



BAPTIST PRESS

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November 22, 1966

Home Board Protests Cuba Ransom Move

ATLANTA (BP)--The Kentucky Baptist Convention's decision to raise \$37,000 as ransom for 37 Baptist leaders imprisoned in Cuba is in direct contradiction to a request by the Baptist agency responsible for the work in Cuba, a Baptist missions leader said here.

Two Baptist missionaries--Herbert Caudill and David Fite--and 35 Cuban Baptist leaders were imprisoned in April of 1965 in Havana.

Charges against Caudill and Fite included espionage but they were convicted of illegal currency exchange.

Arthur B. Rutledge, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said the board requested on Nov. 10 that state conventions avoid any action on behalf of the imprisoned leaders, other than a call to prayer, and specifically asked that the matter of a ransom not be considered.

About a week later, the Kentucky Convention, in session at Bowling Green, approved the drive to raise \$37,000, which was designated for food and drugs to be sent to Cuba "through diplomatic channels" in exchange for the prisoners.

Rutledge said that officials have pointed out that any ransom deal of this sort involving the sending of money or goods to Cuba would be prohibited by the foreign assets control regulations governing relationships with Cuba.

For this and other reasons, any approach of this nature has been discouraged, Rutledge said.

Harold G. Sanders, executive secretary of Kentucky Baptists said no steps have been taken to implement the action among Kentucky Baptist churches and he feels that none should be taken until further notice.

The Baptist agency's original request to state conventions was prompted by the action of a Georgia layman, who wrote to each state executive secretary and president, asking that resolutions be passed calling for stronger steps to be taken.

Many observers feel that any ransom movement will encourage the Cuban government to hold out for a ransom shipment similar to that which earned freedom for the Bay of Pigs captives, and jeopardize the freedom of other Americans in Cuba, Rutledge said.

"Therefore," Rutledge said, "we deplore the effort to raise a ransom, for we feel that it cannot be constructive at this time and that it actually may obstruct some of the present official and unofficial efforts being made to solve the problem."

In the eyes of some observers, Rutledge said, a ransom could be interpreted as an admission that the imprisoned Baptist leaders were agents of the U.S. government, "which they are not."

"We are exploring every possible opportunity," Rutledge said.

The idea for the ransom drive was put before the Kentucky Baptists by former U.S. Congressman Eugene Siler, an active Baptist layman, who contributed the first \$100.

The resolution said, in part, that the men "have been accorded such miserable treatment that now their very lives are in jeopardy."

Most other state conventions meeting this fall passed resolutions simply calling for prayer for the imprisoned missionaries and Cuban pastors.

Georgia Baptists heard a motion for a ransom drive, but a resolutions committee vetoed it.

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Kansas Baptists Admit
8 Nebraska Churches

COFFEYVILLE, Kans. (BP)--The Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists meeting here elected a Nebraska Baptist pastor as its president and admitted to the convention eight churches from Western Nebraska.

The churches in Western Nebraska, formerly affiliated with the Colorado Baptist General Convention, were among 15 churches voted into membership at the Kansas convention.

An amendment to be voted on in 1967 was submitted which proposes deleting the word "Southern" from the name of the Kansas convention, and adding the word Nebraska.

The proposed new name, which must be approved by the convention next year, is Kansas-Nebraska Baptist Convention. There was no debate on the name change proposal when it was submitted, since no action will be taken until 1967.

New president of the convention is Tommy Grozier, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bellevue, Nebraska, the first Nebraskan elected as president of the Kansas convention.

In other major actions, the convention adopted a \$485,000 budget for 1967, including a \$46,495 allocation to world missions causes through the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program.

Reports indicated that membership in the convention, not including the eight new churches from Western Nebraska, increased by nearly 2,000 during the past year, bringing total membership in the convention's 194 churches and missions to 47,000.

There are about 665 members in the eight new churches in Western Nebraska.

The 1967 convention will be held Nov. 14-16 in Kansas City, Kan.

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Baptist Board Evacuates
Workers In Bomb Scare

11/22/66

NASHVILLE (BP)--The 800 employees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here evacuated the board's buildings for an hour on Nov. 22 as police searched for a bomb that wasn't there.

Earlier in the day, an unidentified caller telephoned that a bomb had been set to go off at 10:00 a.m. in the board's church study course awards section.

The voice, recorded over the board's device that enables telephone messages to be left before and after working hours, said briefly: "There has been a bomb placed in the Baptist Sunday School Board in the awards department. It is set to go off at 10:00 a.m."

Workers at the board evacuated the buildings from 9:30 until 10:30, while police searched the buildings. Police found no trace of a bomb, but are continuing to investigate the incident.

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Father, Two Sons, Lead Worship Service Together

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Father and two sons, all Baptist ministers, stood together for the first time as a family team to lead a worship service here, fulfilling a desire voiced earlier by one of the sons during a racial crisis in their hometown.

The occasion was a chapel service at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary when Howard W. Lee, pastor of West Main Baptist Church of Danville, Va., delivered the sermon, and his two sons, David and Douglas, read the scripture and offered the prayer.

The way in which the two sons, both now students at Southeastern Seminary, were led to the moment gave added significance to the occasion.

About five years ago, during a racial crisis in Danville, Va., the youngest son Doug, made his decision to enter the ministry.

"I saw my father stand amid hate, and plead for love," he recalled, "and I knew I could serve man best as a minister of God."

During that worship service, Doug came down the aisle and told his father: "Dad, I wish I were ten years older so I could stand with you."

That desire, expressed at the time of his commitment to the ministry, was fulfilled for the entire family at the Southeastern Seminary chapel service.

For Dave, the oldest son, the way to the ministry was longer and harder. During his college years, he considered a religious vocation but dismissed it first for business, and later for military service.

After two years as a buyer for a large department store, and 40 months in the Air Force, Dave became an office manager in charge of personnel, but he was not satisfied.

In July of this year, Dave at 27 and the father of two children, "finally did the right thing" in surrendering to God's will for his life, he said.

"The choice was not easily made, nor are all the bumps out of the adjustment," he added. "But we are convinced that we are at last where God wants us to be."

It was a joyful experience for both the father and his wife when the two boys participated in the chapel service.

"If pride goes before a fall, I'm ready for the fall; for today I am surely proud of my menfolk," beamed Mrs. Lee following the service.

The daughter of a Baptist minister, it was the first time that Mrs. Lee had seen her preacher-husband and two preacher-sons participate in the same service.

In his address, Lee, a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, spoke of the seminary as a laboratory where the principles of Christian faith could be tested and put to work.

Both of his sons seemed to agree. Commented Doug, the son who made his decision during the racial crisis: "I am satisfied with my Biblical study here and rejoice to see how the Biblical revelation applies to the moral issues of today."

Those who listened to the chapel address knew the speaker spoke from experience, and that the two young men seated behind him on the platform were evidences that it had been tried in his own home--and it had worked.