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November 2, 1973

Missouri Moves to Resolve
Leadership, Finance Crisis

COLUMBIA, MO. (BP)--A record 1,889 "messengers" to the annual meeting of the Missouri Baptist Convention dispensed with the planned program for their three-day annual meeting here to concentrate on settling a year-long controversy over convention leadership and finances.

During two days of almost continual open discussion of convention business, the messengers questioned auditors about charges of administrative mismanagement, considered motions for improving convention business practice, elected 17 new members to the convention's executive board and the board authorized a procedures committee to recommend guidelines for selecting a new executive secretary.

Early in the opening session a motion was passed by a large majority to eliminate most of the scheduled reports by the convention's agencies, institutions and committees "to provide adequate time to discuss fully the business conditions of this convention and the state of its leadership."

W.T. Holland, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cape Girardeau, Mo., and a former president of the Missouri convention, introduced the motion.

Early debate centered on the 51-member executive board. The convention's nominating committee submitted 20 persons for election to the board. Five of them were replaced by nominations from the floor. Only three of the 20 were persons returned to the board for second terms.

On August 24, the board had received a report from special auditors that serious irregularities appear in the convention's financial records for the calendar years 1970, 1971 and 1972.

At that time the auditors stated, "The records and funds of the Missouri Baptist Convention have been maintained in an unacceptable manner with lack of proper controls over the funds, inadequate records, lack of supporting evidence and commingling of the personal funds of the Executive Secretary with assets of the Benevolent Fund."

Earl O. Harding, who had been executive secretary since 1954, died on August 12.

Representatives of both the convention's regular auditors and the special auditors were present to answer questions. One concern which emerged was the propriety of the convention borrowing \$1,040,000 from its restricted Building Fund for operations and for remodeling the convention's office building.

The convention referred to its executive board a motion to refinance this loan and pay back the Building Fund by October, 1974.

The 1972 audit of convention financial affairs also showed a \$254,654.39 excess of expenses over income.

The convention voted to refer to its Structure and Reorganization Committee a lengthy motion calling for clearer executive board policies on conflict of interest, commingling of employee personal funds with convention funds, compliance with the spirit as well as the letter of tax and revenue laws and complete openness and full disclosure by the board on these and other matters. Committee membership was increased from four to 15.

Messengers accepted the auditors recommendation and voted that convention financial records be closed on December 31 each year instead of on January 5 or 10, as has been the practice in recent years.

H.L. McClanahan, who has been serving as interim executive secretary since August, submitted his resignation to the board in a pre-convention meeting. He stated, "I have been placed in an untenable position that will not permit me to perform to the maximum of my ability." He agreed to a request by the board to stay on until a permanent executive secretary can be secured.

A motion outlining a procedure for the selection of a new executive secretary was referred to the executive board. At the close of the convention the board met and authorized a procedures committee to recommend to the board guidelines and a procedure for selecting a new executive.

A motion calling for the firing of W. Ross Edwards as editor of The Word and Way, journal of the Missouri Baptist Convention, was introduced by J.B. Phillips, a layman from St. Louis. After debate, the motion lost by a narrow margin. Edwards said to the crowd, "I appreciate the confidence demonstrated by this vote."

Messengers adopted a 1974 Cooperative Program (unified budget) goal of \$6,275,000. The first \$5 million will be divided--65 per cent for Missouri Baptist causes, 35 per cent for Southern Baptist Convention causes. Fifty per cent of all receipts over that amount will go for the four Missouri Baptist colleges and 50 per cent for other Missouri Baptist and Southern Baptist causes.

Convention receipts are up 7.8 per cent and Cooperative Program (undesignated) receipts are up 9.3 per cent, according to Billy T. Hargrove, the convention's stewardship director. Heavy expenditures accounted for the 1972 deficit.

The convention's membership was up about 13,000 to 546,705 over a year ago. Baptisms reported for the past year totaled 19,106, slightly less than the previous year.

Elected convention president for the coming year was G. Hugh Wamble of Kansas City, professor of church history, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He succeeds F.R. Cole, pastor, First Baptist Church, Raytown, Mo.

Following the convention, Cole, who presided over the sessions, said, "I think that everyone, regardless of the position they had before, came away with an optimistic outlook about the future."

"For the first time we really got down to open discussion of all the issues that people were concerned about. Everybody had a chance to express himself," Cole said. "This came to be very important to us, to get everything out in the open. I don't believe we could have gone any longer without it."

Regarding the significance of convention sessions, Wamble said, "One, the convention was a reaction against the past and there was considerable openness in dealing with past grievances.

"The second significance has to do with the future. The procedures of the convention, the operating of the convention itself, will need to be reflected on very carefully and deliberately," Wamble stated.

First vice president for the coming year is James L. Sells, president, Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Mo. Chosen second vice president is Allen R. Bartlett, pastor, First Baptist Church, Shelbina, Mo. Charles Swiney, pastor, Southside Baptist Church, Fulton, Mo., was named recording secretary.

Three sermons were delivered to the convention by Carl E. Bates, pastor, First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. A fourth sermon was omitted at Bates' request because of a shortage of time.

The messengers adopted resolutions against lobby laws which jeopardize citizen rights, legalized gambling and government-aided religion.

Another resolution supported legislation to curb alcoholism and drunken driving. A general resolution of thanks to various people also expressed gratitude for all the good work done by Harding and McClanahan. A resolution on abortion was referred to the Missouri Christian Life Commission.

Regarding the future of the convention, Cole, the retiring president, said, "I am optimistic and believe that the best days are ahead. We are going to have some changes made in structure and method of operation, but I think that they will all be good and healthy for us and help us to do even better than we have done."

Wamble, the newly elected president, said regarding the coming year, "We must not let other matters divert us from the very reason for the convention's existence, namely to be an efficient agency of service for missions, education, and benevolence."

"We have a committee to study the structure of the organization. This committee, I think, is the most important committee to be working in the coming year," Wamble said.

Wamble added, "In time of controversy feelings become rather tender, and distrust develops. We will simply have to work on repairing the situation which has developed. This is where (the convention's) resources of grace and forgiveness will have to be relied on."

Elected chairman of the executive board was Don Evans, superintendent of missions, Joplin, Mo. Also chosen were Olan H. Runnels, pastor, Swope Park Baptist Church, Kansas City, vice chairman; and Don Kennedy, a layman from Nevada, Mo., secretary.

Members and chairman of the board's executive committee previously were appointed by the board chairman. This year each board member nominated 13 board members for the executive committee and the 13 persons with the highest votes were considered elected. The fourteenth member of the executive committee is the board chairman.

Executive committee officers elected were James Joslin, pastor, First Baptist Church, Springfield, chairman; Mrs. George Hammon, wife of a Crystal City, Mo., pastor, vice chairman; and Mrs. Warren Hearn, wife of the immediate past governor of Missouri, Jefferson City, secretary.

Attendance at the annual meeting was the highest in years, including 560 visitors besides the 1,889 messengers, a total registration of 2,449. On opening night at Columbia's First Baptist Church had standing room only, so the remaining sessions were shifted to Stephens College Auditorium.

The 1974 meeting of the convention will be in Joplin, Mo., October 28-30.

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Jaworski on Record in
Support of Court Orders

11/2/73

NASHVILLE (BP)--Leon Jaworski, named to succeed fired special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox, told a Baptist group nearly three years ago that he believes in the rule of law and effective power of court orders.

"Today's American scene reveals a threat to the efficacy of court orders and a disrespect of constituted authority that should alarm every minister of the gospel, every worshipper of God, every devotee of religious freedom" Jaworski said in early 1971 at a conference on "National Priorities and Christian Responsibility, in New York City. The conference was sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"It takes no depth of wisdom to realize that once the bonds of law are frayed and weak, court orders and other legal restraints correspondingly will lose their weight and force," Jaworski, a Presbyterian minister's son and graduate of Baylor University, a Southern Baptist school in Waco, Tex., told the conferees.

Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the Christian Life Commission, said Jaworski's statements should not be taken out of the context in which they were made in 1971, but he added:

"The tremendous importance of Mr. Jaworski's words today is obvious.

"It is time for the church to shed its timidity and speak boldly concerning the current moral crisis in government. It is time for all Christians who share Mr. Jaworski's concern

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for the rule of law, the efficacy of court orders and justice without special privileges or respect of persons to step forth with supportive words and deeds," Valentine said.

"I pray to God that this new special prosecutor may feel the strong undergirding of all Christians as he takes up the torch so shockingly taken from the hands of his predecessor and as he moves faithfully to carry out his commitment to bring to justice all the law breakers involved in the Watergate and related scandals."

At the 1971 Christian Life Commission conference, Jaworski suggested that religious institutions had not responded noticeably to the country's desperate need for leadership and a recommitment to voluntary compliance with the rule of law.

"With an avalanche of disobediences descending upon us, I had hoped for indications that the church and its organizations would take a leading role in re-establishing throughout our land a dedication to the acceptance of the rule of law and firmly denounce the concept that the individual has a right to choose which law to obey and which to defy.

"I view with similar concern the failure of other institutions and groups, as well as my own profession's remissiveness, to offer vigorous leadership in support of a national commitment to obey the law of our land," said the former president of the American Bar Association.

"The simple truth," explained Jaworski, "is that there's not a single worthy social or political gain that an interested citizenry cannot gain by resort to political processes."

Jaworski explained that he was not trying to prescribe the church's agenda, but said he was sure "the church cannot fail to take note of the modern day forms of disobediences rampant about us. Neither can it fail to do something about it and still retain its prestige as a force that contributes to the stability of the community.

"A nation in crises can scarcely afford its undergirding institutions to be timid or hesitant," he declared. "If we are not boldly to speak out and condemn the disrespects, the disobediences, the lawlessness now plaguing us, what will be the alternative?" he asked.

"The phrase 'law and order' is a time-honored one, having been embraced by every generation since the founding of our nation," observed Jaworski and "it seems--after all these years--to require a change, the addition of the word 'justice.'

"While seeing no real reason for the change, I gladly accept the addition," he said. "We should never cease aspiring to reach the ends of justice in all of our endeavors, but I would remind you that justice must come as the result of law, and it alone, because it is undeniably true that where there is no law there is no freedom.

"For church groups to be skirting this challenge (detering lawlessness and disobediences) to our society and instead to be taking on brush fires is but another indication of the failure of some church segments properly to assess their present-day responsibilities," he told the conferees.

"From what has been said," Jaworski continued, "it is easy to perceive that I am critical of the church's role of leadership today and that I feel that it has not discharged its responsibility to the rule of law.

"Were the church not dear to my heart," he continued, "I would not speak of it so. It has been a meaningful part of my life from the time of my birth in a parsonage to the present day. I want it to fulfill its mission to God and country so that every Christian can point to it with justifiable pride," Jaworski concluded.

November 2, 1973

Managua Examined Ten
Months After Quake

By A. Clark Scanlon

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (BP)--In January, 1973, Managua stirred from under the rubble and smoke like a city just awakening from a bad dream.

Under a cloud of red dust that rose from the powder dry streets, soldiers and government workers worked at the immense task of clearing debris from the streets to allow trucks, cars and ambulances to continue the search for trapped and dead.

In just 30 seconds the teeming city of 400,000 had seen 12,000 killed, 80 per cent of the downtown area destroyed and 300,000 left homeless, results of a devastating earthquake.

Those who escaped huddled around the edges of the disaster area in tents and hastily thrown together shacks.

By October, 1973, the rains had bathed the scenes and placed a growth of green grass and weeds over many of the scars.

On each street government signs bravely proclaim: "1973-74: year of reconstruction and hope."

Life has moved toward normal around the edges of the city, and schools are operating again in reconstructed or provisional quarters.

Gasoline stations, hardware stores, supermarkets and other food suppliers are carrying on regular activities.

Most of the tents are gone or are in front of houses where the homeowners are still afraid to sleep at night.

Although barbed wire previously sectioning off the center of town has now been removed, the Nicaraguan government has not yet allowed reconstruction of the downtown area until experts decide which areas will be reserved for parks because of their location over surface faults.

Many buildings, including those of the First Baptist Church, bear red crosses marking them as unsafe and destined for demolition.

The story of Baptist life is another story. Charles W. Bryan, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean, visited here to present Nicaraguan Baptists with a final check of \$18,950 from Southern Baptist Convention churches.

By previous agreement with Nicaraguan Baptist Convention officials, the funds were destined for unmet needs of the people after the focus of attention had left Nicaragua.

About \$10,000 went to support the convention program of extending loans and gifts to Baptist families to help them rebuild destroyed homes or to relocate elsewhere.

An additional \$3,000 was set aside to help families in crisis obtain clothes and food.

Responding to a climate of despair and spiritual need, Southern Baptists also gave \$3,450 to be used in evangelism, providing literature and hymnals.

The final \$2,500 will enable the Baptist hospital, working in temporary quarters here, to extend free or reduced-cost medical care to needy patients. The check was presented to the executive committee of the Nicaraguan Baptist Convention.

Bryan explained: "Southern Baptists had taken action to send food, medicines and clothes to the Nicaraguan people immediately after the earthquake, but we also realized that long after the tragedy no longer made the newspaper and television reports, needs would remain."

In March, the Foreign Mission Board asked Leslie Keyes, Southern Baptist missionary to Honduras, to oversee construction of temporary meeting places for the seven Baptist Churches of Managua.

Keyes and his wife, Naomi, worked with volunteer laborers from Texas and Oklahoma in the construction.

When travel mishaps and other problems prevented the full crew of workers from getting to Managua, the Keyes continued working and finally hired local laborers for the construction.

Today, all seven churches have adequate wooden buildings in which to hold services. Some churches report that, even though many homes were destroyed in the neighborhood, attendance is up. One church reported an attendance of 300, which was 50 more than before the earthquake.

The Nicaraguan convention itself has set a goal of 1,000 conversions and at least 500 baptisms for the year.

Ten months after the January, 1973, holocaust, Christians express a new spirit of love and hope in Nicaragua.

They find people more responsive to the gospel of Christ and also feel closer to fellow Christians than ever before.

One leader expressed his gratitude to God by saying, "When the earthquake broke down the walls, we could see love on the other side."

Although Southern Baptists do not have missionaries in Nicaragua, they could feel gratitude for having been able to help in the moment of tragedy.

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A. Clark Scanlon, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board field representative for Middle America, prepared this article for the Christian Index, official publication of the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia

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Baptists Launch
Seamen's Ministries

11/2/73

By Tim Nicholas
for Baptist Press

During the solemn moments of a dedication service on a front lawn in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., a group of young Filipino sailors approached nervously from behind the crowd.

The audience of 50 turned and began to applaud the young seamen, motioning them up onto the front porch of "The Beacon," an International Christian Seaman's service center.

Sailors are the primary reason for the center, located just inside the main gate of Port Everglades, a deepwater port at Ft. Lauderdale. The recent dedication officially opened the center for fulltime operation.

The concept of seamen's ministries as an outlet for world missions is spreading with centers and ministries popping up all over the United States.

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Mack Mobley, Southern Baptist foreign missionary in Kobe, Japan, who directs "Harbor Evangelism" there, lists 23 Baptist affiliated seamen's ministries in the United States, plus "contact" ministries in Japan, Canada, Bermuda and Korea.

To follow up contacts with sailors, as they move from port-to-port and back to their home countries, Mobley and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board compile addresses of ministries and persons who can continue relationships begun in other ports.

The Home Mission Board is also compiling a resource booklet for groups interested in starting a seaman's ministry.

The booklet will give advice on how to make initial contact on ships and how to get around language barriers to communication. Suggestions will be included for social gatherings (fellowships), relationships at church and at home, also for follow up.

The Florida center, operated by the Gulf Stream Baptist Association, is the culmination of three years of part-time volunteer work by Howard Botts, a self-employed apartment contractor.

Botts initially used his own home as a base of operations, inviting the often lonely seamen for fellowship. Sensing the need for additional ministry, the association bought a bus 18 months ago for him to transport men to churches and members' homes in the association.

Interest in the ministry boomed, and now Botts directs the shipboard visitation; Charles Loveday, a retired Navy man and ordained minister, supervises the center.

The center, situated in the former home of the port manager, has a full kitchen, a record player and television, ping pong and billiards. The facility is manned on a voluntary basis five nights a week by volunteers from the 35 associational churches. The buses run from ships to the churches on Wednesday and Sunday nights.

At the dedication service, Lt. Cmdr David Halverson, of the Naval Ordnance Lab in Ft. Lauderdale wished the group success.

Paul de Mariano, director of operations for Port Everglades, gave the center the key to the port.

Success in a dilapidated building in Baton Rouge, La., prompted the Judson Baptist Association to invest in a new seaman's center to be dedicated in December, 1973.

The center, directed by James Buie, who also directs a language ministry, will provide a more attractive place for recreation and relationships.

Sailors have visited the Baton Rouge center after learning of it from ministries in other ports. Most persons working in seamen's ministries consider follow up of prime importance.

Charles Lawhon of Jacksonville, Fla., directs Baptist ministries to internationals, which includes military and students, but 75 per cent of visitors to the Jacksonville association's International Fellowship House are seamen.

Lawhon illustrated the importance and effectiveness of such a ministry.

He recalled that only one seaman came to the house on a recent night. The seafarer had been visited in 1967 by a church group and their witness had influenced him. The man accepted Christ that night, Lawhon said.

John Vandercook, who operates the New Orleans Baptist Seamen's Service, says similar incidents are highlights of his 10-year ministry. The radio officer of a Colombian freighter recently told Vandercook, who operates solely from donations, that he needed to talk with someone.

Over coffee, the man told Vandercook that his daughter was lost.

Vandercook made a call and was able to locate the daughter.

The two men read together in the Spanish Gospel of St. John where it says, "You were sad, God made you happy." The man responded, "God sent you to me."

Vandercook estimated that through his ministry more than 2,500 persons have made professions of faith and 9,000 have attended worship services in New Orleans.

"Through the ministry on ships I visited 95 countries in 1972 alone," Vandercook says.

In another incident, a Sunday School class in Ft. Lauderdale invited an entire Turkish ship's crew to dinner at a local cafeteria. The crew's captain reciprocated by inviting the class on board the ship for a full-course Turkish dinner.

Meals are often a central focus for seamen's ministries, especially when the ministry has no center of operations, and home cooking is one thing seamen miss no matter where they're from.

Running across open fields and pitching horseshoes, are among other things lacking during long sea voyages. Realizing this, Mrs. Fern Powers opened her farm to seamen from the port of Olympia, Wash., as did other members of First Baptist Church, Lacey, Wash.

Not only do the seamen enjoy home cooked meals and sight-seeing trips, but the farm gives them opportunities to play volleyball, see crops growing, and even ride horses.

The ministry, headed by Mrs. Powers, is only one of many in the Washington-Oregon area.

Integral to most seamen's ministries is the distribution of international language Bibles. Jim Wright, pastor of Highland Avenue Baptist Church, Jamaica, N.Y., says that men who participate in his church's ministry ask for Bibles in their own language. The church has given out Bibles in several languages including German, Indonesian, and Chinese.

Wright asks the sailors to fill out cards which are forwarded to the SBC Foreign Mission Board for missionary follow up.

If other churches with similar ministries could "link up, their effectiveness could be greatly increased," Wright said.

Vandercook admits that "follow up is one of our weakest points. The expense of it makes it not feasible for us, with 50 ships coming into port each day."

Baptists are just now "getting their feet wet" in seamen's ministries, and as experience accrues, follow-up and later contacts will increase.

A.L. Dawson, executive director for Gulfstream Baptist Association, said the seamen's ministries are worth the effort.

The police chief of a town in India wrote and thanked Dawson for the seamen's ministry. The law official's son had run away to sea. While the son was in America, "You were kind to him," the policeman wrote.