



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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77-19

SBC Annuity Board Notes 1976 Advances

DALLAS (BP)--The year 1976 will go down in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board as "one of the most important years in the areas of new policies and plans affecting retirement annuities," Darold H. Morgan, board president, told trustees attending the agency's 59th annual meeting here.

In addition to hearing Morgan's report, the trustees honored two staff members, Frank Durham and Owen Henley, with a retirement dinner and heard speeches by James L. Sullivan, Southern Baptist Convention president, and Don Conlan, Los Angeles economist.

Morgan pointed to "substantive changes in the church and agency retirement plans which we believe make them innovative, marketable and fully geared to meet the needs of our constituency for many years to come."

He explained the Annuity Board launched a new "fixed income" retirement fund January 1, 1977, and continued preparations to open a new retirement plan for Southern Baptist ministers and church employees Jan. 1, 1978.

He also told trustees the board's church insurance plans were "fully evaluated with far-ranging administrative changes resulting."

Changes in church insurance plans resulted in an overall premium increase of 15 percent--a figure significantly less than the 35 percent feared imminent last October, he said.

He said other key accomplishments include change in annuity rates from four to six percent, which means larger retirement benefits; issuance of the "13th check" to annuitants for the 11th time; and gearing up for a major communications thrust called "route 10," the "now way" for financial security for the new program.

In the report, the trustees learned funds held in trust (assets) again reached record proportions: \$472,218,669, an increase of more than \$71,066,728 over 1975.

The Annuity Board administers these funds for about 45,000 participants in church and agency retirement plans.

Income from premiums for retirement protection stood at a record \$42,190,990, up \$5,811,912 from 1975. Investment income reached \$41,393,317. This figure, too, represents a record, up from \$23,149,064 last year.

In 1976, benefits paid to retirees, the disabled and widows amounted to a record \$17,138,343. Church and agency life insurance volume of \$508,190,950 topped last year's total by \$71.5 million.

In the report, Morgan noted the board added 840 new annuitants to its rolls in 1976. There were 429 age, 162 widow, and 84 disability annuitants, as well as 74 education beneficiaries and 91 who received child benefits.

Emphasizing promotion of the new church retirement program last year, the church area of the development division reported applications for participation in the Family Benefit Section totaled 1,958 ministers. A total of 457 new churches enrolled in the program, while 2,223 persons upgraded their retirement plans. Forty-one students were enrolled in the seminarian retirement plan at the end of 1976.

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In the agency area of the development division, accounts totaled \$19,846,016, an increase of more than \$2 million above last year.

The insurance services department said it took steps to improve service to policy holders last year, particularly in its response to claim inquiries. The area also reported the addition of dental benefits to the comprehensive medical coverage the Annuity Board administers for employees.

In the investment area, bonds, stocks and other related securities produced \$27,127,818, while mortgage loans yielded income of \$9,267,230. Real estate provided \$4,998,269 in income.

Real estate investments make up 42.5 percent of the total investment portfolio. Stocks comprise 39.5 percent. The rest is in collateral loans, bonds and short-term securities.

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Sunday School Board Approves
Reorganization, Personnel

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in their semiannual meeting here reorganized the church services and materials division into three divisions and elected several new executive management personnel.

The three new divisions include a Bible teaching division, a Christian development division and a church and staff support division.

Trustees elected James W. Clark as executive vice president of the Sunday School Board; Dessel Aderholt, Robert G. Fulbright, and Howard Foshee to head the Broadman, Bible teaching and Christian development divisions respectively; Lloyd T. Householder as director of the board's office of communications; and David P. Turner and Andy Dodson to department manager posts. All are current Sunday School Board employees.

Included in the Bible teaching division will be the Sunday School department, a projected radio-TV bible correspondence department and an art department.

The Christian development division will include the church training department, family ministry department, National Student Ministries, and an art section.

The church and staff support division will be composed of the church administration department, church music department, church library department, church recreation department, church architecture department and an art section. The directorship of the division will be filled later.

Clark, 45, director of the board's Broadman division since 1971, has served as interim executive vice-president since W. O. Thomason's resignation last November. A native of Texas, he is a graduate of Wayland Baptist College, with graduate work at North Texas State College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He began work with the Sunday School Board in 1954, and since that time has served as a Broadman Press salesman, trade sales supervisor, manager of the Broadman sales department and then manager of the church literature department.

Aderholt, 47, elected to succeed Clark as director of the Broadman division, general publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, has served as manager of the Broadman marketing services department since 1962. A native of Alabama, Aderholt first came to the board in 1959.

Fulbright, 42, has been manager of the Broadman products department for the past year and a half. Earlier he served as supervisor of the children's, preschool/children's and children's field services sections at the board.

Foshee, 51, has been secretary of the church administration department of the Sunday School Board since the department was organized in 1958.

The name of the office of public relations was changed to the office of communications, and Householder was elected as director, succeeding Homer R. Lesch, who is now the special assistant to the executive office of the Sunday School Board. Householder, 47, has been manager of the church training department at the board since 1968. Turner, 40, will serve as manager of the materials services department. He has been leader of the central support group in the church services and materials division since 1971. -more-

Dodson, 37, will serve as manager of the Broadman marketing services department. He has served as supervisor of the buying section of the board's procurement department since 1969.

In other actions, trustees approved the recommendation of a new family ministry periodical entitled *Living with Teenagers*, to provide guidance, inspiration, counsel, challenge, and practical helps for the parents of youth, 12-17. They also launched an effort to start Sunday Schools, cooperating with the Home Mission Board, state conventions and associations.

-30- (BP) Photos mailed to Baptist editors.

Sounds of Silence Echo
Christ in Deaf Church

By Jim Newton

PORTLAND, Ore. (BP)--The small church building, with its baroque architecture, looks like almost any Baptist church built more than 30 years ago.

But no music blares across the neighborhood on Sunday mornings in the city's southern section. No preacher can be heard exhorting his flock during worship services.

Instead, worship is filled with the sounds of silence, made more beautiful with the graceful signs of the language of the deaf.

First Baptist Church of the Deaf in Portland according to its pastor, Tommy Adams, is the only self-supporting, duly constituted church for the deaf in the entire Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

About 500 churches in the SBC have ministries to the deaf, and some, like the First Baptist Churches of Dallas and Knoxville, Tenn., have deaf congregations within a hearing church. More than a dozen deaf congregations have their own pastor.

The Portland deaf church even sponsors a "hearing" mission in Portland--Oak Grove Baptist Church, begun in June, 1976.

Adams, who learned to sign as a child to communicate with his deaf brother, said that financially the deaf congregation isn't able to help much. It's monthly offerings total about \$800.

But when Oak Grove Church called Brad Dixon as its pastor, the deaf congregation gave Dixon and his wife, Martha, a "money tree" with \$50 in cash hanging from the branches.

Harold Hitt, language missions director for the Northwest Baptist Convention, said that it has helped the deaf church to be on the giving end instead of the receiving end of missions. Sponsoring the "hearing" mission has given the Portland deaf congregation a greater vision of what it means to go into all the world and proclaim the gospel, Hitt explained.

The hearing mission project has also helped give some of the deaf church members a better self-concept and a feeling that they are able to help others, Adams said.

In terms of mission involvement, Dixon noted, the deaf church members have not done a lot, but, he said, several deaf church members helped in a mission Vacation Bible School (VBS) last summer.

The organization principles of the hearing mission, using a Vacation Bible School as the first drawing card, are fairly typical in the Northwest; but the way the deaf church was organized was quite different--almost the entire "deaf" congregation was baptized at one time.

The deaf church's story began almost four years ago when Hitt received a letter from Carter Bearden, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's specialist with the deaf.

Bearden told Hitt about the United Evangelical Deaf Church in Portland, organized in 1953, and that one of the members, Charlie Butler, wanted to know about becoming a Baptist--not just for himself but for the whole church.

Hitt contacted Butler, who said he was personally interested in becoming Baptist but was not speaking for the entire church. Butler was also upset because he felt the non-denominational deaf church members were easy prey to proselyting Christian groups.

Hitt moved slowly. Bearden preached a series of sermons at the church, and the two Southern Baptists began to establish solid relationships with the church's members.

Meanwhile the church called a conservative Baptist preacher sympathetic to Southern Baptists as their interim pastor. Three years later, the pastor raised the issue of affiliating with the SBC shortly before he resigned.

The deacons recommended that the church affiliate with a denomination, and began studies on Baptist doctrine.

The only real doctrinal question was over baptism by immersion, and the Northwest Baptist Convention's constitutional requirement that members of its churches be "immersed on the authority of a local New Testament Baptist church."

Some members were opposed to being rebaptized, but when the vote was taken only one person voted against the proposal to affiliate with the Northwest Baptist Convention.

Shortly afterwards, 20 members were rebaptized in a silent ceremony. Now the church has 67 members, with a full program and about 50 attending Sunday School regularly.

Hitt also worked with the pulpit committee and helped them find Adams, the current pastor.

Adams said the church is full of some exceptional people, like Miss Deaf Oregon, Marlis Turner, who was one of the 10 finalists in the Miss Deaf America pageant. Charlie Butler, a brown belt Karate expert who is also a pilot and a sheet metal worker, is also a church member.

Much of the deaf members' lives are centered around the church because of fellowship and friends.

Adams, the pastor, confessed that one of the hardest things for him is that they want to stay at the church and talk until midnight: "Like most members of hearing churches, I'm ready to go home 30 minutes after the service."

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Adapted from the March 1977 issue of World Mission Journal

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

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Southern Baptists Vacating
'Briar Patch,' Sullivan Says

Baptist Press
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DALLAS (BP)--Southern Baptists have moved from the "briar patch" into the national spotlight, James L. Sullivan, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), said here.

"This is our finest hour," said Sullivan. "The convention has more visibility now than ever before. If we fumble the ball now, we'll be 24-karat fools in front of everybody."

Sullivan was referring to the convention's growth since its beginning in 1845. He also alluded to the visibility caused by the presence of Jimmy Carter, a Southern Baptist, in the White House.

The SBC president addressed trustees of the SBC's Annuity Board attending a dinner meeting in Dallas' First Baptist Church. The dinner was held in connection with the pension agency's 59th trustee meeting.

"The marvelous thing about Southern Baptists has been our ability to deal with extremism," Sullivan said.

"It's my hope and prayer we shall write as well as our forefathers, who have written a glorious history."

Sullivan also said he's not as concerned about the "charismatic" movement as "some have been."

He explained that he views the movement as part of a recurring cycle.

Charismatic movements are usually followed by periods of theological "intellectualism," Sullivan explained.

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