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November 5, 1968

Illinois Convention Votes  
 To Move Baptist Headquarters

ZION, Ill. (BP)--The Illinois Baptist State Association meeting here voted to move its offices from Carbondale to Springfield, Ill., and approved purchase of a site near a major expressway in the state capital for \$150,000.

No date was set for the move, but the summer of 1971 has been suggested as a possible target date.

The new office building will be located in the Capital City Shopping Center at the intersection of the Adlai E. Stevenson Expressway and U. S. Highway 66, in the southeast section of Springfield.

The convention voted last year to relocate, but postponed until this year a decision on the site. The offices have been located in Carbondale since 1930.

The convention authorized its Board of Directors to work with the relocation committee in securing an architect, preparing specifications, and selling the present Baptist Building and adjacent property in Carbondale.

In exchange for a long-term lease for a Baptist Book Store, the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has tentatively agreed to assist with financing.

In other major actions, the convention adopted a report of its restructure committee which recommended reorganization of the 72-member Board of Directors into four major committees instead of 11, and authorized a special state convention next May to consider constitution changes necessary for the reorganization. If the revised constitution is approved in May, it must get second approval at next year's regular convention.

A 1969 budget of \$1,292,501 was adopted by the state Baptist association. The budget includes a Cooperative Program goal of \$1½ million, which would allocate 37 per cent, an increase of one per cent, to support Southern Baptist world mission causes.

The convention also voted to sell the Baptist Student Center at the University of Illinois at Champaign. The present center has dormitory space and meal service, and the convention voted to use \$250,000 of the proceeds from sale to build or purchase another center with space only for student activities and Bible classes.

Another major action called for establishing two state camp and retreat centers, one near Streator, Ill., and another near the center of the southern half of the state. The 430 acre site near Streator will be purchased for not more than \$135,000, and a similar price would be paid for property in the southern half of the state.

Authorization was given for the sale of present camp property at Lake Sallateeska near Pinckneyville, Ill., whenever feasible.

The 1969 convention will meet in Wheeling, Ill., Oct. 28-30. The convention voted to meet in Rockford, Ill., in 1970, and to start the convention on Tuesday instead of Wednesday night, enabling the meeting to end on Thursday.

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68 Missions Gifts  
 Top \$42 Million

(11-5-68)

NASHVILLE (BP)--Contributions to world missions through the Southern Baptist Convention during the first 10 months of 1968 exceeded \$42.6 million, up \$2½ million from last year's contributions, the convention's Executive Committee reported here.

The \$42.6 million includes \$21,729,272 given through the SBC Cooperative Program unified budget, plus \$20,846,854 to designated mission causes primarily through special offerings.

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The grand total for the year exceeds contributions for the same period last year by \$2,278,016, or 5.64 per cent.

Gifts to support the total work of the denomination through the Cooperative Program were up \$890,970 in comparison to the first 10 months of 1967, an increase of 4.28 per cent. Designations for the same period increased \$1,287,046, or 7.09 per cent.

For the tenth consecutive month in 1968, Cooperative Program contributions for the month of October passed the \$2 million mark, with \$2,112,289 contributed during October. It is the first time in SBC history that Cooperative Program gifts have exceeded \$2 million each month through October in the fiscal year.

Of the \$42.6 million total, the biggest amount, \$26.5 million, has gone to support foreign missions through the SBC Foreign Mission Board, Richmond. Of the total, \$10½ million has come from the Cooperative Program, \$14½ million from the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (up \$760,248), and the remainder from other designations.

Home missions has received \$9½ million through the SBC Home Mission Board. Of that amount, \$4.6 million has been from the Cooperative Program, and \$3.9 million through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (up \$31,080), plus about \$1 million from other designated gifts.

The Cooperative Program provides funds for 19 different agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention. Funds are distributed to the agencies on a formula and budget adopted by the convention in annual session.

The totals reported by the SBC Executive Committee reflect only contributions given to Southern Baptist Convention (nation-wide) causes, and do not include amounts given to support local and state mission programs.

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SBC President Says  
Israel Seems Peaceful

(11-5-68)

DALLAS (BP)--The president of the Southern Baptist Convention said on his return from the Holy Land that he found the nation of Israel for the most part safe and surprisingly peaceful, contrary to headlines concerning war in that nation.

W. A. Criswell, president of the convention, admitted "there were a few incidents on the borders, but inside the land where one would want to go, all is peaceful."

Criswell commented on the Israeli situation upon his arrival here after completing a two-week tour of the Middle East. He had been a guest of the Israeli government.

He said he could not understand reports of violence in the villages. "I was in Jericho when demonstrations were supposed to have occurred, but I couldn't see anything going on other than that which usually takes place in a sleepy little town," he said.

Criswell said his feelings about the Middle East war situation before and after his visit were similar to those he held about Chicago during his youth.

"The first time I visited Chicago was during the Al Capone heyday, he said. I had heard tales of people being murdered right on the streets. I believed this to be true all the time. Suddenly I realized I was standing on the corner of Madison and State Streets and it was just as calm as any city anywhere else in the country. The newspaper headlines had me believing a murder was taking place every minute. It wasn't. It was very similar to my preconceived thoughts on the war in Israel."

The Baptist leader focused most of his attention on Jerusalem, the cradle of three great religions--Christianity, Moslem and Jewish.

He said to declare Jerusalem an international city would create many political complications although there is a great deal in favor of such a move.

"Whether Jerusalem is made an international city or not, it ought to be available to Moslems, Jews and Christians, all of whom look to Jerusalem as peculiarly theirs."

Criswell said Jerusalem looks as though there had never been a war there. Restoration is complete. The holy places were not disturbed.

During a press conference, Criswell was asked what he thought about the bombing halt in Vietnam and if he thought it was politically inspired.

"I pray that this is an introduction to peace," he said. "I pray that it is not a political move but I don't think it is. Our national leaders would not use the lives of thousands of American boys as part of a political strategy."

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BP FEATURES  
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PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE  
(Fifty-sixth in a series)

THE SELECTIVE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

By T. B. Maston

Retired Professor of Christian Ethics  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

There has arisen in the contemporary period a new type of conscientious objector. The federal government and many churches have not decided what to do about him.

There were some conscientious objectors during World War I and a noticeable increase during World War II. Those mainly were objectors to war in general. Our national government more or less uniformly respected the rights of conscience of such objectors. They were permitted to become medics or enter some other type of noncombatant service. If they were limitless objectors the government provided conscientious objector camps for them although the objectors had to arrange for their own support.

Now, however, there are some young people who are not necessarily objectors to war in general but to a particular war--the Vietnam conflict. These selective conscientious objectors have created some problems for the federal government.

The existing draft law provides for conscientious objection against war as such but not for the objector to a particular war.

Furthermore, only the religiously motivated conscientious objector is provided for. Some of the contemporary objectors base their objections on philosophical or political grounds.

The preceding helps to explain but it does not excuse some of the extreme methods that have been used by some contemporary objectors and their supporters.

One of the continuing problems of draft boards as well as military personnel is to determine when an individual is really a conscientious objector and when he is simply seeking to avoid military service. It is particularly difficult for the authorities when the young person does not belong to one of the historic peace churches.

What is and what should be the attitude of the main-line non-peace churches toward the conscientious objector in their own fellowship and in general? It is possible that there are very few, if any, such objectors in most of our churches.

However, if our churches are consistent in the application of our concept of the right of individual conscience then they will defend the right of the conscientious objector, selective or otherwise.

The only question our churches and church leaders should ask about the conscientious objector is whether or not he has carefully thought through and is honest in his position. Protestants in general contend that the right of conscience of the individual person should be respected. This should be just as true regarding war as it is regarding worship or anything else.

A local church with 200 or 2,000 members might have one lone conscientious objector in its fellowship. The 199 or the 1,999 other members should defend the right of conscience of that one member. They should surround him with understanding and Christian love.

A denomination may have 1,000,000 or 10,000,000 adherents or members. There might be only one sincere selective conscientious objector in the whole denomination. My viewpoint is and has been for many years that the other 999,999 or 9,999,999 should defend the right of the one conscientious objector. To do less is to violate something that is basic in our Protestant way of life in general and our Baptist way of life in particular.

If it should be necessary for the conscientious objector to go to a conscientious objector camp and to provide his own financial support, his local church and or his denomination should provide such support for him.

On the other hand, the conscientious objector should scrupulously avoid any sense of superiority. He should respect just as much the position of those who disagree with him as he expects them to respect and defend him in his position.



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