



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 4, 1970

Illinois Board Studies Closing
Student Center Dorm, Cafeteria

CARBONDALE, Ill. (BP)--The Board of Directors of the Illinois Baptist State Association heard a committee recommendation to close down dormitory and cafeteria services at the Baptist Student Center at Southern Illinois University here, and then voted 24-23 to study the proposal for a year.

The board also adopted a resolution requesting the trustees for Southern Illinois University, a state institution, to repay the Baptist Student Center \$33,000 it refunded to students who paid room and board in advance after trustees closed down the school last spring.

According to the board's action, the Baptist Student Center at Southern Illinois University will apparently stay open at least two more school years.

Robert C. Fuson, director of the Baptist Student Center, and the board's special ministries committee had recommended that the center's dormitory and food services be closed at the end of the 1971 summer quarter, provided that the State Association meeting in November as well as the convention's Board of Directors approved the request.

The \$1 million, three-year old center, includes housing for 300 students, a public cafeteria, chapel and classrooms. Fuson said he wanted it made clear that he was talking about closing only the food and dormitory service, not abolishing Baptist student work on the campus.

In giving reasons for his recommendations, Fuson cited increased pressure from some parents "who believe we should operate as sort of reform school and do more for their children in two or three years than they did in 18 (years)." He also said some Baptists feel "we should maintain the atmosphere of a monastery as pertains to dress and social customs" which is virtually impossible on a modern campus.

He also listed financial problems, a decline in enrollment in Bible courses at the center, and increased restrictions by the university, including withdrawal of accreditation for the center's Bible classes.

Two university students who are residents at the center told the board their views, praising the center for the Christian atmosphere it provides.

In the discussion, one board member commented, "As I listened to one speaker, I felt like voting one way, and then when another spoke, I saw an entirely different viewpoint."

The vote was split 24-23. Any action to close the center's services would come at the annual state convention in November of 1971 after another year's study.

Presumably, the center would not be closed until the spring of 1972 if the board and convention next year approve of the idea.

The resolution holding the trustees of Southern Illinois University responsible for the closing of the Carbondale campus last spring and asking for \$33,000 from the university to repay the Baptist Student Center for losses will be delivered to the S.I. U. trustee chairman, Lindell Sturgis in Metropolis.

The resolution, offered by C. R. Walker, pastor of First Baptist Church, Marion, Ill., claimed that the trustees were liable for closing the school early after student demonstrations because the trustees "failed to establish and/or maintain policy, procedures and personnel who would maintain the institution."

Fuson, director of the center, said that students who had paid for room and board in advance were refunded "every penny" which they had not received in services. "Although we may have had no legal obligation to reimburse the students, we felt a moral obligation to do so," he said.

In other actions, the board voted to recommend to the annual convention a 1971 Cooperative Program unified budget goal of \$1,260,000, which would allocate 63 per cent to Baptist work in Illinois, and 37 per cent to Southern Baptist Convention world mission causes.

The board also voted to recommend a budget of \$1,242,743 for state denominational causes, and a budget of \$272,000 for the Baptist Children's Home at Carmi, Ill.

Several actions were taken to prepare the way to previously-approved plans to move the state Baptist headquarters office from Carbondale to Springfield, Ill., as well as other routine business operation actions.

The board awarded a printing contract to Tazewell Publishing Co., Morton, Ill., for production and mailing of the Illinois Baptist weekly newspaper when offices are moved to Springfield, contracted with Springfield realtor Leonard Sapp to secure and screen tenants for the new Baptist office building, set a maximum of 10 years for any office space lease in the building, and approved a 10-year lease to the Baptist Book Store in the new building.

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New Religious Education Dean
Installed at Southern Seminary

9/4/70

LOUISVILLE (BP)--In his inaugural address as dean of the School of Religious Education at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here, Ernest J. Loessner called for a move away from polarization as a way of responding to new developments within the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Baptists need to be helped to move away from big confrontations, to putting their trust in the processes by which new problems are solved," Loessner said in his address delivered during Founders' Day activities at the seminary.

"The seminary must produce Christian leaders who can help us mediate our differences, or we shall fail," he declared.

Loessner, who was recently elected president of the Eastern Religious Education Association, also stressed the need for the minister of religious education to "see himself first as a minister, and secondly as an educator."

"Too frequently in the past, he (the minister of religious education) has been a promoter of programs and organizations," Loessner said. "There will continue to be important, but his primary concern in the future must be with persons first and programs second."

Loessner also stressed his belief that religious education should be seen as a theological discipline, a branch of practical theology.

"The minister of education needs to see himself as a theologian just as the pastor needs to see himself as a teacher," Loessner said. "The educational minister needs to know more than methodology; he must know the whole gospel in depth if he is to be an expert in helping laymen to communicate it.

He observed that the education minister will never attain the usefulness in the churches or denomination he needs until he has the same basic theological background as the pastoral minister.

"The proposed Doctor of Ministry program now under consideration, and in planning stages, should open this door of opportunity for the education minister of tomorrow," Loessner said.

The new dean also stressed his belief that "just as the educational minister needs a solid theological education, the pastor needs a thorough understanding of the purposes and procedures in religious education, church administration, and social work.

Loessner joined the seminary faculty in 1952, becoming the only man in history to teach at Southern seminary without a college diploma. Later he earned degrees at Georgetown College, the University of Louisville and Indiana University and went on to do post-doctoral work at the University of California and Pacific School of Religion.

He was also the first layman to be allowed to matriculate at Southern, although as a seminary student in 1939 he served as minister of education at Highland Baptist Church in Louisville.

He has also served in the education ministry at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., South Main Baptist Church in Houston, and First Baptist Church in Amarillo, Tex.

SBC Mission Gifts Up
Slightly Over 1969

NASHVILLE (BP)--Contributions to world missions through the Southern Baptist Convention unified budget plan, the Cooperative Program, have increased by \$478,484 or 2.58 per cent over the same eight-month period in 1969, a SBC financial report indicated here.

The report, prepared by the SBC Executive Committee, disclosed that mission gifts through the Cooperative Program had reached \$19,027,893 through the end of August, 1970, compared to \$18.5 million during the same period in 1969.

During the month of August, giving through the Cooperative Program increased 6.85 per cent compared to August of 1969 and four states failed to get their checks to the SBC office here in time to be counted in the August report.

Cooperative Program contributions during August totalled \$2.3 million, the report indicated.

In addition to undesignated funds through the Cooperative Program which allocates the contributions to SBC causes on a convention-approval formula, an additional \$21.2 million for the year has been given in designated contributions to specific mission causes.

Designated contributions have increased on \$35,969, or .17 per cent over designations for the same eight-month period in 1969.

Grand total SBC mission gifts (Cooperative Program and designated contributions combined) reached \$40.2 million for the eight month period, up \$514,453 or 1.3 per cent compared to the \$39.7 million grand total gifts for January-August, 1969.

The monthly financial statement prepared by the SBC Executive Committee includes only amounts given to Southern Baptist Convention causes, and does not reflect amounts given by SBC churches to local and state mission efforts.

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18 Make Decisions In Dark
At Bullfight Arena Crusade

9/4/70

REYNOSA, Mex. (BP)--An evangelistic service held in almost total darkness in a bullfighting arena here results in 18 professions of faith in Christ.

"There had been a rainstorm until just before the service," said Robert Smith, missions director for the Rio Grande Valley area of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

"It was so dark in the arena that you couldn't see the preacher from the front row, but about 250 people remained to hear the evangelist, Fernando De La Mora of Mexico City, editor of La Luz Bautista (The Baptist Light), preach in the dark.

The lights had been out during part of the previous night's service, but this time, the problem couldn't be located until afterward when someone discovered a wire had been cut.

At the close of the service, a truck's lights were turned on at the gate to the arena, and 18 people walked to the lights in response to the preacher's invitation to accept Christ as their personal savior.

The six-day "New Birth Crusade," Baptists' first citywide evangelistic effort in Reynosa, was delayed the first night until the Sunday bull fights ended, and rain held attendance down the next two services.

"But sometimes adversity works for the best," said Smith, noting that there were 131 professions of faith during the crusade.

"The Apostle Paul didn't have lights or a piano," he added.

Reynosa, a city of about 100,000 people, has one Baptist church and four missions with a total of about 400 members.

James Hatley, associate missionary of the Rio Grande Valley area, said the crusade had made people aware of the Baptist witness in the Reynosa area.

The mayor permitted Baptists to use a sound truck four hours a day and to put post banners announcing the crusade. Also, advertisements on the crusade were permitted in local newspapers and on radio.

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