



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, 1350 Spring Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Billy Keith, 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

December 9, 1968

**Texas Board Approves Loan
Report After Heated Debate**

DALLAS (BP)--The Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas unanimously accepted a special report on the activities of the Baptist Church Loan Board following a tense confrontation with a Dallas pastor, Herbert Howard, who charged the loan agency with fraud and conflict of interest.

Howard also intimated that the investigation was hampered by "cronyism" among committee members charged with the responsibility of administering and sustaining the Church Loan Association during several months of crisis.

Later, however, the 192-member board voted unanimously to express confidence in the investigation made by a committee headed by Fort Worth real estate developer J. T. Luther, and gave Luther a standing ovation for his work.

Luther's report indicated that the committee found no evidence of fraud, that the loan board had not violated its charter, but that there were mistakes "of bad judgment" in speculative land investments in California.

Howard, pastor of the 4,000-member Park Cities Baptist Church here, called the investigation "a white wash," and left the board meeting to hold a press conference.

The Dallas pastor, who told the state convention in Fort Worth a few weeks earlier that all the facts had not been disclosed, told the press of a letter he had written to several Texas Baptist leaders urging that past activities of the loan agency be "brought out completely in the open."

The letter included 10 questions demanding admission of poor administrative practices, violations of the loan association charter, extremely speculative land investment, fraud, conflict of interest, and complicity with certain fraudulent transactions in California.

Luther denied the charges of fraud, charter violations, and conflict of interest charges, and an auditor from Peat, Marwick, Mitchel and Co., Don Cloud, who audited the association's books, said there was no evidence of fraud.

The two-page printed report of the committee, published before the board meeting by the Baptist Standard, official convention newspaper, disclosed details on a total investment of \$2,275,958 in real estate and land development projects in California.

The committee said that "it was a serious mistake in judgment to participate in speculative real estate investments in California." Luther told the board here he did not think there would be any losses in the California investments, but he likewise did not expect any big profits.

Howard contended that the loan board violated its charter by speculative land investments when the money should have gone into church loans instead.

The controversy has been swirling about the Church Loan Association since the 1967 meeting of the state convention when charges were made that the California land speculation was interfering with the chartered purpose of the loan board.

A sub-committee of the Committee of 100, created by the 1967 convention, plus the five-man committee headed by Luther appointed by the convention's Executive Board, and the auditing firm of Peat, Marwick, Mitchel and Co., each conducted investigations.

All three of the investigating groups admit serious errors in judgment took place in the loan association's past operations, but contradict Howard's accusations of fraud and charter violations.

Luther said that steps have been taken to assure proper procedures in the future, under the direction of new Church Loan Association President, Don Singletary, a former Fort Worth banker.

In other actions, the Executive Board elected Harry D. Trulove of Fort Stockton, Tex., as associate in the convention's estate stewardship department; named Charles V. Petty of Fort Worth as associate in the state Christian Life Commission; approved salary increases for 24 of the campus Baptist Student Union directors, and authorized construction of a new \$70,000 dormitory for Mexican Baptist Bible Institute in San Antonio.

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41,000 Baptists Request Prayer
Partners In Crusade of Americas

(12-9-68)

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--With less than a month before the deadline, more than 41,000 Baptists in North, Central and South America have said "Sim" (Portuguese), "Si" (Spanish), or "Yes" to a prayer partnership for the Crusade of Americas.

"Pact," coordinated by the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union here, continues to attract at least 400 requests for prayer partners each day. Deadline for applying for a "Pact" partner is Dec. 31.

Approximately 30,000 of the applicants have already been matched with partners according to Mrs. R. L. Mathis, "Pact" coordinator.

"With a heavy flow of applications still coming in, we will not be able to have all the partnerships assigned by the deadline," she said. "We will handle all applications which arrive before Jan. 1. Partners will be assigned as soon as possible after that date."

Mrs. E. O. Fowler, an employee who has headed the clerk team for "Pact," said that one partner wrote the sad story that a visitor in her home had escaped with her partner's name. "Can you tell me who my partner was?" she pleaded.

More than 100 assignments have been returned, "moved," "no such street number," "refused," "addressee unknown," the envelopes say. Persons who have changed address since writing for a partner need to let the "Pact" office know, Mrs. Fowler said. Several persons have reported sending in applications which have never arrived in Birmingham.

Mrs. Mathis urged applicants to wait patiently for their partners, but she said, "If a person believes that his card could have been lost in the mail he should write "Pact" in care of 600 North 20th St., Birmingham, Ala., 35203.

The applicants include individuals, groups, families and churches. Of the 30,000 already in partnership, many have reported a concert of prayer under way.

The pastor of a General Baptist church in Missouri wrote the "Pact" office thanks for matching him with a Southern Baptist church in Inverness, Fla. "It is delightful," he said.

A woman who described herself "on the wrong side of fifty" checked the incorrect age group on her application. She was assigned a teenager for a partner. The woman wrote her partner and the "Pact" office giving the young lady a chance to trade her name in for a younger model. "Until I hear further," she wrote, "I will pray at nine o'clock each day for you and the Crusade." The team did not drop partnership.

A retired Southern Baptist missionary to China, Mrs. Wilson Fielder enlisted 20 of her fellow residents of the Buckner Baptist Haven for the Aging in Houston to join "Pact."

A Sunday School class in Macon, Ga., asked its 90 year old teacher to write for a partner for each of them. "We're all over 80 but we are praying for the Crusade of the Americas and want to join 'Pact'," she said.

An Illinois family asked for a partner after their friend shared letters and prayer requests from their partners. "I meant to write long ago," the mother said, "but when three friends told us what a blessing 'Pact' was proving to be I got busy."

A Texan was so impressed with the value of "Pact" crusade that he sent \$150 to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board for use in an area touched by "Pact."

Under "Pact," partners will undergird the Crusade of the Americas with prayer following a prayer calendar in the assignment booklet from each partner.

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Southern Seminary, Baptist
Colleges Gain Accreditation

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, and two Baptist colleges have been accepted as newly accredited members of the Southern Association of colleges and schools, which held its annual meeting here.

The seminary, accredited by the American Association of Theological Schools, since 1937, was accepted by the Southern Association under the "special purpose institution" category.

Baptist colleges accepted into the association are Houston (Tex.) and Mobile (Ala.) Baptist Colleges. The Baptist College at Charleston (S.C.) was recognized as a candidate for accreditation.

Three other Baptist schools were cited as having completed institutional self-studies, a step toward full accreditation. They were East Texas Baptist College, Marshall, Tex., Wayland Baptist College, Plainview, Tex., and William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Miss.

Until recently, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools had not accepted applications for accreditations from theological schools, but recently created the "special purpose institution" category. The joint accreditation will facilitate "increased opportunity for academic cooperation with other institutions and will enable a more standardized basis for credit and degree exchange."

Southern Seminary is the only school in the group operated by the Southern Baptist Convention. The others are institutions of various state Baptist conventions.

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Arizona Board Elects
New WMU Executive

(12-9-68)

PHOENIX (BP)--Miss Mary Jo Stewart, executive secretary of the Woman's Missionary Union for the Baptist General Convention of Oregon-Washington, was elected here as the new executive secretary of the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) for the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

A native of Mississippi, Miss Stewart is a former field representative for the Louisiana Baptist Convention's WMU, and a former Young Women's Auxiliary director for Georgia Baptists.

She will succeed Miss Almarine Brown, executive secretary for the Arizona WMU since 1957. Miss Brown is retiring, effective Dec. 31, and will continue to live in Arizona.

Miss Stewart, a graduate of University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, will begin her duties March 1, 1969, said Charles L. McKay, executive secretary of the Arizona convention.

She was elected to the position by the Executive Board of the Arizona convention.

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SBC Planning, Promotion
Conference Discusses Polity

(12-9-68)

NASHVILLE (BP)--More than 1,300 Southern Baptist leaders from throughout the nation opened five days of long range denominational planning here by agreeing generally on their mode of operation.

James L. Sullivan of Nashville, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, presented for discussion a paper on Southern Baptist polity, destined to serve as a foundation for the Southern Baptist Planning and Promotion Conference.

The subject, a popular one for Southern Baptists, brought sharp reaction at points but general agreement in substance from the group in War Memorial Auditorium.

The leaders, representing about 500 of the denomination's 1,100 associations, 30 state Baptist conventions and 23 agencies and organizations of the Southern Baptist Convention, broke up into small groups for more lengthy discussion of Baptist polity throughout the week.

Main purpose of the week-long meeting is to plan Southern Baptist activities for 1969-73, particularly those in 1969-70.

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Most of the week was to be devoted to separate planning sessions for the 500 associational superintendents of missions, the state secretaries for the 30 conventions, the heads of the 23 SBC agencies and organizations, and for state and nation-wide Baptist workers in the areas of Sunday School, church training, music, Brotherhood, Woman's Missionary Union, evangelism, missions, architecture, work with Negro Baptists, stewardship, Christian Life (ethics), state papers, and public relations.

In his paper, Sullivan cited nine principles on Baptist polity and elaborated on each. Later a five-man reactor panel and about 20 persons at floor microphones commented on his statements.

The principles touched on a consecrated membership, basic theology, local church autonomy, equality among Baptist bodies, sound organizational practices, independence of Baptist bodies and agencies, communications, relationship of associations, state conventions and Southern Baptist Convention agencies, and motivation.

During discussions, persons in the audience suggested additional principles on leadership and religious liberty.

Porter Routh of Nashville, executive secretary of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, said he agreed with the nine principles but underlined two areas of concern in their application.

Southern Baptists need to work out a better and more equitable basis of representation, he said, in pointing to the lack of laymen on Baptist boards.

Routh identified the other area of concern as a theology of agreement.

"We ought to remember that we follow the majority rule, but the vote of the majority does not always reflect the voice of God," he said. "This is why we should always take time to hear the voice of the minority. Of course it could well be that neither voice is the voice of God."

Cecil E. Sherman, pastor of First Baptist Church in Asheville, N. C., represented the Baptist ministers on the panel, and commented it was strange that so few pastors had been invited to take part in planning the work of the denomination.

The North Carolina preacher praised the principles of Baptist polity as fine in theory but acknowledged they ran into difficulty on the practical level.

"Some kinds of work will never be done if all areas of our denomination must relate acceptably to every project," he contended. "The Christian Life Commission will never have a Race Relations Sunday and the Sunday School Board would never have published 'We Hold These Truths--An American Dilemma'." Both have racial implications.

Sherman also took issue with a statement in the address that large Baptist bodies were defenseless against critics.

"Larger Baptist bodies have sophisticated and highly efficient methods of defending themselves and on occasion punishing the critic." Sherman said.

The meeting featured general sessions at the War Memorial Auditorium in downtown Nashville, with group conferences at the Sunday School Board, the Southern Baptist Convention Building, the First Baptist Church, and several local hotels.

C O R R E C T I O N S

On BP story mailed 12-5-68, headlined, "Home Board Okays \$14.9 Million Budget," please substitute the following for graph 8 of story as sent. Corrected graph gives number of associate missionaries. As sent, the two categories did not add up to the total.

Rutledge, in his annual report to the directors, said 392 mission appointments were made by the agency, 81 of which are fulltime career missionaries, 279 of which are associate missionaries, and 32 of which are young college graduates participating in two-year mission assignments.

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On BP story mailed 12-6-68, headlined "Home Board Elects North Carolina Chaplain," please correct spelling on name. It should be McKay, not McCay as sent. Thanks.



BAPTIST PRESS

*460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219*

DAVIS C. WOOLLEY HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 NINTH AVE, N.
NASHVILLE, TENN. 37203

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