



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

FEATUERS

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March 24, 1966

EDITOR'S NOTE: More than 15,000 Southern Baptists are expected to attend the Southern Baptist Convention when it meets in Detroit, Mich., May 24-27. When they visit this center of automobile manufacturing, they will find 79 Southern Baptist churches and chapels. How long have they been there? What are they doing? The superintendent of missions for the Greater Detroit Baptist Association, Francis M. DuBose, gives the answers and background in this report from Motor City, USA.

Southern Baptist Work
In Detroit On The Move

1162

By Francis M. DuBose

Baptist work began in Michigan in 1812, two years before the formation of the Triennial Convention, the first national organization of Baptists in America.

Southern Baptists, however, did not officially enter Michigan until 1951. In that year, the "Motor Cities Association of Southern Baptists in Michigan," affiliated with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, was organized.

Encompassing the entire state, the association was formed by six churches which reported some 800 members. Two of the churches were in Detroit, and three were in suburban Detroit (Pontiac, Roseville, and St. Clair Shores). The sixth was in Flint.

In 1957 the Baptist State Convention of Michigan was organized with 53 churches, including 29 in the Detroit area.

Today, the Baptist ministry in Michigan has grown to 148 churches with an additional 49 chapels, and 26,555 members.

In the Detroit area, 60 churches and 19 chapels with 14,025 members seek to minister to the needs of a metropolitan area where there are 2.7 million people.

It is our great pleasure to host the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Detroit, May 24-27.

From the beginning, Southern Baptist work in Detroit has had a close relationship to the work in the rest of the state. The state Baptist offices have been in Detroit from the start.

The state convention has provided office space for the superintendent of missions serving the Detroit area, employed jointly by the Baptist State Convention of Michigan and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Nearby Oakland and Macomb counties have their own Baptist associations. Of the 60 Southern Baptist churches of the metropolitan area, eleven are in Macomb County and thirteen are in Oakland County. The superintendent of missions who serves these two counties also serves the "thumb area", the section immediately north of Detroit.

The Greater Detroit Baptist Association serves the 2,750,000 people of Wayne County with a staff of three: a superintendent of missions, a director of the Baptist Center, and an office secretary.

The primary program of the Detroit association is church extension. The present emphasis is upon home fellowship missions, in an effort to reach the untouched areas of the county. The thirty-six churches are only a fraction of the number needed for an adequate Baptist witness.

An area in northwest Detroit has a half million people with only one Southern Baptist congregation, a new mission, and few Baptist churches of other kinds.

The main institutional emphasis has been the Detroit Baptist Center. The center program includes the fellowship of a Baptist church and a variety of special week-day programs designed to minister to the needs of inner city families.

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Construction will begin this spring on a new center building to be provided by funds from the state convention and Home Mission Board. The center building will be erected on the site of the old center just across the street from the state office building at 2619 Cass Avenue, in downtown Detroit.

The center will serve as a laboratory to find adequate programs for inner city churches. Presently most of the Detroit central city churches are making plans for a week-day ministry.

Detroit, which might be called the buckle of the American language belt, offers an unusual challenge for special language ministries.

As a beginning, through the assistance of the state convention and Home Mission Board we are working with the Spanish and Slavic speaking of Detroit. Ministries to the deaf are also getting under way.

Other work includes a counseling program for prison parolees, a student program at Wayne State University, and a youth program consisting of monthly rallies and special recreational activities.

The Detroit association and the state convention work closely in the development of a strong Southern Baptist witness in Detroit.

This cooperative effort has resulted in an institute program which offers training for pastors and lay people of the Greater Detroit area. The curriculum ranges from New Testament Greek to Class Piano.

The association, especially through the Baptist Center, assists in the rehabilitation ministry sponsored in the facilities of the Baptist Building, Priscilla Hall.

During the Baptist Jubilee Advance emphasis, Detroit area Baptists--Southern, American, National, North American General Conference, and Canadian--sponsored annual rallies and fellowship banquets.

The committee meetings which planned these events helped to develop a good relationship among the various Baptist groups. Although this official program terminated with 1964, their good relations have continued.

For example, Southern Baptist leaders from the Detroit area have conducted training clinics for Canadian and National Baptists. Various fellowship meetings have been held from time to time which have brought Southern Baptists and other Baptist groups together.

In addition to the Negroes who attend institute classes at the Baptist building, Detroit association and state convention personnel conduct classes three days a week at one of Detroit's leading Negro Baptist churches.

Southern Baptists have joined with other religious forces in Detroit to help make a spiritual impact upon the city. In 1963 Detroit Southern Baptists, with the aid of the Home Mission Board, led in enlisting churches from 25 different denominational groups in one of the largest religious surveys ever conducted.

This effort won the public support of the Metropolitan Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit, the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit, and the Detroit area National Association of Evangelicals.

Through the initiative of Detroit leadership, the Baptist State Convention of Michigan has become a member of the Citizens Sponsoring Committee, composed of most of the major religious groups in Detroit. Through this organization, Michigan Southern Baptists are able to be a part of a powerful voice which speaks meaningfully to the great social issues of the city and state.

Southern Baptists have become one of the fastest growing religious groups in Michigan.

In a state where churches generally have experienced a frightening decline in Sunday School enrollment, Southern Baptists have experienced phenomenal gain in Sunday School enrollment. Michigan led the Southern Baptist Convention last year with 11.8% increase.

In the three counties of Greater Detroit, Southern Baptist churches are third in number to National and Independent Baptist churches (though the membership of American Baptists is slightly higher).

Southern Baptists do not feel that they are in competition with other Baptist groups in Detroit. We feel rather that we are adding strength to an ever-growing evangelical witness in the area.

Official figures gave Baptists only three percent of the religious population in the state in 1958. A survey in 1963 revealed that in the Detroit area Baptists comprised nine percent of the religious population, second only to the Lutherans among Evangelicals.

The Detroit Baptist Association has sought to project a ministry relevant to the needs of a modern metropolis. Its program of mission outreach embraces all men. In a city from whose heart 53 old-line denominational churches moved in a recent 15-year period, Southern Baptists have moved to stay.

In the heart of the motor capital of the world, at the intersecting point of the greatest urban expressway system in the eastern United States, the offices of Detroit and Michigan Southern Baptists are located; and from this strategic position, plans are in the making to saturate the water-winter wonderland state with dynamic Baptist churches and a living message of Christ's love for five million unchurched souls.

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First California Baptist
Music Man Ends Service

BP Features

By Polly McNabb

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The first song leader of the first Southern Baptist church organized in the state of California stepped aside recently after 30 years of service.

Henry Mouser of the First Southern Baptist Church of Shafter, Calif., has earned the distinction of serving longer in the same church than any other person in California.

There's a good reason why. He started first and ended last, getting a head start on all the other Baptist song leaders in the state.

Mouser began leading the music at the Shafter church (then known as the Orthodox Missionary Baptist Church) the day it was organized, May 10, 1956.

He's kept the job until just recently when he decided it was time someone else took over. His pastor, Dexter C. Ogan says that Mouser missed very few services of any kind during all of the years he served the church.

Brother Henry, as he is known to many of his friends, was one of the moving spirits in the organization of Southern Baptist work in California.

A charter member at the Shafter church, he was also elected one of the church's first three deacons selected the day the church was organized.

Following his resignation, which was accepted "not only with reluctance but with tears," Mouser nominated Harold Reimer, a new church member, as his successor. Reimer was duly elected.

Then, the congregation stood in grateful recognition of a man who had meant much to them through the years--"Brother Henry."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Photos to accompany feature on Baptist work in Detroit already mailed to state Baptist paper editors. Photo of Mouser to accompany above feature to be mailed shortly.



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March 24, 1966

Proper Credentials Urged
For Detroit Convention

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NASHVILLE (BP)--A plea to officially-elected messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention urging them to obtain proper credentials prior to the convention in Detroit, May 24-27, has been issued here by the convention's registration secretary.

W. Fred Kendall, SBC registration secretary and executive secretary of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, also called on Southern Baptist churches to elect their messengers in accordance with convention rules, and to provide them with the proper credentials as indication of their election.

More than 13,000 elected messengers (delegates) are expected to attend the convention, meeting in Cobo Hall on the banks of the Detroit River.

Kendall said he had been instructed by the convention when it met in Dallas last year to enforce the SBC constitutional provision that only those messengers be registered who present the proper credentials from their churches.

The convention authorized last year the appointment of a credentials committee to assist the registration secretary "regarding registration and seating of messengers."

The seven-member credentials committee is to be appointed by the president and vice presidents of the convention at least 30 days before the convention.

Kendall said that the convention constitution requires each messenger to fill out a registration form in advance, signed by the pastor, moderator, or clerk of the church which elected the messenger.

Messenger cards have been mailed to each of the 29 Baptist state convention, and are available on request from the executive secretaries of the respective Baptist state conventions.

Churches should write requesting the number of cards they desire, Kendall said. Registration cards of former years should not be used.

Kendall said that those who show up at the convention in Detroit without proper credentials must be approved by the credentials committee before they can register. The committee will make decisions in cases where problems arise, he said.

Last year, a large number of messengers came to the convention without credentials of any kind, Kendall explained.

"This delays registration and the clerks had to take the responsibility of making a decision concerning those presenting themselves in such a manner," he said. "Stricter enforcement of registration will be necessary this year."

The convention official also said that no church, regardless of size, can send more than ten elected messengers to the convention.

The SBC Constitution states that each Baptist church co-operating with the convention which has contributed to the convention's work during the past year is entitled to one messenger.

Such churches are also entitled to one additional messenger for each 250 members, or for each \$250 paid to the work of the convention during the past year. But no church can appoint more than ten messengers.

Registration for the convention will begin at Cobo Hall in Detroit on Monday morning, May 23, at 9:00 o'clock. Messengers should register as soon as possible after they arrive, Kendall said.

The messengers should present pre-signed credentials to the registration clerks, listing on the card the name of the hotel or motel or local address in Detroit.

Upon registration, messengers will receive a badge, a program, and the official ballots for use in voting. They may also purchase a Book of Reports.

Computer-type punch cards will be used as official convention ballots for the second time at the Detroit convention.

"All of this points up to the fact that each church must follow the procedure as set out and elect its messengers, certify them, and provide them with the proper credentials to present at the registration area at the convention," Kendall said.

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Baptists To Stage
Detroit "Fly-In"

3-24-66

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DETROIT (BP)--Several dozen Baptist ministers and laymen who fly private airplanes are expected to stage a Baptist "fly-in" just prior to the Southern Baptist Convention here May 24-27.

The group, known as the Flying Parsons, will hold a fly-in breakfast, Tuesday, May 24, at the Sheraton-Cadillac Hotel in connection with the meeting.

About 40 Baptist ministers, denominational workers, and laymen are members of the group, organized in 1963 when the convention met in Kansas City, Mo.

Ray Conner, field services consultant in the church music department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, is president of the Flying Parsons.

Program topics for the 7:00 a.m. breakfast will include: "Coming...A Revolution in Private Aviation," and "Weather...An Important Factor in Air Safety."

Other leaders in the organization include George Y. Williams of the Southside Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala., and Cecil Etheredge of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Atlanta.

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Baptist Associational
Missions Leaders to Meet

3-24-66

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DETROIT (BP)--The third annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Conference for Superintendents of Associational Missions meeting here May 24 will feature a lecture on "How to Improve Our Communications in Our Multiple-Faced Ministry."

Speaker for the meeting will be Leonard L. Holloway, vice president at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and former public relations man for Texas Baptists and for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The meeting will also feature a panel discussion on communications relating to radio and television, editorial writing, and financial support.

Sessions will be held at Cobo Hall, Room 3039, the Tuesday afternoon preceding the opening session of the Southern Baptist Convention, May 24-27.

J. Clark Hensley of Jackson, Miss., superintendent of missions for the Hinds County Baptist Association, is president of the group.

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Rural Churches Urged
To Adapt to Emergency

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PASS CHRISTIAN, Miss. (BP)-- A Texas social psychologist urged rural churches to adapt creatively to today's new "emergency" environment.

Barden Nelson, of Texas A & M University, made the suggestion in a speech to 700 rural Southern Baptist pastors attending the denomination's nation-wide Rural Church Conference here.

Speaking on changes in Rural America and their meaning to rural churches, Nelson characterized the new environment as emergency because of "the United States' war-like commitment of resources in its containment of Communism."

"It is the cold-war commitment of resources which speeded up the pull of young people to areas of opportunity, stressed the industrial city, and emphasized efficiency in everything, including farming methods," he said.

These changes emphasize others, the population shifts, the mechanization of methods, less young people and consequently more older people in rural areas.

"Of most consequence to rural churches are the accompanying loss of cultural values, growth of the impersonal society, and an over-organization of society," he added.

He urged pastors to get away from the negative promotion of fears and uncertainties, and exercise adaptive behavior or creativeness.

"The challenge you face is that people are suffering from loss of personal element in life, and the rural church has to develop strength and confidence in itself and in society.

"To do this involves risk, and getting involved in the significant areas of life to provide a gospel of love, understanding, and supporting of those who need support," he said.

The pastors were warned to watch for the development of a closed group, of over organization, and of a bureaucracy.

"Such action is simply joining the crowd, and encourages an impersonal atmosphere. Some pastors actually retreat or escape to the Bible and preach sermons as appropriate 500 years ago as today," he said.

The ministers were told to lead their people to emphasize moral challenges rather than yesterday's glories.

To avoid the drift toward impersonalism, Nelson suggested the recruitment of highly motivated individuals, a favorable attitude toward criticism and individuality, a recognition that goals are more important than processes, and an alertness to vested interests.

The Rural Church Conference, the third ever held by Southern Baptists, was sponsored by the rural-urban missions department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.