

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Billy Keith, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-1631
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

February 24, 1971

Bates Urges Baptists: Accept Responsibilities of Trustees

NASHVILLE (BP)--The president of the Southern Baptist Convention issued a challenge here for Baptists to stop engaging "in sharp and loveless controversies" and to accept their responsibilities as God's trustees and witnesses in the world.

Carl Bates, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charlotte, N.C., and president of the 11.6 million-member convention, made the plea during a Cooperative Program rally sponsored by the denomination's Stewardship Commission.

"Many feel that the Southern Baptist Convention has begun to engage in sharp and loveless controversies which could conceivably distract us from the main task of the people of God," Bates told more than 260 Baptist leaders attending the rally.

He cited trends in church history, observing that when this occurred, the churches became unconcerned about the world, and the "little deposit of religiosity left, soured and putrefied the lives of the membership and the total movement became a grief to God."

Southern Baptists, he stated, must find their way "into a fresh understanding of the 'trustee-witness' concept of the scriptures."

Asked later to explain what he meant by the term "trustee-witness," Bates replied that every Christian has been entrusted by God with the management of certain affairs for God, and is thus both a "trustee" and a "witness."

He added that the word "trustee" implies some of the same responsibility as the word "steward" or "stewardship," but that he felt a fresh concept needed to emerge with excitement and creativity concerning the "trusteeship" (or stewardship) of responsibility Christians have.

In his address, Bates said that this concept is largely neglected, and that Baptists have not been taught what it really means to be a "trustee-witness."

While Baptists have emphasized the responsibility of tithing (giving one-tenth to the church), they have often neglected to teach that "not just a tithe is holy unto the Lord, but all of life's wealth is a trust," Bates said.

"Our willingness to compromise for a portion in giving has carried over into our missions philosophy," he added. "We have tried to conduct missions by proxy."

"I do not believe we shall long survive when the total task of the church is done by a few," the SBC president declared.

He expressed doubt that anyone present really believes "that he can give his proxy to witness to our mission boards and their missionaries."

"Why, then," he questioned, "do we hope to succeed by proxy promotion in stewardship (trusteeship)?"

Saying it was not just the business of the denomination's Stewardship Commission to promote the Cooperative Program, the SBC unified budget plan, Bates stated: "It is the first business and the main business of every agency of this convention to help push and personalize the Cooperative Program."

"Unless the Baptist Press finds a way to do this, it is guilty of 'sitting on' the grandest story it could print week by week," Bates added.

"If the mission boards, seminaries, agencies and commissions do not pitch in and help, it seems to me that this would be the equivalent of 'biting the hand that feeds you,' or at least never clasp it in thanks," he said.

Bates told the 260 denominational leaders, including leaders for state conventions, all SBC agencies and members of the SBC Executive Committee, that "the influence of those gathered in this place today, if properly exerted, could not only change the spirit of the Southern Baptist Convention...we could change the world."

-30-

390 Attend National Bus
Clinic At Georgia Church

2/24/71

DECATUR, Ga. (BP)--A national bus clinic, sponsored by Woodlawn Baptist Church here, drew a total of 390 participants from churches in 23 states for a "how-to-do-it" session on theories and practical aspects of using church buses in evangelism.

Speakers dealt with subjects ranging from job descriptions of people involved in such programs to acquisition of equipment, with emphasis on the use of buses and what they can mean to the local church.

William A. Powell, head of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's department of survey and special studies, and the director of Woodlawn's bus ministry, had this to say about trends among churches using buses to boost church attendance:

"After three years of intensive research throughout the nation for the (Home Mission) board and others involved in the bus ministry idea, we have discovered that the size of the church and the population density of the community make no difference.

"The question is," he added, "Is the church willing to use buses to evangelize its community?"

Numerous participants told of the value of buses in their church situations.

"The bus ministry has been a real shot in the arm in revitalizing a large inner-city church," one Tennessee pastor said.

"A bus ministry is a most effective technique in reaching the apartment house dwellers of our community," another participant added.

Woodlawn Pastor Fred Wolfe demonstrated his enthusiasm for the clinic by announcing that his church would sponsor a similar conference in 1972.

Woodlawn, in planning the meeting, had anticipated 50 participants. "This was truly a nationwide conference and we were genuinely surprised by the number who attended," said Don Mabry, Woodlawn member and one of the conference planners.

"It went far beyond our dreams of what it could accomplish," added Mabry, associate secretary of the SBC Home Mission Board's department of survey and special studies.

Speakers included Jack Stanton, associate in the board's Division of Evangelism and John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church, Houston, who spoke to the group by telephone for 45 minutes.

-30-

Tornados Damage Four SBC
Churches In Mississippi

JACKSON, MISS. (BP)--A series of tornados, described as the worst to hit Mississippi in three decades, destroyed or seriously damaged at least four Southern Baptist Churches in the Delta area of the state.

Damage and destruction was cited at First Baptist Church, Inverness; Delta City Baptist Church, Delta City; Central Baptist Church, Little Yazoo; and Tillatoba Baptist Church, Tillatoba, Miss.

Pastors homes at each of these churches were also destroyed or damaged, according to reports received by the Baptist Record, Baptist state paper here.

Mississippi Baptist Convention Executive Secretary W. Douglas Hudgens and W. R. Roberts, the convention's pension board representative, spent two days in the area checking the extent of the damage.

Hudgens said that because telephone lines were down and communications were difficult, they were not able to determine the real extent of damage both to Baptist churches and those of other denominations.

At least one Baptist deacon, Aaron Brumfield of Central Baptist Church in Little Yazoo, Miss., was killed. Brumfield was treasurer of the church and a leading layman.

The wife and two children of the pastor of the Little Yazoo church were injured, though not seriously. Pete Bradfield is pastor of the church, located just south of Yazoo City, Miss.

Mrs. John Cobb, wife of the pastor of First Baptist Church, Inverness, Miss., was hospitalized briefly from injuries received in the tornado, but her condition was not serious.

At Tillatoba, Miss., the tornado struck the church during the church training hour on Sunday evening, but no one was seriously injured, according to A.M. Moore, pastor, who was in the building at the time.

The church's new sanctuary was "heavily damaged," and the pastor's home was reported as "completely demolished." Moore's automobile parked near the house was apparently a complete loss.

Accurate estimates of the extent of damage, however, was not available three days after the tornados struck.

According to news reports, at least 90 persons were killed, with hundreds injured.

Hudgens said that Mississippi Baptists were giving serious consideration to plans for aiding the churches and pastors hit by the tornados, but details had not yet been finalized on relief efforts.



BAPTIST PRESS

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

RECEIVED
FEB 25 1971

HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SBC

Lynn May

~~SECRET~~ HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
187 BENTON AVE. N.
NASHVILLE, TENN. 37203