



# BAPTIST PRESS

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March 13, 1967

Kentucky Southern College  
Released from Convention

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BAGDAD, Ky. (BP)--Kentucky Southern College in Louisville, Ky., was formally released from Kentucky Baptist Convention ownership here by the convention's Executive Board meeting in a session marked by strong debate, substitute motions, and parliamentary entanglements.

The severance is effective immediately, and the college's president said the school plans to apply for federal aid "very quickly."

Trustees of the Baptist college requested that the school be released from convention ownership because of critical financial problems which recently reached crisis proportions.

It is the first time in the Southern Baptist Convention that a Baptist college has been released from a state convention's control so it can accept federal aid to help solve a financial crisis. The Arkansas Baptist State Convention has released a hospital to accept federal aid, but no state convention had released a college until now.

Kentucky Southern College President Rollin S. Burhans told the Kentucky Baptist finance and Christian education committees prior to the board meeting that the school could not survive without federal grants and loans.

Rather than compromise the Baptist principle of separation of church and state, he said, the trustees of the school were requesting separation from the convention.

Release from the convention was only one part of a three-prong proposal made by the finance and Christian education committees to the Executive Board in an attempt to alleviate the school's financial problems.

The Executive Board voted overwhelmingly to grant Kentucky Southern's request for \$500,000 in emergency funds to be used immediately in paying faculty salaries and meeting other pressing financial needs.

A \$300,000 loan will be floated immediately by the convention to aid the school, and the additional \$200,000 will be borrowed and made available by July 25.

Although the \$500,000 was granted overwhelmingly, the Executive Board members balked at assuming responsibility for the unpaid balance of a \$898,000 loan secured by the college last year.

Adopted instead was an allocation to the school of \$77,010 each year for the next five years, giving the school an additional \$385,050 over the five-year period.

The annual \$77,010 allocation will be taken from the Kentucky Baptist Convention's budget as part of a \$300,000 loan repayment plan approved by a special session of the convention last year to assist all Kentucky Baptist schools.

The \$77,010 annual allocation decision was a compromise of two earlier motions to come before the Executive Board, meeting at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly near here.

First considered was the college's request for the \$898,000. This was followed by a substitute motion that the convention float a loan for only \$500,000 additional assistance, to be paid over the next 10 years.

Chester Badgett, pastor in Campbellsville, Ky., offered the \$77,010 allocation for five years as a substitute to the substitute motion. It carried 65-38.

Several alternate proposals to releasing the college from convention control were made. Included was a suggestion to study the feasibility of merging Georgetown College and Kentucky Southern into one school, advocated by Pastors Odell Leigh of Greenville, Ky., and Isaac McDonald of Paducah, Ky.

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The action of the board to release Kentucky Southern was considered final. The 148-member board was acting as the "ad interim" governing body for the full convention, and thus, the severance is effective immediately.

Kentucky Southern President Burhans told the Executive Board that the college's immediate needs amounted to more than \$5 million.

"These are our needs," he said. "These are not luxuries. These are the bare essentials if we are to recruit quality students, retain our present faculty, pay current bills and debt service, and receive full accreditation."

He said the college will be eligible this fall for accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools provided it can meet standards for financial stability and facilities.

Burhans said the money voted by the board "is very excellent; it helps us over this transition period. It will also release the payment of certain pledges that have been made more or less on condition that we receive a certain amount from the convention."

He said he felt the college's financial situation now "is much improved, and we feel that we're definitely on our way to financial stability."

He added it was with "sincere regret and deep disappointment" that the school officials had been forced to request that ties with the convention be severed.

Burhans predicted that the school's severance from official denominational control "is the direction that inevitably every church-related college that does not have tremendous endowment funds will have to ultimately follow."

In an editorial in the Kentucky Baptist Western Recorder following the board action, Editor C. R. Daley echoed Burhan's prediction, calling the board action "a step that might prove to be the way Baptists in other states will approach the severe problems of higher education today."

Daley said the board's decision was "wise, fair, and mutually advantageous to the school and the convention.

"It is clear now," Daley wrote, "that Kentucky Baptists are not committed enough to Baptist higher education to afford four senior colleges and two other schools. It can only be viewed as wise to lighten our educational load and eventually free finances for schools that remain on for other mission purposes."

"The releasing of Kentucky Southern College will serve to reduce some friction and controversy in the convention over how schools are to be financed and over other school policies," Daley wrote.

"Kentucky Southern and other Baptist schools that survive with strength will ultimately have to take government loans and even government grants, and this will be controversial among Baptists for many years to come," Daley predicted.

With current enrollment of about 800 students, Kentucky Southern College was organized only seven years ago. It became an institution of the Kentucky Baptist Convention in 1960.