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SBC Messengers Urged
To Obtain Credentials

205

350

NASHVILLE (BP)--Elected messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in Miami Beach, May 30-June 2, must bring with them the proper credentials certifying their election by a local Baptist church, the convention's registration secretary said here.

W. Fred Kendall, executive secretary of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and registration secretary of the SBC, urged every messenger to bring a registration card signed by the church moderator or church clerk to certify him as a duly-elected messenger.

"The registration secretary has been requested to enforce the constitutional provision that only messengers be registered who present the proper credentials," Kendall said.

Kendall added that all messengers who do not bring the proper registration credentials must be approved by a credentials committee, appointed by the convention president, before they will be allowed to register.

"Last year at Detroit, nearly half of the messengers did not bring any kind of identification or registration card as the required credential," Kendall said. "This creates a tremendous problem and adds confusion to the registration process."

Kendall said registration cards are available from the executive secretary of each Baptist state convention cooperating with the SBC.

The SBC official also listed the constitutional requirements setting forth the number of messengers each church can elect.

No church can appoint more than 10 messengers to the convention, and each messenger must be a member of the church by which he is appointed.

One messenger may be appointed by each SBC church "which is in friendly cooperation with this convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work, and has during the fiscal year preceding been a bona fide contributor to the convention's work," according to the SBC Constitution. (Article III)

One additional messenger may be appointed from each church for every 250 members, or for each \$250 paid to the work of the convention during the fiscal year preceding the convention.

The "messengers" to the convention are not called "delegates" under Southern Baptist terminology, since they have no "delegated" authority to speak for the local church, and since the convention's actions are advisory and not binding on SBC churches.

-30-

Senator Sees Declining
Prayer Amendment Support

206

3/14/67 238

WASHINGTON (BP)--Sen. Sam J. Ervin (D., N.C.) told a group of Baptist editors that he believes support for a Constitutional Prayer Amendment will shrink in the future.

Sen. Ervin made his prediction in an orientation conference on church-state issues sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs for eight curriculum editors of Southern and American Baptist agencies.

"People are coming to recognize how essential it is for religion to keep hands off the state and for the state to keep hands off religion," the Senator said.

The North Carolina Senator said that Sen. Everett McKinley Dirksen's present proposal for a Constitutional Prayer Amendment would have the effect of denying denominational groups the right to worship.

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205-206

Sen. Dirkeen (R., Ill.) has introduced a resolution that would amend the Constitution to read that "Nothing in this Constitution shall abridge the right of persons lawfully assembled in any public building which is supported in whole or in part through the expenditure of public funds, to participate in non-denominational prayer."

In conference with the Baptist writers, Sen. Ervin also plugged his Judicial Review Bill which he has reintroduced in the Senate. The bill, which would provide for judicial review of the constitutionality of certain measures involving government aids through religious agencies, passed the Senate last year but died in the House of Representatives.

The group also met with other government officials as well as representatives of non-government agencies.

-30-

New York Baptists Join
Interdenominational Group

207

3/14/67

336

NEW YORK (BP)--Southern Baptists here are participating members in a regional Church Plan Commission that includes 10 Protestant denominations and several Councils of Churches.

The new organization, which provides the basis for cooperative research and mission efforts in the metropolitan New York area, already has produced "Spread City 1985," a study projecting the developments and trends of the area and the issues they pose for the church.

Paul S. James, superintendent of missions for the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association, has been attending meetings of the new group.

Denominations represented are Methodist, United Presbyterian, American Lutheran, Episcopalian, Christian, United Church of Christ, Reformed Church in America, American Baptist, and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

State Councils of Churches in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey, the Protestant Council of the City of New York, and County Councils in the area also are represented.

"We were one of the first to indicate our interest and to pay the fee," James said. "Our representation is listed in terms of our association."

"I haven't thought that we would be able to make much of a contribution," James said. "We will be on the receiving end of needed information, however, and they at least know we are interested."

The Plan Commission will work within a tri-state region that includes 14 counties in New Jersey, 14 in New York and three in Connecticut. Nearly 20 million people, or one-tenth of the U.S. population, live in this area, James said, and the total is expected to reach 24 million by 1980.

He said emphasis of the new ecumenical group will be placed on helping the church "to serve," rather than "be served," in the face of this challenge.

James stressed the fact that Baptist membership in the organization in no way interfered with the unilateral strategy of Southern Baptists in the area.

"Frankly, my interest in getting us involved is simply to know what is going on and what is being proposed," he said. "This is a very challenging possibility, and we ought to be a part of it."

There are 19 churches and 24 chapels (affiliated with the Maryland Baptist Convention) registering more than 3,200 members in the New York Baptist Association, which covers basically the same tri-state metropolitan area as the Plan Commission.

-30-

207

March 14, 1967

3

Baptist Press

Central America, Mexico
Baptists Plan Crusade

208

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GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala (BP)--Baptists from Mexico and Central America met here to lay plans for the proposed 1969 Crusade of the Americas, and scheduled several Sunday School Congresses this fall as the first step in the evangelistic campaign.

Plans were also mapped for a regional evangelistic rally in the spring of 1968, although the date and place for the regional rally were not announced.

Planning sessions were held in the chapel of Baptist Theological Institute here, with Ervin E. Hastey of Mexico City, regional coordinator for the Crusade of Americas and a Southern Baptist missionary, directing the meeting.

Assisting on the program were Adrian Gonzalez, pastor of the First Baptist Church of San Jose, Costa Rica, and Augusto Cotto, national coordinator for the crusade in El Salvador and pastor in Santa Ana, El Salvador.

Two addresses were delivered during the meeting by Waylon B. Moore, Southern Baptist pastor from Tampa, Fla., who spoke on "The Role of the Layman in the Campaign," and "The Conservation of Results."

An opening night session was devoted to a mass rally in the local Betania Baptist Church with a message by James D. Crane, field representative of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board for Northern Latin America.

"The meeting was characterized by a tremendous spirit of cooperation," said L. Laverne Gregory, Southern Baptist missionary to Costa Rica.