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### Non-Controversial Convention Predicted For Portland SBC

PORTLAND (BP)--More than 10,000 Southern Baptists from throughout the nation are expected to gather here June 12-14 for what some veteran Baptist observers have predicted will be a calm and uncontroversial 116th annual session.

"I do not foresee any controversial business emerging, but there probably will be some debate on issues, especially resolutions, brought up at the convention," said Southern Baptist Convention President Owen Cooper of Yazoo City, Miss., in an interview with Baptist Press.

Cooper, who retired May 1 as president of the Mississippi Chemical Corp., predicted most of the debate will come over resolutions on such topics as abortion, amnesty, ordination of women as deacons or ministers, sex education, prayer and Bible reading in public schools, tax credits for parochial schools or other topics.

Debate is almost sure to come, he added, on Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Duke McCall's proposed motion to assign the work and programs of the denomination's Stewardship Commission to the SBC Executive Committee.

If adopted, the proposal would in effect abolish, effective Oct. 1, 1974, the Stewardship Commission as an agency of the SBC. A similar proposal was defeated by the SBC last year in Philadelphia.

Cooper said he knew of no plans by individuals or groups to revive efforts to ban the Broadman Bible Commentary, a question that has plagued the SBC for the past three years. A motion to ban the commentary, which some conservative Baptists feel is too liberal, was defeated last year by the convention in Philadelphia.

Recently in Atlanta, a new conservative group called the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship was organized, announcing its intentions to "work within the framework of the SBC" to oppose theological liberalism.

M.O. Owens, pastor of Parkwood Baptist Church in Gastonia, N.C., new president of the new organization, was quoted by a Houston (Tex.) Chronicle reporter as saying that the organization was not planning any formal action at the Portland convention.

He said there was not much chance of "doing anything" this year, but he hoped the new organization would consolidate all other conservative groups into one strong organization that would have more influence at the 1974 convention in Dallas.

Editorials in several Baptist state papers across the nation have questioned the goals of the new conservative organization, but no clear indication of the group's immediate plans has yet emerged.

Editorials in almost half-dozen Baptist state papers have predicted calm and uncontroversial sessions in Portland. Baptist state papers in South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Texas and Maryland have agreed that there appear to be no over-riding issues facing the Portland meeting.

Cooper said he felt the most significant actions to come before the convention would be the recommended \$35 million Cooperative Program unified budget, which supports the work of 19 SBC agencies; and the concern for world missions he expects to be generated by the three evening programs on the convention schedule.

Cooper said the program emphasis on foreign and home missions, plus the closing night program on the theme, "Share the Word Now," should "fill the messengers with enthusiasm for missions, the great cohesive force that unites us, and put into perspective any debate over resolutions and other business during the daytime sessions."

Major speakers for the convention include Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield, Miami Dolphins football star Norm Evans, Paris artist Annie Vallotton who illustrated the Today's English Version of the New Testament, black Baptist minister Frederick Sampson of Detroit, professor William M. Pinson of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth; Birmingham pastor Dotson M. Nelson who preaches the annual sermon, and Cooper, who brings the annual presidential address.

If tradition is followed, Cooper will likely be re-elected to a second one-year term as president of the 12-million member convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

A dozen recommendations, including the budget, will be presented by the 64-member SBC Executive Committee for consideration by the "messengers," as Baptists call their delegates.

The Executive Committee will meet on the Monday preceeding the convention's opening Tuesday morning session to consider two items it could possibly recommend the next day.

One is a proposal by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to establish a Bible-college aimed at training Baptist ministers who lack formal education, especially a college degree.

The other proposal is the selection of a meeting place for the 1978 convention. The committee is considering Atlanta for the 1978 session.

Several editorials in Baptist state papers, citing lack of hotel accommodations for the crowds expected for the Portland convention, have urged the SBC to consider limiting the annual meeting to a half-dozen cities across the nation where there are adequate accommodations and a large enough meeting hall.

Although only 10,000 registered messengers are expected, as many as 18,000 may attend some of the sessions, including family members who have come to the Portland meeting, the first session in SBC history held in the Northwest.

No specific motion or recommendation, however, on limiting the convention to a half-dozen cities has been brought to the attention of convention leaders.

After a study of means to involve more laymen in the annual sessions of the convention, the SBC Executive Committee will recommend that SBC churches be encouraged to share the expenses of laymen, as well as their pastors, to attend the annual convention.

Progress reports on several other studies are expected to be presented. Reports will likely come on current studies by the so-called Committee of Fifteen which is studying the total structure of the denomination; by the SBC Executive Committee which is studying possible need for a program to help Baptist pastors in the area of counseling and relocation; and by a special committee asked to study means of increasing retirement benefits for Baptist pastors.

Cooper and other Baptist observers agree that with five hours and 40 minutes on the three-day program devoted to miscellaneous and special business, almost anything could be introduced from the convention floor, including unforeseen controversy.

Much of the three-day meeting will be devoted to six hours of reports from the 22 agencies and related organizations on their work during the past year, and plans for the future.

19 Royal Ambassadors  
To Get Service Awards

PORTLAND (BP)--Seventeen Royal Ambassadors will be recognized by Southern Baptist Convention President Owen Cooper during the denomination's annual convention here June 13.

Each of the Royal Ambassadors, members of the missions-education organization for boys, has earned the Ambassador Service National Award which represents 750 hours of volunteer service through a local church.

Three of the boys will be in Portland to receive a national award plaque from the SBC president.

The recipients to be recognized on the Convention platform are Boyd Lynn Worthey of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Pasco, Washington; and John Bob Gilbert and Phillip Johnson of Union Avenue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee.

The other national award winners are Tommy Mayhood of Sugarland, Texas; Ken Raines of Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Jerry Downs and Ricky Black of Pineville, Louisiana; and Edwin Bridges of Morgantown, North Carolina.

Other recipients are Alan Huesing of Irving, Texas; Randy Whitener of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Ronnie Wagner and Bruce Anderson of LaMarque, Texas.