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U R G E N T BAPTIST PRESS BULLETIN

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CUBAN SENTENCING STILL  
UNOFFICIAL, CORDER SAYS

May 27, 1965

ATLANTA (BP)--Published reports that Southern Baptist missionaries in Cuba were sentenced are still unofficial, a Baptist mission leader said here.

A New York Times release said Herbert Caudill of Clinchport, Va., and David Fite of Fort Worth received ten and six-year prison sentences, quoting an unnamed Cuban official.

Loyd Corder of Atlanta, after conferring with the United States State Department, said, "The sentencing has not taken place officially.

"This was someone's idea of what the sentencing would be; they were not speaking for the court, although they may have had inside information, or they may not have had."

Corder is secretary of the language missions department for the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and directs the agency's work in Cuba.

According to the Times report the tribunal sentenced Caudill, who has spent 35 years in Cuba, for counterrevolutionary activities, espionage, and illegal foreign currency traffic.

The Times' news source said Fite, who is the son-in-law of Caudill, received his sentence for illegal foreign currency deals. Fite's parents live at Waynesboro, Ga.

"We still have hopes that our negotiations through diplomatic channels may be productive of favorable results and secure their return to the United States," Corder said.

"Officially, we are still in the same position as before the story was released by the Times," he added.

The missionaries and 32 Cuban Baptists were tried May 14. All had been arrested April 8, together with 19 others, including four women. The other 19 have not been tried.

The charges at the May 14 trial against the Cubans were espionage, "ideological diversionism," counterrevolutionary activities, and currency traffic.

At least one Cuban preacher was sentenced to 30 years in prison, the Times report stated.

"We are continuing to make every effort possible to secure the early release of the missionaries, and will continue to do so in the event the announced sentencing becomes official," Corder said.

"The White House, the State Department, the Baptist World Alliance, and the Swiss Embassy have given excellent assistance and we will all continue our efforts," he said.

NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION  
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