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November 28, 1973

Private Group to Sponsor  
Nativity Scene in Capital

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--Yes, there will be a nativity scene at the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace this year in the nation's capital.

The big difference between this and previous religious observances around the national Christmas tree is that it will not be under governmental sponsorship, supervision and financing. Thanks to a court decision, the nativity scene will now be under private sponsorship.

Earlier, news reports said that "Jesus won't be allowed in the Christmas Pageant of Peace this year near the White House." This is not exactly what the court decision said.

On September 26 the U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia reversed a decision of the U. S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The case is known as Allen v. Morton.

The issue of the nativity scene at the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace arose when a group of District of Columbia residents challenged the practice as a violation of the "Establishment Clause" of the First Amendment. This clause prohibits an establishment of religion in the United States.

The lower court ruled that "there was neither a religious purpose in the government's sponsorship of the pageant, nor was the primary effect of the creche that of substantial religious impact." On the question of purpose, the district judge took note of the fact that the pageant was intended "to provide a colorful event during the Christmas season which would attract visitors to Washington and thereby increase the business of local merchants."

Therefore, the district court ruled that the Pageant of Peace, including the nativity scene, does not violate the First Amendment.

The court of appeals, however, ruled that the continuation of the government's participation in the Pageant of Peace, which includes sponsorship and planning the religious activities, resulted in an excessive entanglement of government in religion. For this reason, the court of appeals issued a complicated three-pronged opinion, summarized as follows:

First, the court said that there will be no further legal problems if the creche is eliminated from the Christmas Pageant of Peace.

Second, if the creche is retained, and if the government terminates sponsorship or connection with the pageant, appropriate plaques must be erected explaining the relationships.

Third, if the creche is retained, and if the government continues connection with the pageant, new regulations must be prepared to provide for governmental neutrality and nondiscrimination.

As a result of this decision it was widely believed throughout the nation that the court "took Christ out of the Christmas pageant."

The court itself knew that its ruling would be widely misunderstood. The judges said, "This case, we unhappily surmise, is similarly disposed to perplex, confuse, and even frustrate, so sensitive and complex are the issues it presents." It took the court 51 pages

to set forth the opinions of the three judges in the case.

The government has now decided to continue its participation in the Pageant of Peace and to eliminate the nativity scene from the event.

However, a permit has been issued to the American Christian Heritage Association to erect a nativity scene on park property adjacent to the pageant. This means that there will be a religious activity along with the Christmas Pageant of Peace, but that there will be no official connection between the two and that the religious activity will be under private sponsorship.

The American Christian Heritage Association was formed by Vaughn Barkdoll for the purpose of having a nativity scene in connection with the national Christmas tree and Pageant of Peace.

Barkdoll is a member of the First Baptist Church of Riverdale, Md., a suburb of the District of Columbia. This is an independent church not affiliated with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention or with the Baptist Convention of Maryland.

Named as the executive director of the American Christian Heritage Association, Barkdoll is employed full time as a ramp agent at the National Airport and operates a small sports promotion business on the side. He is a former political campaign manager, having worked for Rep. Lawrence J. Hogan (R.-Md.).

Tentative plans for the nativity scene call for a display 60 feet long and 28 feet deep. Barkdoll plans to use live animals but will use static figures of persons. He estimates that the cost will reach \$10,000, which he hopes to receive from donors throughout the United States.

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BWA Leaders Study Two R's:  
Reconciliation and Relief

11/28/73

By C. E. Bryant

WASHINGTON (BP)--Joseph B. Underwood wrote an Acts of the Apostles-type letter to the Baptist World Alliance administrative subcommittee as a substitute for his scheduled report as chairman of BWA's World Mission of Reconciliation Through Jesus Christ.

Underwood, a staffer of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, in Nigeria at the time the committee met, said that he had visited five continents--North and South America, Asia, Europe and Africa--since the meeting of the BWA executive committee in Switzerland last July.

More than 3,000 individuals made "first time decisions to trust Christ as Saviour and Lord" in a three-week evangelistic emphasis he observed at Ibadan, Nigeria.

"Evidences of genuine revival throughout Nigeria continue to multiply," he said. "Men are being reconciled with each other--men of various tribes--as well as with God through Jesus Christ."

Underwood's letter told also of courses in lay training for personal evangelism in Bangladesh, of a spiritual emphasis program in the Baptist middle school at Hong Kong and of evangelistic outreach in Brazil and in various countries of Europe.

"We were received with extreme friendliness, kindness and generosity," he reported of a visit he made with Dr. and Mrs. Carl W. Tiller of the BWA staff to the USSR in October. "We saw the desire of the Russian people for reconciliation, for friendship and peace. We were blessed by profound worship experiences."

The BWA leaders heard also of worldwide outreach and service in a report by Chester J. Jump, chairman of the alliance's relief committee.

Jump said that primary attention is being given currently to the sending of aid to famine victims in Africa's Sahelian nations and to relief of post-war problems in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. He said that Baptists have responded generously to appeals for contributions to the Sahelian famine project, but that with the exception of generous gifts from Baptists in Australia the contributions to Southeast Asia "have been disappointing."

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Besides emergency problems, the relief committee oversees a wide-reaching program that touches chronic problems on every continent. A goal of \$423,000 has been set for 1974 relief, rehabilitation and development projects.

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Continental Baptist Men's  
Organization Approved

11/28/73

WASHINGTON (BP)--A continent-wide, self-supporting organization of Baptist men was approved by the North American Baptist Fellowship during its meeting here.

The proposal came in a report from an ad hoc committee authorized by NABF a year ago, and chaired by Glendon McCullough, executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's Brotherhood Commission, mission education organization for men and boys.

The motion for adoption, made by McCullough, was seconded by Mrs. Lawrence (Letha) Casazza, president of the North American Baptist Women's Union. The continental women's group was organized 21 years ago and has long sponsored cooperative projects for North American women.

A Pan American Union of Baptist Men, encompassing all the Americas, already exists, but Owen Cooper, Southern Baptist Convention president and president of the Pan American Union, said a North American organization would permit a stronger focus of activity within both South America and North America.

A BWA spokesman said, "It is assumed the new men's organization will be allied with the men's department of BWA as the North American Baptist Women's Union is an integral part of the BWA women's department.

Cooper and Floyd Harris, both officers of the worldwide men's group, participated in discussions of McCullough's committee. David Y. K. Wong of Hong Kong is BWA men's department chairman.

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#### Wrapup

BWA Administrative Group  
Considers World-wide Agenda

11/28/73

By C. E. Bryant

WASHINGTON (BP)--The topics of world peace, relief, reconciliation and budget matters highlighted discussions at a two-day session of the Baptist World Alliance administrative subcommittee here.

Applications for membership from two new South American Baptist conventions--the Baptist Cooperative Convention of Guyana and the Baptist Convention of Bolivia--were considered favorably for recommendation to the BWA executive committee at its annual meeting next August.

The addition of these two groups would bring the BWA constituency to 97 Baptist conventions and unions in 76 countries, with a membership near 28 million.

An appeal from representatives of the Southern Baptist Mission in Israel for designation of Sunday, December 23, as a world day of prayer for peace was heard and endorsed. The appeal was tied into the BWA's current World Mission of Reconciliation and called on Baptists "to understand Jewish and Arab history, hurt and aspirations and to respect the personhood and religion of both the Arab and Jewish people."

Plans progressed for three major international Baptist meetings--the first World Conference of Baptist Men, Nov. 26-30, 1974, in Hong Kong; the 8th Baptist Youth World Conference, July 31-Aug. 4, 1974, in the States in Portland, Ore.; and the 13th Baptist World Congress, July 8-13, 1975, in Stockholm, Sweden.

The World Conference of Baptist Men was set one week later than announced earlier at the request of Hong Kong hotels so they could accommodate the expected 1,000 conferees more adequately. Primary emphasis on attendance will be directed to laymen and to Asia.

Reports of evangelistic progress on all six continents were brought in a report by Joseph B. Underwood of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, who chairs the

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World Mission of Reconciliation. His report came by mail since he was working at the time of the meeting in an evangelistic emphasis in Nigeria.

Chester J. Jump, chairman of the committee on world relief, reported that emergency assistance was being given to famine victims in the Sahelian nations of Africa and rehabilitation aid was being sent to war victims in Indochina. In addition to these emergency items, the alliance maintains relief and development projects on all continents, with a 1974 goal of \$423,000.

An operating budget of \$232,000 was adopted for 1974 operations of the alliance. Of this, \$167,500 is expected to come from member conventions and the balance in special gifts from churches and individuals and in miscellaneous income.

The administrative committee accepted an invitation from churches in the Virginia Beach, Va., area to hold its March 6-7, 1974, meeting there. A highlight will be an area-wide convocation at the Churchland Baptist Church of Portsmouth, the home congregation of the alliance's president, V. Carney Hargroves.

The annual meeting of the BWA executive committee and study commissions will be held at Louisville, Ky., August 6-9, 1974, on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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#### Wrapup

11/28/73

33 State Conventions Set  
Even-Tempered Pace

By Baptist Press

Thirty-three Southern Baptist state-level conventions, recently completed, had all the makings for acrimonious debate but ran, observers say, in a remarkably even-tempered fashion from start to finish.

That happened despite doctrinal disagreements, a computer card foulup in the election of a president, a controversy over leadership and finances and discussion over alteration of several convention structures.

Doctrinal discussions touched seven state conventions, revolving around open communion and/or alien baptism in four of them.

"Messengers" to the Southern Baptist General Convention of California sidestepped expected heated controversy, calmly defeating six constitutional amendments which would have deleted prohibitions against churches accepting alien immersion or open communion.

In Kansas, messengers tabled a motion which would have deleted constitutional requirements against churches practicing alien immersion or open communion.

Arkansas Baptist State Convention messengers raised a protest over two churches. The issue on one of the churches, First Baptist Church, Russellville, Ark., which had previously practiced alien immersion, died when messengers discovered the church, which had been denied seats on previous occasions, had sent no messengers. Messengers from First Baptist Church, Malvern, Ark., were seated after the credentials committee reported that the church was no longer in violation of the convention's constitution on open communion.

Meanwhile, the North Carolina State Convention of Baptists defeated, 1307 to 1248, a proposed constitutional amendment which would have limited messengers to those coming from churches which have only immersed members.

In Texas, Wayne Ward, a theology professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, warned in a speech that "self-appointed orthodoxy committees are the kiss of death." Ward said such a committee had approached him and told him that if he could not sign a statement of faith the committee was drafting, "then you're gone."

"This kind of Gestapo-like heresy-hunting committee is one of the most ominous things to appear among Southern Baptists," he declared. Such tactics, he said, are "unChristian, unBiblical and unBaptistic." He said he had "gladly signed" two "voluntary statements"--the seminary's own articles of faith and the Baptist Faith and Message statement passed

by the Southern Baptist Convention. He stressed the voluntary nature of these statements, as contrasted with the coerced nature of statements drafted by the self-appointed committees.

Two conventions, Florida and Alabama, also touched on doctrinal issues, passing resolutions supporting the biblical view of creation as opposed to the evolution theory that humans evolved from a lower form of life.

In other developments, messengers to the Louisiana Baptist Convention, with only one dissenting vote, deleted the word "white" from its constitutional membership requirement for churches.

Three state conventions elected black officers--Alaska, a black president, Herb Cotton, and Michigan and Texas, black second vice presidents.

Five state conventions--the District of Columbia, Hawaii, North Carolina, Alaska (Herb Cotton) and Northern Plains--elected laymen as president; two--Florida and North Carolina--selected laymen as vice presidents; and three--Florida, Northern Plains and Indiana--named women officers.

The Northern Plains Baptist Convention, however, endorsed the much-discussed resolution by Mrs. Richard Sappington on the "God-given role of women" which was passed by the 1973 Southern Baptist Convention in Portland.

The resolution presented at the Northern Plains convention, a spokesman said, was made without most messengers knowing the specific content of Mrs. Sappington's resolution.

That resolution cited ". . . man (as) the head of the woman. . ." and said "man was made not for the woman but the woman for the man, that the woman is the glory of man and as that woman should have not existed without man, henceforth, neither would man have existed without the woman. . ."

Messengers to the Missouri Baptist Convention dispensed with a planned program to concentrate on settling a year-long controversy over convention leadership and finances.

They questioned auditors about charges of administrative mismanagement, considered motions for improving business practice, elected 17 new members of the convention's executive board, and the board authorized a procedures committee to recommend guidelines for selecting a new executive secretary to succeed Earl O. Harding, executive secretary since 1954, who died Aug. 12.

Also, messengers defeated a motion to dismiss W. Ross Edwards, editor of the Word and Way, journal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

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.

On Aug. 24, the board had received a report from special auditors that serious irregularities appear in the convention's financial records for the calendar years of 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 the assets of the Benevolent Fund."

Representatives of both the convention's regular auditors and the special auditors were present at the convention 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 expenditures over income.

The computer card foulup came in Texas when first results named James Harris, a Fort Worth pastor, as president. However, Ralph Smith, an Austin pastor, became the actual president when convention officials discovered the computer had yielded false results because two incompatible types of computer cards had been mixed together accidentally.

In Kansas, messengers cheered their executive director, Pat McDaniel, a layman, for his efforts in helping pull the convention from the brink of bankruptcy with which it had been threatened for five years.

The two-state convention, which changed its name from the Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists to the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, voted unanimously to call in all outstanding bonds of the convention's Church Loan Association, dissolve the association and accept a letter of commitment from two banks for a loan of up to \$500,000.

The bond call solves the financial crisis, relieves the close scrutiny of the Securities and Exchange Commission and allows bondholders to receive 100 cents on every dollar invested.

Five states dealt with changes either affecting their convention structure or location.

The Northwest Baptist Convention, which encompasses Southern Baptist work in Oregon and Washington state, voted to phase out the convention's Baptist Building in Portland and develop a convention office-church program training center complex near Portland.

The Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, which covers Arizona and Nevada, referred back to committee for further study a proposal which would have radically restructured the convention by placing it and its institutions under one executive director-treasurer.

In Georgia, messengers to that convention approved construction of a major \$5.5 million Baptist Administration Center on the northeastern edge of Atlanta.

The Baptist State Convention of Michigan granted approval for an undetermined relocation of the body's administrative offices from inside Detroit possibly to a suburb.

The District of Columbia Baptist Convention's outgoing president, James M. Windham, declared that the convention's attempt at dual alignment with American Baptists and Southern Baptists has not worked. He proposed models for change, including possible conversion to a metropolitan association.

Citing "divisiveness" and "fragmentation," Windham said, "In matters upon which we differ we seem to divide almost instinctively along lines of our ABC (American Baptist Churches) and SBC (Southern Baptist Convention) orientation.

In his report to the convention, the day after Windham spoke, D.C.'s executive secretary, James Langley, said, "Rather than dual alignment having been found not to work it has been found difficult and not seriously tried by many of us as individuals and churches.

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Christian Life Commission  
Protests "In Cold Blood"

11-28-73

NASHVILLE (BP)--The decision of the Columbia Broadcasting System to televise the motion picture, "In Cold Blood," has drawn protest from Harry N. Hollis Jr., director of family and special moral concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"The decision to send 'In Cold Blood' over the network (it was scheduled for Friday night, Nov. 30) runs contrary to last year's statement of CBS Vice President Thomas J. Swafford that 'CBS continues to be aware that we are guests in people's homes and we try to conduct

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ourselves accordingly," Hollis said.

"The TV airwaves belong to the people of this nation, and I do not believe that Americans are going to tolerate much longer the 'gore-nography' that is being sent into homes. Somewhere we need to draw the line and start to move away from the excessive violence of our culture," Hollis said.

"CBS does itself and the nation a disservice by showing 'In Cold Blood,'" Hollis said. "As a parent, I deeply resent the showing...because I know that many unsupervised children will see it and receive a much-too-early initiation into the horrors of violence. As a citizen of this country, where there is already too much violence, I am appalled that CBS has chosen to show this gruesome movie which may trigger violent acts by unstable individuals," Hollis said.

"If CBS shows such poor judgement as to broadcast 'In Cold Blood' in prime time, then dare we trust its judgement in other matters?"

He continued, "Evidently CBS officials think the Christian Life Commission (which opposed the network's decision to run the same film last year) and others concerned about morally offensive programs will give up the fight for media responsibility. These officials are mistaken. We will not give up. Indeed, the Christian Life Commission will redouble...efforts to assist Southern Baptists and other concerned Americans in the battle for healthy television programming."

Hollis "applauded the action" of WLAC-TV, the Nashville CBS affiliate, which decided against showing the movie, and said he hoped other affiliates would do the same.