



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 30, 1971

**Ethiopian Newspaper Praises
Baptist Missionaries' Work**

ADDIS ABEBA, Ethiopia (BP)--The largest circulation English-language newspaper in Ethiopia has published an article by an Ethiopian newsman commending the work of Southern Baptist missionaries in Ethiopia for their emphasis on helping people help themselves.

In an article in the Ethiopian Herald, Melaku Kifle examined the work of Southern Baptist missionaries in the highlands of the Menz District. There the missionaries are working among people faithful to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

He asked: "How can missionaries from the West work with an indigenous church in Africa which is traditionally Christian without undermining her authority and structure?"

Answering his own question, Kifle said: "The Baptists working in the highlands of Menz are, by no means, missionaries in the classic mould. They are 'layman abroad' who are indeed of a different type... Their emphasis is on self-help, self-sustained growth, and ultimate self-sufficiency."

Kifle pointed out that the mission team operating in the remote highlands of his country is organized to meet the specific needs of "a community steeped in tradition who live by farming and who lack basic health care."

The Southern Baptist agriculturalist missionary is experimenting with a variety of crops and trees which might grow in the area, Kifle continued, and the mission veterinarian plans to see if better breeds of animals can be produced.

The team physician is trying to set up throughout the highlands health centers where he can treat and refer patients. Toward this end, the Baptist mission built and equipped a health center at Mehal Meda and turned it over to the government. The clinic now belongs to the community.

"The Baptist Mission from all apparent circumstances perceive very well what their purpose should be," said Kifle. They want to be of use to the people for a limited amount of time--only as long as it takes to teach these people the knowledge and skills which will improve their way of life and give them greater self-sufficiency.

"In short, they are working themselves out of a job," he said. To become entrenched in an area, to foster in the community a dependency upon the mission, to force their authority and structure upon an alien culture--these would be "false and dangerous goals which would work against the good of all concerned."

The aspect of Baptist work which "amazed and gratified" Kifle is the level of Baptist cooperation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Menz.

"At no point have they interfered with the traditional church structure in the area," he said. "Rather, they have used it as a base of support for their own special work in the community."

The missionaries are teaching Orthodox deacons to weave rugs, and they attempt to work out through the church fathers in Menz any problems with the people.

The prevailing attitude is that "we are all Christians and, therefore, we can all work together in Christian fellowship," Kifle noted.

Recognizing that Southern Baptists are a strongly evangelical people, he asks: "How can these people fulfill their special mission to bear witness to Christ?"

He suggests that the missionaries are bearing a very effective witness in helping others "to stand on their own feet by creating in them a climate of awareness that enables them to meet their own needs."

The Southern Baptist Missionary force in Ethiopia consists of Jerry and Rosie Bedsole of Birmingham, Ala., and Lafayette County, Mo.; Sam and Ginny Cannata of Houston, Tex., and Hollandale, Miss.; John and Marie Cheyne of Anniston and Fort Deposit, Ala.; Lynn and Suzanne Groce of El Paso, Tex., and Tampa, Fla.; Bill and Nina Lewis of Sarasota and Miami, Fla.; Raymond and Lauralee Lindholm of Grover City and Arroyo Grande, Calif.; James and Roberta Nelson of Glendale, Ariz., and Seattle, Wash; and Garland and Sally Threlkeld of Mexico, Mo., and Lufkin, Tex.

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President Proclaims May
As Senior Citizens Month

4/30/71

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Richard Nixon has set May, 1971, as Senior Citizens Month with the theme to be "Toward a National Policy on Aging."

The presidential proclamation pointed out that Senior Citizens Month, 1971 is especially significant since this is the year of the White House Conference on Aging.

The governor of every state has called for a state conference on aging to be held during May. From these state conferences will come policy recommendations to be submitted to the White House Conference next November.

The President declared that the nation must change the outlook for 20 million older Americans. Their latter years should be "days of reward, happiness and opportunity," but "too often they have been days of disappointment, loneliness and anxiety," he said.

"Perhaps the greatest error which younger Americans make in dealing with the elderly," Nixon continued, "is to underestimate the energy and skill which they can still contribute to their country."

The President said that during the past year, several hundred thousand older people wrote to the officials of the federal government to tell them what they desire. "We learned once again that what they seek most of all is a continuing role in shaping the destiny of their society," he observed.

The President said that Senior Citizens Month should be a time to thank the older citizens for their contribution to America's progress. He said that it was also a time to ask "whether they are now sharing in that progress as fully as they deserve and desire."

Nixon asked that government at all levels, voluntary groups and private organizations give special attention to the problems of older Americans during the month of May.

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Men's Conference Slated
On Missions During SBC

4/30/71

ST. LOUIS (BP)--"Laymen in Missions" will be the theme of the Baptist Men's Conference scheduled at Southwest Baptist Church here on Monday, May 31, prior to the Southern Baptist Convention, June 1-3.

Primary purpose of the meeting, according to W. J. Isbell, director of the men's department for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, will be to present ideas on how Baptist laymen can become involved in mission outreach.

The conference will also provide an opportunity for laymen attending the SBC as well as local laymen from the St. Louis area to attend a national Southern Baptist men's conference, Isbell said.

Four major addresses will highlight the program, which is scheduled from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on May 31.

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Speakers are Jack Stanton, associate director, Evangelism Division, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Atlanta; James Johnson, a computer expert from Arlington, Tex.; Dr. Timothy Pennell, professor at Bowman Gray School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, N.C.; and Fred Rhodes, deputy administratory of the Veterans Administration, Washington, D.C.

Stanton will address the laymen in involvement in missions through evangelism, Johnson data management supervisor for General Portland Cement Co., in Dallas and coordinator of Actions for Christ, Inc., will speak on involving laymen in missions through vocations.

Dr. Pennell will deal with missions through professions, and Rhodes, current first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, will speak on involving laymen in missions through the denomination.

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Ministers Wives Set
St. Louis Luncheon

4/30/71

ST. LOUIS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Conference of Ministers' Wives will hold a luncheon meeting here Tuesday, June 1, at Third Baptist Church, carrying out the theme, "Meet Me in St. Louis."

Featured speaker for the luncheon will be David Edens of Stephens College, Columbia, Mo., a noted marriage counselor, psychotherapist, professor and writer.

Edens, former minister of counseling at Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio, Tex., is the author of Why God Gave Parents Children, Sexual Understanding Among Young Married Adults and Making the Most of Family Worship.

Musical entertainment will be presented by Mr. and Mrs. David Wilch of the Kirkwood Baptist Church of St. Louis.

Mrs. Malcolm Knight of Jacksonville, Fla., president of the organization, said tickets would be available in St. Louis on Monday, May 31. Advance reservations may be made by writing to the vice president of the organization, Mrs. Brooks Ramsey, 67 Crestwood Dr., St. Louis, said Mrs. Knight.

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California Baptist Board
Opposes State Legislation

4/30/71

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--The Executive Board of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California adopted resolutions opposing legislation authorizing licensed prostitution in the state, a state lottery or other forms of gambling, and aid to parochial schools through a "voucher system" or any other method.

The board, meeting here, also accepted the resignation of the editor of the California Southern Baptist and adopted a record mission offering goal for 1972.

J. Terry Young resigned as editor of the paper after eight years, effective June 30. Young will join the faculty of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

The board approved a Cooperative Program goal for 1972 of \$1,460,000 an increase of \$70,000 over the 1971 budget goal. Of the total, 25 per cent will go to world mission causes of the Southern Baptist Convention. Final approval must come from the full convention next fall.

In the resolutions, the board expressed opposition to a bill proposed by Assemblyman LeRoy Greene providing for state licenses for houses of prostitution. Greene said he introduced the measure after a poll of his constituents indicated that 69 per cent of them favor such legalization of prostitution.

The resolutions opposed at least five different measures currently before the state legislature.

The board took note that the California legislature is considering bills "extensively designed to aid parents of children attending private schools (which) in fact channel public funds into parochial schools.

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The resolution expressed opposition to "the implementation of any educational voucher system or any other system which would permit the use of public funds either directly or indirectly by private or church-related elementary and secondary schools.

Other resolutions opposed legislation which would authorized a state lottery, or other forms of gambling, and expressed concern about criteria adopted by the U.S. Supreme Court in determining what material is pornographic or not.

The board urged Baptists in California to examine the pertinent issues and express their convictions to the appropriate legislators.

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Chicago Churches Test
SBC Witnessing Materials

4/30/71

CHICAGO, Ill. (BP)--In a move to test new Southern Baptist evangelistic materials outside the Atlanta area, 27 Chicago churches held simultaneous lay evangelism schools here, recently.

Use of the materials in a Thursday night visitation in the Chicago area resulted in 43 professions of faith, and 27 similar decisions on other days of the week.

Witness Involvement Now (WIN), produced by the Division of Evangelism of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board had been previously used only in Atlanta churches with division staff members teaching. The Chicago schools were proving ground to determine whether the materials are as effective in a local church situation, board officials said.

An average of 475 people attended the WIN schools, which featured classroom type presentations for five days. On the fourth evening, the students went into homes for personal witnessing, testing the methods they had learned during the week.

One layman spoke at a downtown rescue mission where 15 professions of faith were registered. A teenage girl witnessed to 11 of her friends and nine expressed commitment to Christ.

Jack Stanton, associate director of the division and director of lay evangelism, called the week of a success. "This meeting reached and trained laymen of various backgrounds to witness effectively and proved the feasibility of our ultimate goal which is to train laymen to train other laymen," Stanton said.

WIN materials prepare a person to lead a prospect from an introduction to Christianity to the beginning his growth as a Christian Stanton said.

This was also the first time laymen had been used as teachers. Of the 23 teachers about eight were laymen.

James Norman, assistant to the superintendent of missions in Chicago South Zone, expressed pleasure at the use of laymen in training. "In every school were laymen led there was a good response. Pastors said that having a lay teacher added to the effectiveness of the school."

The Chicago week also disclosed the adaptiveness of WIN materials to each church's particular situation, Norman said.

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Constitutional Convention
Bill Gets First Approval

4/30/71

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Separation of Powers has reported favorably a bill to establish procedures for and to prevent "runaway" Constitutional Conventions called under Article V of the Constitution.

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Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D., N.C.) is chairman of the subcommittee and author of the bill. He has requested Sen. James O. Eastland (D., Miss.), chairman of the Judiciary Committee, to schedule action by the full committee as soon as possible.

Before becoming law the bill will have to pass the Senate and House of Representatives and be signed by the President of the United States.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in its March meeting expressed concern that proposals in the various states calling for a Constitutional Convention would result in a "runaway" convention that might jeopardize some of the freedoms in the Bill of Rights.

Although the Baptist agency did not approve specifically any particular bill before the Congress, they did express approval of the "spirit" and intent of the Ervin Bill.

The reason for apprehension about Constitutional Conventions is that a number of states have approved a resolution calling for such a convention. During the 91st Congress, 32 of the required 34 states had passed resolutions calling for a Constitutional Convention for a variety of reasons.

"Time is of the essence," Ervin said, "in light of the move in the state legislatures to call a convention to propose constitutional amendments dealing with revenue sharing, and the dangerous lack of precedent or procedures should the requisite 34 states succeed in petitioning Congress for such a convention."

"It is generally recognized," he continued, "that virtually no precedent exists to guide the states and Congress in answering the complex and sensitive questions involved in calling a convention under Article V.

"I introduced this bill in an effort to provide answers to these difficult questions and to ensure that we will never have a runaway convention that might attempt to make wholesale changes in the constitution."

The Ervin bill would provide procedures for state legislatures to adopt and rescind resolutions asking for a Constitutional Convention. It includes procedures for the conduct of such a convention.

The limited authority of Constitutional Conventions is stated in the following provision of the bill: "No Convention called under this act may propose any amendment or amendments of a nature different from that stated in the concurrent resolution calling the convention."

In the discussion of the possibility of a Constitutional Convention at the meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, it was pointed out that many political experts fear that the entire constitution could be "junked" by certain interest groups if they gained control of such a convention.

It was within the context of preventing potential loss of basic rights concerning religious liberty and the inalienable rights of individuals that the Baptist committee took its action approving the objectives of the Ervin Bill.



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