



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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75-04

Capps Named to New Education Commission Post

NASHVILLE (BP)--George Capps Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Cookeville, Tenn., since 1961, has been named director of denominational relations for the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, effective Feb. 1.

Capps will be responsible for cooperative work between the commission and 18 other national agencies of the 12.3-million-member SBC, the nation's largest Protestant-evangelical denomination.

"Both his 14 years experience as a pastor in a large university town, working with faculty and students, and his wide denominational experience, uniquely equip Mr. Capps for this newly created position," said Ben C. Fisher, the Education Commission's executive director-treasurer.

The Education Commission, with offices in Nashville, is the SBC agency which relate to 71 Baptist colleges, universities, seminaries and schools across the nation.

A native of Talladega, Ala., Capps is in his second term as president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's executive board and was a member of and recording secretary for the Education Commission's board at the time of his election to the staff post.

He has been first vice president of the Tennessee Convention, president of the Tennessee Baptist Pastors' Conference, moderator of the Stone Association of Baptists, chairman of the Cookeville Ministerial Association and a member of the board of trustees of Baptist Hospital, Nashville.

Before entering the ministry, Capps, a civil engineering graduate of Auburn University, served as an engineer with the Tennessee Valley Authority. He is also a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and was pastor of churches in Fordoche, La., and Parsons, Tenn., before coming to First Baptist Church, Cookeville, in 1961.

During his ministry there, the church has reported 1,884 additions and increased annual receipts from \$68,000 to \$175,000.

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(BP) Photo mailed to state Baptist papers.

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Texas Baptists Top CP
Budget By \$1.7 Million

Baptist Press

DALLAS (BP)--The Baptist General Convention of Texas has surpassed its 1974 Cooperative Program unified budget by more than \$1,775,000, giving new church and mission expansion the biggest boost in the history of the two million-member state convention of Southern Baptists.

All of the receipts above the regular and "challenge" portions of the budget, which include funds designated for the national Cooperative Program, will go to purchase sites and provide funds for expansion of new churches and missions for the convention, which has some 4,200 churches and missions already.

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DALLAS
S. B. C. HISTORICAL COMMISSION
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

According to the unaudited final report, the churches across the state gave \$19,925,706 through the state's Cooperative Program during 1974, compared to \$16,971,392 during the previous year.

Texas Baptists also contributed in record amounts to the three special missions offering in 1974.

The state missions collection --the Mary Hill Davis Offering--showed receipts for the year of \$1,112,036. The Annie Armstrong Offering for home missions garnered \$1,328,048. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions totaled \$4,536,433.

The record giving paves the way for Texas Baptists to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the national Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program during 1975 by raising its goal of more than \$20,608,000, believed to be the highest budget ever adopted by a state convention.

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USSR Baptist Congress:
"Breath of Air; Cold Wind"

Baptist Press

MOSCOW (BP)--The change in atmosphere at the 41st Congress of the All Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCEB) here was "as if windows were opened and a breath of air was felt."

The analogy and comparison of the AUCEB Congress with its last meeting in 1969 was made by C. Ronald Goulding, London-based associate secretary for the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

Goulding noted, however, that "the fresh air changed to a cold wind" as discussion came to the relationship of the AUCEB with the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, a dissident group. The AUCEB is officially recognized by the Soviet government.

About 3,500 persons who separated themselves from the AUCEB in the early 1960s have returned to registered churches of the AUCEB, over the last five years, according to Goulding.

The AUCEB reported a total membership of about 535,000 in about 5,500 churches and over 12,000 baptisms over the past five years. Goulding noted. And it is probable, he said, that the "Council of Churches," increased in about the same ratio, although membership of the latter group is impossible to determine.

A more relaxed approach at the 41st Congress "gave greater freedom for fellowship and participation," Goulding noted in a report for European Baptist Press Service (EPBS).

Attending the meeting were over 480 delegates, who assembled in the Moscow Baptist Church as official representatives of regional, inter-regional, territorial and republican conferences of the Baptists in Russia. There were 130 guests including Robert S. Denny, general secretary for the BWA, Goulding, and the executive leaders of Baptist unions throughout Europe, among others, the BWA noted.

But, no official representatives came from the dissident Council of Churches, although the word had been spread that they would be welcomed, BWA's Washington office reported.

Alexei Bichkov, AUCEB general secretary, announced that invitations had been sent to the Council of Churches to send official delegates to the congress, but these had been rejected, Goulding said. Six Council of Churches members did attend the congress meetings as observers and participated in worship, he added.

Goulding's report depicted much of the congress' color, noting it took "the power of physical endurance to sit through the sessions--which lasted as long as 6 1/2 hours.

"Visitors were able to greet their fellow believers from various parts of the Soviet Union. The language barrier was felt, but the sense of brotherliness and joy at being together was very real," he said.

"The entire program for the three-day meeting was made available in English and this helped greatly. There was remarkable freedom felt to change the order of the agenda, but each day things seemed to be finished up in about the right place.

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"The way in which delegates were allowed to participate was most impressive. In one session, 35 speeches were heard by requests from the floor," he said.

"Only the lack of time--it was 10 p.m. and the meeting started at 9:30 a.m.--prevented about that many more from asking to address the assembly."

Goulding continued: "The report of General Secretary Alexei Bichkov lasted 3 1/2 hours, a feat of physical endurance for speaker and congregation. It was a review of the work of the presidium (AUCEB's top committee) and the churches.

"Among subjects reviewed and subsequently discussed by delegates were the charismatic movement, the possible service of women as pastors (rejected), the problem of excommunication (over 4,000 excluded from the churches during the past five years), Bibles and other Christian literature."

The relationship of the AUCEB with the dissident Council of Churches, was the topic that finally turned the "breath of air" into a "cold wind," Goulding observed

"Although attempts have been made," he said, "on a number of occasions to conduct 'brotherly conversations' between leaders of the two groups, there has been minimal success or none at all.

"There is an 'ebb and flow' of members between the two organizations of Baptists," Goulding said. Of these received back into the larger body (AUCEB), some have "left it to join Council of Churches congregations. There are registered and unregistered churches in both groups," Goulding said.

"Perhaps the wind became coldest," Goulding said, "when Mr. Bichkov spoke of terminology being used by some leaders of the dissident group to distinguish the two bodies--'saving' and 'unsaving' churches.

"The inference," Goulding observed, "is obvious but hard to understand on the part of any who have been challenged and stirred by the evangelical fervor of AUCEB churches.

"The delegates and all members of the churches were urged to strive for unity with prayer, love and patience."

On the last day of the congress, elections brought about "important changes in leadership," Goulding said.

Ilja Ivanov retired as AUCEB president and Andre Klimenko, a vice president (both are Baptist ministers), was elected to succeed him.

One observer noted that the AUCEB congress consisted of about 60 delegates under 40 years of age, 250 between 40 and 60, and the rest over 60-years-old. It was emphasized that leadership roles are being increasingly handled by "younger persons "

"Experiences during these days in Moscow," Goulding said, "confirmed earlier impressions of the evangelical fervor of Baptist brethren and sisters in the USSR and left no doubt of their deep anxiety to heal the sad and painful wounds of division."

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Two Baptist Schools Launch Joint ROTC Program

Baptist Press

DALLAS (BP)--Two Baptist colleges in Dallas, one predominantly black, have joined together to provide military science training for students.

Dallas Baptist College, a part of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and Bishop College, a predominantly black school sponsored by several Baptist groups, including Texas Baptists, will start the cross enrollment program this spring.

Currently, Bishop College has a Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program, staffed by nine officers. The Bishop instructors will train 25 or 30 students at Dallas Baptist College, according to Clifton Harris, interim president of Dallas Baptist.

Dallas Baptist College has not had an ROTC program in the past

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