braubard, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and others favored the court decisions and opposed any constitutional amendment.

Robert G. Howes, Massachusetts Citizens for Public Prayer; Charles W. Lowry, president, Foundation for Religious Action in the Social Order; Francis B. Burch, chairman, Constitutional Prayer Foundation; and Carl Thomas McIntire, national chairman, International Christian Youth in the United States of America, were among those favoring a "prayer amendment" to "put God back in the public schools."

Arguments for an amendment were strongly anti-atheist and anti-Supreme Court. They charged that the court in effect had established "atheism or agnosticism as the national religion."

William J. Kenealy, a Jesuit, professor of law at Boston College law school, said previous testimony forced him to say he is "neither an atheist nor an agnostic nor a secularist nor a Communist" in opposing a constitutional amendment.

While "prayer amendment" supporters argue the Supreme Court denied the "free exercise" of religion, Kenealy took the opposite view. "I oppose any constitutional amendment...because any such amendment would seriously abridge the constitutional 'free exercise' of religion," he said.

The law professor said the spiritual heritage and religious character of America come from "the American society as such," not the "American Constitution, the American government, the American state as such."

He said society is religious, the state is not. The state was "deliberately constituted religiously neutral, by a religious society, precisely because religious neutrality is the essential condition of religious freedom in a pluralistic society," he said.

Schiotz, a Lutheran pastor, took a different view. He said "in many homogeneous communities, school boards made provisions for scripture reading and prayer during school hours." This, in principle, he said, is "official religion--taught by the servants of the state."

With churches and religious in this country multiplied, Schiotz states, "the time was therefore bound to come when someone would challenge the right of school authorities to require worship in a public school under school auspices. The fact that an atheist contributed to challenging the legality of such practice is incidental."

Francis E. Burch said the aim of atheists is a "completely godless society for America." He told the Judiciary Committee by ignoring "the amendments before you, it can be said that you are negatively favoring the goals that have been established by the atheists."

Rep. Emanuel Celler (D., N. Y.), chairman of the committee, took sharp issue with this statement. "I am opposed to these amendments and I do not subscribe to any of the tenets" of atheism, Celler stated. He said Burch's charge was a "very bold and untoward statement."

As city solicitor of Baltimore, Burch unsuccessfully argued the case against Mrs. Madalyn Murray in the Supreme Court.

Bishop Creighton said he opposed the "proposed amendment to the Constitution" because:

1. It is important to make clear the court decisions "are supportive of religion and not in any degree hostile toward it;"
2. The changes in American life have made it more than ever a pluralistic society, and the concern for freedom of conscience of all people requires no one be "put in the position of embarrassment that would result" if the proposed amendment were adopted;
3. There are real questions about the effect of devotional practices in the public schools that could "diminish the reality of worship in the minds of children;" and

4. Such an amendment would tend to reverse the "good effect" that the decisions have had of "rescuing religious concern from its confinement in a brief period of Bible reading and prayer, and of making it an integral part of the educational process,"

Bishop Mosley said the religious traditions of the nation "cannot be well preserved an advanced by coercing others--even in the slightest degree--to join in devotional exercises when in their hearts they do not wish to do so." This, he said, "undermines" these traditions.

Referring to the "pressure" a student might feel from fellow students and teachers to participate in such devotional exercises, Mosely said to impose such a burden is "especially offensive when it is done in the name of the Christian religion."

Charles W. Lowry, a former Episcopal minister, called the testimony of the two bishops "radically liberal." Speaking in favor of a constitutional amendment, Lowry said a large number of ministers, "particularly...in the great Southern Baptist Convention" are misinformed about the meaning of the court decisions.

Robert G. Howes, a Roman Catholic priest, speaking for the Massachusetts Citizens for Public Prayer, struck out against the Supreme Court, the Judiciary Committee and anyone who opposed an amendment to overthrow the court decisions. He charged clergymen appearing before the committee favoring the action of the court were "generals without armies."

"Isolated leaders and isolated editorials...cannot be interpreted as speaking for the nation nor...the organization itself in terms of the people," Howes said. He cited the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs as one example of "generals without armies."

Carl Thomas McIntire, son of a Collingswood, N. J., minister, testified for a constitutional amendment. He said he could not understand how a "clergyman, who has respect for the Bible and believes that it is God speaking to man, can be opposed to Bible reading in our schools." He said not all who oppose an amendment are "anti-God" and an "enemy of religion," but "obviously, many are."

Opposition to such amendments was also registered by Americans United, Public Education Association of New York City, and an "ad hoc group of religious leaders" from Pennsylvania which includes the executive secretary and director of Christian education of the Pennsylvania Baptist Convention.

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