



BAPTIST PRESS

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October 31, 1972

**Sunday School Board
Consultant Hijacked**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Dennis Conniff, a consultant in youth work for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here who was aboard an Eastern Air Lines jet hijacked from Houston to Cuba, admitted afterwards that "I was scared to death.

"It was more than a hijacking, it was a terrorist action," said Conniff, one of 40 passengers aboard the flight scheduled from Houston to Miami.

Four armed hijackers, including a father and son wanted on bank robbery and murder charges, forced the plane to go to Cuba, killing one Eastern Air Lines agent and wounding another in Houston.

Conniff was asleep at the time. But he had a rude awakening.

"I was awakened by a shotgun in my stomach, held by the leader of the group," Conniff related. "He frisked me with one hand while holding the shotgun with the other.

"Quite a few of the passengers were harrassed, but none were hurt," he added.

Admitting that he was "scared to death," Conniff confided that "I think my heart stopped beating."

The shots were fired in Houston, leaving three or four bullet holes in the door of the plane.

Conniff said the pilot later told him that the plane had to fly at a low altitude all the way to Cuba from Houston because of the bullet holes.

He said that the passengers were "treated well in Cuba," despite delays caused by negotiations between the U.S. government and the Cuban government through the Swiss liaison.

Conniff had attended a meeting in Kansas at the state convention offices during the preceding week and was enroute to Miami to be on a program with Miss America.

Although he failed to arrive in time for the Sunday morning program with Miss America, he was able to meet with youth leaders of the church where he had been scheduled to appear. It was after 1:00 p.m. Sunday before the plane was able to leave Cuba.

Conniff went on to Dothan, Ala., to resume his business schedule after what he called the most unusual weekend of his life.

Although he is the first Sunday School Board worker on a hijacked plane, he is not the first Southern Baptist official. In 1968, Duke K. McCall, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, was on a plane hijacked from Miami while enroute to attend a meeting of seminary presidents.

During the past year, about 250 Sunday School Board employees were on 3,660 airline flights without incident. Conniff is the only one to be aboard a hijacked plane.

West Virginia Increases
Cooperative Program Gifts

HUNTINGTON, W. Va. (BP)--The West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists meeting here adopted several constitutional changes, re-elected its president, approved plans for future growth, and adopted a budget authorizing an increase of the percentage going to support world missions causes through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program.

Churches of the convention were challenged to begin at least one new mission in 1973, to train 20 per cent of their members in personal evangelism through the Witness Involvement Now (W.I.N.) materials, and to be involved in W.I. Evangelism clinics and People-to-People search programs.

The convention voted to keep the state convention offices at their present location in St. Albans, W. Va., "temporarily," and authorized the convention's Executive Board to seek suitable property on which new state offices may be built sometime in the future.

Three constitutional changes were approved. The changes would (1) provide for a more equitable distribution of Executive Board membership from across the state; (2) provide for election of three "trustees" for the convention to handle legal matters; and (3) name the executive secretary as treasurer of the convention, changing his title to executive secretary-treasurer.

Following a report that contributions through the state convention's budget had increased by 12 1/2 per cent during the first nine months of the year, the convention adopted a \$218,174 budget for 1973, including a \$113,140 goal from the churches and the remainder in budget support from the SBC Home Mission Board and Sunday School Board.

The 1973 budget will allocate 21 per cent to Southern Baptist Convention world mission causes through the Cooperative Program, rather than the 20 per cent previously going to SBC causes.

Herbert H. Slaughter, pastor of Highland Avenue Baptist Church of South Charleston, W. Va., was re-elected president of the convention.

Next year, the convention will meet at the Evangel Baptist Church, Weirton, W. Va., Oct. 25-26.

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Lee Porter Named to SBC
Christian Life Commission

B10/31/73

NASHVILLE (BP)--Lee Porter of Houston, former two-time vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has been named director of organization for the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Porter, 43, is pastor of the First Baptist Church of Bellaire, a suburb of Houston. He assumes the position here effective Nov. 15.

Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the commission, said Porter will work in a liaison capacity with program leaders of other SBC agencies in emphasizing applied Christianity. He also will be responsible for organizational arrangements of the commission's conference program, Valentine said.

Valentine added that Porter "comes to this position with unique qualifications of Christian commitment, social concern, moral convictions, special graduate training in Christian ethics, denominational leadership and pastoral experience of 25 years."

Porter served as second and then first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, from 1968-70. He is also a former vice president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

He holds the doctor of theology degree in Christian ethics from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, as well as the bachelor of divinity degree. He is also a

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graduate of Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, Mo., and William Jewell College, Liberty Mo., both Baptist schools. In 1970, William Jewell College awarded Porter the honorary doctor of divinity degree.

At present, he is president of the Greater Houston Clergy Association and is a member of the committee on order of business for Southern Baptist Convention.

He was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Glen Rose, Tex., Calvary Baptist Church, Casa Grande, Ariz., and Winbourne Avenue Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, La.

Porter succeeds W.L. Howse III as the commission's director of organization. Howse resigned last year to become director of the alcohol and drug abuse program for the Mental Health Department of the State of Tennessee.

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Baptist College Aide
Killed in Car Crash

10/31/72

BONNER SPRINGS, Kan. (BP)--The assistant to the president of William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo., Lon G. Amick, was killed in an automobile accident on the Kansas turnpike near here.

Memorial services for Amick were led by William Jewell President Thomas S. Field and W.C. Link, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Liberty, Mo., on Oct. 26, with burial in Kansas City.

Amick, formerly president of a national fund-raising firm based in Kansas City, has served as director of development, and was in charge of the donor support program, alumni services and public relations for William Jewell College.

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