



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Telephone (615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

REGIONAL OFFICES

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Editor, 161 Spring Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30303, Telephone (404) 523-2593

DALLAS R. T. McCartney, Editor, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) RI 1-1996

WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Editor, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

BUREAU

BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD Lynn M. Davis Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203,
Telephone (615) 254-1631

May 24, 1967

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Interchurch Group Seeks Ways to Retrain Leaders

NASHVILLE (BP)--A Southern Baptist professor has been named head of an interim advisory committee to direct planning for a 14-denomination attempt at retraining leaders and "finding new forms of ministry."

G. Willis Bennett, associate professor of Christian Ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, was one of 30 representatives from 14 denominations attending a meeting here, which was designed to map initial planning for the organization.

The new agency will be called the Association for Christian Training and Service (ACTS).

Purpose of the biracial agency will be "finding new forms of ministry," said William A. Jones, a Memphis Episcopal clergyman who is research director of the Association.

Jones added that churches, like industries, must retrain their people to meet the new challenges of the 20th century and the organization will "provide a process of training for clergy, laity and seminarians in the Southwest.

"Each denomination will nominate a representative to the board of directors in October to plan details of the program," he said.

"At the present a staff of five with a budget of \$125,000 a year is envisioned."

Initial planning will be under the direction of the advisory committee headed by Bennett. He said his committee will draw up a statement of purpose, bylaws, and a program statement for approval by the directors.

"We do not envision that this will become theologically-oriented toward church union," Bennett said. "It is rooted in an attempt to see our problems together--to see the role of the church in the cities and the South, the nature of our problems and resources, and to discover ways whereby we can supplement and help each other."

The association grew out of a research project conducted by a pilot program of the Episcopal Church in Tennessee and financed by a \$48,000 grant from the national Episcopal Church.

"The object is to achieve theological understanding, sociological awareness and practical skills for missions in a rapidly changing and urbanizing South," Jones said.

The Association also will seek to devise a process of demonstrating to policy-makers and decision-makers within the church what is going on in their cities.

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Hays Advises "Never Seal Ministers' Lips"

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ATLANTA (BP)--Former Arkansas Congressman Brooks Hays pointed to the church as one of the main forces in helping solve social and racial problems throughout the nation.

"Never seal the lips of a minister," advised the former Southern Baptist Convention president in a speech here. "Let him say what his conscience guides him to say no matter whether you agree or not."

(more)

The special assistant to President Lyndon Johnson said that the racial problem has taken national dimensions and that the nation as a whole must deal with the grass roots problems rather than just the symptoms of racial injustice.

He said churches should become more involved by equipping its sons and daughters to deal with the problems of today.

Hays was speaking to an awards dinner of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

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OKLAHOMA SPECIAL CONVENTION
INCREASES EDUCATION SUPPORT

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SHAWNEE, Okla (BP)--Oklahoma Baptists approved a record \$3.5 million Cooperative Program budget for 1968 in a special session focused primarily on additional financial needs of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and state Baptist Student Unions (BSU).

A crowd of about 1,500 persons met on the Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) campus for the first special called session in the history of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

In a standing vote, messengers adopted eight recommendations of the convention's board of directors setting forth the budget's major divisions and plans for implementing a projected five-year program.

Representing an increase of \$375,000 over the 1967 state missions budget, the plan for 1968 calls for a basic operating budget of \$3,186,000.

All funds received above the basic budget will be divided between OBU and state BSU work on 26 state college and university campuses.

The split will be on a basis of 75 percent to OBU and 25 percent to BSU work.

The basic budget will be divided on a basis of 57 percent to state mission work and 43 percent to the Southern Baptist Convention.

The convention approved a recommendation of the convention's board of directors that a similar plan be considered in the next four successive years.

Ultimately, if similar plans are adopted through 1972 and receipts from state Baptist churches meet the proposed goals, OBU would receive \$4.4 million from the convention during the next five years.

BSU work in the state would receive over a million dollars in the five-year period from state Baptist churches.

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SOUTH CAROLINA PASTOR
JOINS SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Chester Floyd Russell, pastor of Remount Baptist Church, North Charleston, S.C., will join the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board staff, effective June 15.

Russell will be general Sunday School administration consultant in the Sunday School Department. He will develop and implement new approaches in Bible teaching, including Bible conferences.

He is a 1946 graduate of Furman University (Baptist) in Greenville, S.C.. He also is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, where he received his doctor of theology degree in 1951.

Russell has been a trustee of Furman University, Baptist College of Charleston, and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

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Editors: Photo has been sent to state Baptist papers.

Church Has Continuing
Role in Poverty War

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ATLANTA (BP)--"Nowhere do we leave the impression that you can just sit under a tree and bananas will fall off and be put in your hand," said Sargent R. Shriver, head of the "war on poverty," in retaliation to those who label the national act a "hand-out program."

"We're a nation on whose back is being carried 32 million poor people. That is a deadweight against economic, social and religious progress. What we're trying to do is reduce the deadweight," Shriver said.

Shriver recently explained the workings of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) in an interview with Walker L. Knight, editor of Home Missions magazine. The interview is featured in the June issue.

"From the beginning of this effort, nearly all religious groups have been overwhelmingly in favor of what we are attempting," Shriver said. "And I continue to see an important role for the church.

"Any religiously-motivated person should be participating...because if there is anything that comes through in the Bible 100 percent it is that you help your fellowman."

Shriver explained that OEO guidelines concerning the granting of funds to religious groups were drawn up by groups whose membership included leading Baptists. He said OEO also maintains an inspection department to protect against potential or actual breaches of these guidelines.

The director revealed that only one lawsuit had been filed in a challenge of any OEO grant. The suit was filed in the summer of 1965 in Kansas challenging Head Start in relation to the church-state issue, but it was withdrawn.

"It's a miracle," Shriver confessed. "When we started everyone said we'd have hundreds of injunction actions challenging what they claimed would be our violation of church-state separation."

Shriver listed three areas in which even a strict separationist could help: information, exhortation and personal participation.

He said more persons need to know what the program really is. "Some people have attempted to portray our program as being strictly for Negroes. That is not true.

"Of the total poverty population, 75 percent are white. Many more white people participate...than minority groups."

He said the person who pastes an "I fight poverty--I work" sticker on a car "exhibits a tremendous amount of ignorance.

"This is very unchristian. He should be saying, 'Thank God I've got the health and education to hold a job.'"

Shriver said with the expenditure of about three times as much money per annum as it now receives the program could eliminate poverty in the U.S. by 1976--the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

"I thought it would be a fantastic tribute to the people who created this country...and we've spent that amount fighting the war in Vietnam, without even raising taxes."

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C O R R E C T I O N

On BP story dated 5-19-67, headlined "Dehoney, Hull Named Baptist Hour Speakers," please correct second graph, line 2, to read: "Dehoney is pastor of the Walnut Street Baptist Church of Louisville," ending sentence there. The church has not changed its name.

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SBC Assembly Counselors
Named for 1967 Season

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Assembly counselors have been named for the 1967 summer season at the two Southern Baptist assemblies at Ridgecrest, N.C., and Glorieta, N.M.

Milton A. Webb, director of student affairs at Southwest Baptist College in Bolivar, Mo., will serve at Ridgecrest.

Assembly counselor at Glorieta will be Everett Reneer, professor of psychology of religion and pastoral care at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

Duties of the counselors involve coordinating decision services in cooperation with conference program directors and training counselors for follow-up sessions.

The counselors will conduct vocational guidance conferences as assigned. They will counsel guests upon request and assembly staffs as time permits.

"Both Webb and Reneer have had extensive experience and training in the counseling field," said Lloyd Householder, director, vocational guidance section, Training Union department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Ridgecrest and Glorieta assemblies are owned and operated by the Sunday School Board in Nashville.

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Puerto Rico Mission
Purchases Building

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VIEQUES, Puerto Rico (BP)--The first convert was baptized recently in a small one-year-old Baptist mission here that in April purchased a former medical office as a meeting place.

Saron Baptist Mission, an offspring of Vieques Baptist Church, is located in Isabel II, the largest town on the Island of Vieques, near the infamous Canyon district where prostitution prevails.

On April 3, 1967, the mission purchased the small five-room suite in which it held its first Sunday School meeting on April 10, 1966.

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta paid \$2,200 of the purchase price, and the Puerto Rico Baptist Association \$400.

According to Gerow F. Carr, missionary pastor, however, the members who are of a very low economic class have agreed to purchase the title themselves from the Home Mission Board.

He said the association had been helping on the rent for the mission offices which were furnished with chairs and other equipment donated by the U.S. Navy.

The mission holds regular services three times a week.

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