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October 26, 1971

New York Baptists Urge Prison Reform after Attica

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MADISON, N.J. (BP)--Adopting a brief resolution referring to the prison riots at Attica, N.Y., the Baptist Convention of New York urged Baptists to work for prison reforms and provide innovative programs to make prisons "more honestly correctional."

"Attica made us all aware that there is a lack of concern in our prisons for individuals in rehabilitating them to cope with today's society and have respect for their fellow man," stated the resolution, which was adopted unanimously by the convention.

"Be it resolved," continued the resolution, "that we follow the teaching of Christ by seeking reforms that are Christian-motivated; and provide ministries and other innovative programs to make prisons more honestly correctional."

The Attica resolution was one of four statements adopted by the convention during its second annual meeting.

Another resolution expressed opposition to House Joint Resolution (H.J.R.) 191, which would provide for a "prayer amendment" to the U.S. Constitution advocating "non-denominational prayer" in "public buildings." The prayer amendment is scheduled for a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives in early November.

Other resolutions opposed the use of public funds for non-public education, dealt with developing Christian day school ministries, and charged the convention's public affairs committee with the responsibility of identifying key critical issues within the community, state and nation for appropriate action by the churches.

Elected president of the convention was Homer ("Spot") Schumacher, an International Business Machines (IBM) customer engineering manager from Matawan, N.J.

The convention adopted a budget of \$151,114, allocating \$22,000, or 17 per cent, to support world-wide Southern Baptist Convention mission causes.

A "rock-tata," a Christian rock musical written by Kenneth Medema of Montclair, N.J., was premiered during the convention by a 40-voice youth choir from area churches. Entitled "The Joy Explosion," the "rock-tata" depicted the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Convention ministries were highlighted with a "Preview '72" presentation. According to Paul James, executive secretary of the convention, the presentation outlined goals for 10 per cent increases in convention programs next year.

Reports disclosed that the convention, which embraces 120 congregations in New York State, northern New Jersey, and southwestern Connecticut, has a total of 11,700 members, an increase of 1,300. Baptisms for the year totalled 975, an increase of 130.

Next year's convention will meet in Albany, N.Y., at the Thruway Hyatt Motor Inn, Oct. 19-20, 1972.

Snedden Elected Leader
Of West Virginia Baptists

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WILLIAMSON, W. Va. (BP)--John I. Snedden, director of missions and evangelism for the Western Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists, was elected executive secretary of the state Baptist body during its annual convention here.

Snedden, who pioneered in establishing Southern Baptist mission work in West Virginia, was elected the convention's executive leader by the Executive Board of the convention, and the election was later ratified by the full convention.

It was the highlight of the two-day meeting of the convention at East Williamson Baptist Church here.

In other actions, the convention adopted a budget of \$205,200, an increase of about \$35,000. The budget allocates 20 per cent to Southern Baptist world mission causes.

The convention organized a state Woman's Missionary Union Convention, electing Mrs. Robert Gillespie of Bluefield, W. Va., as president. Mrs. Ola Cox of St. Albans, W. Va., is executive secretary of the W. M. U.

Elected president of the state convention was Herbert Slaughter, pastor of Highland Avenue Baptist Church, South Charleston, W. Va.

Snedden, the new executive secretary, helped start Southern Baptist work in West Virginia, serving for 13 years as area missionary of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Charleston, W. Va.

He came to the state from Ohio, where he was pastor of what is now First Baptist Church, Athens, Ohio. Previously he was pastor in Lancaster, Ohio. He is a graduate of Bob Jones University, Greenville, S. C.

For the past two years, Snedden has been director of missions and evangelism for the convention, which has not had an executive secretary until now.

Serving with Snedden is Francis R. Tallant, director of religious education for the convention. Snedden and Tallant have been "co-directors" of the convention. Tallant will continue to serve as director of religious education.

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Seelig Resigns Seminary Post;
Named Aide for Local Corporation

10/26/71

FORT WORTH (BP)--John Earl Seelig, assistant to the president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here since 1960, has resigned to become administrative assistant to the president of the First Worth Corp. of Fort Worth.

The corporation is the parent organization of a group of diversified operating divisions and wholly-owned subsidiaries which manufacture and market a varied product line from Justin boots to brick.

Seelig, an accredited member of Public Relations Society of America, will be responsible for the corporation's public relations and administrative activities.

A native of Fredericksburg, Tex., he holds the bachelor of science and doctor of humanities degrees from Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., and a master's degree from Southwestern Seminary.

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