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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Sullivan--'Could Not  
Have Predicted Pressures'

By James Lee Young

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President James L. Sullivan says he could not have predicted the work and pressure that suddenly confronted him with his election in a Bicentennial year, when Southern Baptist layman Jimmy Carter ran for and won the U. S. presidency.

Sullivan, 67, has declined to be named for a traditional second term as SBC president. By his own admission, he is a hard-driving individual who was booked heavily even before assuming the highly visible and oft-quoted post of SBC president.

Actually, the SBC constitution bylaws give the convention president plenty to do as a member of the various agency boards, convention committees, and certain appointive powers throughout the year. Sullivan, as SBC president, is automatically a member of the SBC Executive Committee, and presides over the SBC annual sessions.

In recent years, however, the convention president has become also a roving public relations person, with his time taken up in speaking, writing, attending key meetings, and granting interviews.

Sullivan, also in the middle of a five-year term as vice president of the Baptist World Alliance, served over 20 years as president of the SBC Sunday School Board in Nashville, retiring from the board at the end of 1975.

His bearing, energy, capabilities and overall grasp of Southern Baptists made him a natural to become convention president in Norfolk, Va., in June, 1976. He has been repeatedly praised in print and verbally for his role as SBC president.

His time has been eaten by more than 130 speaking engagements with only one week free since Labor Day, 1976, writing assignments, some 100 letters to write a week, plus multiplied news interviews for newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

He doesn't complain, but recently told Baptist Press that the "ceaseless air travel, constant physical and emotional strains, and absences from home" convinced him that one term was "best for me and for the convention."

Sullivan has been hailed by some as "Southern Baptists' man of the hour," at a time when the denomination has enjoyed unparalleled international media attention, the result of an SBC appearance in Norfolk by President Gerald Ford and the campaign and election of President Carter.

When the Plains Baptist Church controversy broke over whether to admit a black minister as a member, Sullivan, that same day, reaffirmed to the media the Baptist tradition of local church autonomy and at the same time declared himself firmly in favor of racial openness in Southern Baptist and all Christian churches.

During the crisis in Carter's home church in Plains, Ga., generated two days before the 1976 national elections, Sullivan spent hours at a time on the telephone answering questions on Southern Baptists, Baptist polity, race, and related issues.

At one time, he recalled, six reporters were lined up, holding for telephone interviews. One morning, phone calls interrupted his breakfast five times. Reporters still call on watts lines and talk at length. With few exceptions, Sullivan told Baptist Press, the media has been fair and accurate.

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Even now, wherever he goes, local pastors, missionaries and other hosts know in advance they have a newsworthy, quotable and responsive source in Sullivan. Often, a reporter will be waiting in the car that takes him to his hotel, a home, or to where he will speak.

Although Sullivan has consciously tried to slow his pace, he is awake by 5:30 a.m. each day and well into his activities by the time most people are stirring. This time of day, he finds--after years of doing so--is the best time for daily devotions.

His travels into more than 18 states the past year--to Bicentennial celebrations and speaking engagements for local, state, national and international gatherings--have given him a fresher, updated perspective on Southern Baptists.

In his travels, Sullivan said, he has found the vast majority of Southern Baptists are "content and pleased" with what the denomination is doing through its state conventions and national agencies.

Looking toward the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Kansas City, Mo., June 14-16, 1977, Sullivan said he believes a major issue could be the desire of 35 Canadian Baptist churches and missions, who consider themselves Southern Baptists, to receive more assistance from the national agencies of the denomination.

The Canadian churches and missions in four western Canadian provinces are affiliated with the Northwest Baptist Convention (Oregon and Washington) but aren't eligible to affiliate with the SBC. Last year in Norfolk, the SBC assigned the denomination's Foreign Mission Board to study the matter.

The board will recommend in June that "all appropriate SBC agencies" be encouraged to extend a helping hand to the Canadian Baptists, in keeping with the agencies' program statements and with appropriate consultation between agencies. Also, it will recommend that no worker whose salary is paid by any SBC agency is to encourage existing Baptist churches in Canada to affiliate with Southern Baptist work, to avoid proselytizing of churches.

Discussing another potential Kansas City issue, Sullivan said he has "no objection to full release of all votes" taken at the SBC. Under convention procedure in the SBC Constitution and Bylaws, the tabulation of the vote is "announced and recorded only on the request of a majority of the messengers voting."

The SBC Executive Committee has recommended that all votes be released on issues but they not be released on officers unless a majority of the body asks for it. Sullivan said, however, "I think Baptists have a right to any information they wish concerning their own operation."

On the so-called debate between "conservatives" and "liberals" in the denomination, Sullivan cautioned against identifying anyone as a liberal, "unless we recognize that it depends on what subject you're talking about." He called such debate, however, "potentially healthy" for the denomination:

"It's the cross fertilization of ideas and testing of facts that enables 80 percent of the people we refer to as the 'silent middle' to make up their minds as to what is right . . . It's best that discussion be underway rather than explode without knowledge. You can't always interpret what's happening when emotions reach a certain pitch."

Addressing some other issues, Sullivan said he could not get as excited as some about the "latest wave" of the charismatic movement: "It comes and it goes away," he said, noting also that this is the third such movement he has seen in his lifetime.

On Bold Mission strategy--Southern Baptists' efforts to evangelize the world by 2000--he said the goals and ideals are idealistic and perhaps unreachable, "but this isn't bad . . . we should always reach beyond ourselves, to enable us to reach further than we would otherwise."

He cautioned that the use of too many terms or themes for the various segments of the Bold Mission strategy might confuse people trying to understand what the denomination is doing in terms of mission strategy.

He predicted that for the near future not many women will become pastors of Southern Baptist churches but that many could and likely will become professors and instructors in Baptist seminaries and colleges, institutional chaplains and church staff members.

"I think, traditionally, people are going to prefer men pastors," he said.

". . . In the SBC, we have quite a few women ordained as deacons, but it's still a matter of controversy and differences of interpreting scriptures."

Eventually, Sullivan said, women and ethnics will come to have more positions of leadership at all levels of SBC life . . . it's moving in that direction. I think it will come in time, and we'll be logical and accept it when it does come."

On taxation of churches, Sullivan said: "Religious institutions and churches ought to pay taxes on any area of their work that isn't related to their charter purpose . . . If you put in some facility in general competition with the public, you ought to pay taxes on it . . ."

But, "We should not be paying taxes in areas where a church is being the church with its own spiritual ministry . . . 'The power to tax is the power to destroy,'" he said, quoting John Marshall, 19th century U.S. Supreme Court Justice.

Sullivan said the denomination's greatest accomplishment in recent decades is the "ability of the agencies to work together toward common objectives as a team. Before World War II, the agencies could hardly communicate with each other . . . and I think we're at the point where--if we can get motivation built to a high level--we're in for some real growth and development as a denomination."

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Gays Can't Advertise  
In Student Newspaper

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WASHINGTON (BP)--A homosexual group on the campus of Mississippi State University lost in an attempt to have the U. S. Supreme Court rule that their advertisements must be run in the student newspaper.

The Mississippi Gay Alliance, an organization comprised mainly of homosexuals on the Starkville, Miss., campus, had submitted a paid ad in 1973 to The Reflector, the university student newspaper. Editors at the newspaper refused to run it.

The homosexual group then brought suit against newspaper editors and university officials, claiming that their free press rights had been denied.

Two federal courts had earlier disagreed with them, however, upholding the editors' freedom to accept or reject their ads.

Attorneys for the university officials, including the president, argued successfully that they did not control the operation of the newspaper and that any effort to dictate newspaper policy on their part would amount to a violation of the student editors' free press rights.

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New Areas Approved For  
Foreign Missions Work

Baptist Press  
4/27/77

By Susan Cahen

RICHMOND (BP)--Reaching toward the goal of missionaries in at least 125 countries by the end of the century, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board recently approved work in five new areas.

Southern Baptist missionaries already have begun building an active program of witness in one new mission field, Rwanda; and the board gave approval in its April, 1977, meeting to enter Bolivia, South Africa, the Seychelles Islands and the Cayman Islands.

Only one, the Cayman Islands, will be immediately listed officially as one of the political and geographical entities where Southern Baptists have missions work. The others will not be added until personnel are assigned to them, said J. Winston Crawley, director of the board's overseas division.

Crawley's office keeps the official tally of Southern Baptist mission fields overseas as well as a count of missionary personnel serving in them. As of April 27, 1977, the board had 2,716 missionaries in 86 countries.

The board also heard reports of moving ahead with efforts to open work in Swaziland. Approval to enter that country was given by the board in April 1975.

Active Baptist work began in Rwanda, approved as a mission field by the board in March, with the arrival of the Earl R. Martins in Kigali, the capital, in early April. At first, the Martins will be engaged part time in study of the Nyarwanda language. (That language and French, in which the Martins already have some proficiency, are the official languages).

The Martins, formerly missionaries in Tanzania and Kenya, will begin their ministry with seven congregations in the Kigali area. No established churches are there. An estimated 200 additional Baptists have moved to the area, but have no one to work with them.

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The Martins will do general evangelistic work, literature and youth work, with needs determining the thrust.

Southern Baptists were invited to work in Rwanda by the Baptist Union of Rwanda (national convention) and by the Danish Baptist Union, which has work in the country. Rwanda is a landlocked country bounded by Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire.

The work of Southern Baptists in Rwanda will be a "supplementary, cooperative venture with the groups inviting us," says Davis L. Saunders, the Foreign Mission Board's secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa.

The Martins were assigned to Madagascar before their transfer to Rwanda, but they were never able to get government permission to enter that country. Madagascar is no longer officially listed as a Southern Baptist mission field.

The Herbert W. Neelys have been transferred from Rhodesia to the Cayman Islands. They will be stationed on Grand Cayman, the largest of the three-island group, working with a number of Baptists on the island, most of them from Cayman Brac.

Before Southern Baptists could send missionaries through the Foreign Mission Board, a Southern Baptist pastor responded to the needs he saw in the Cayman Islands, says Charles W. Bryan, the Foreign Mission Board's secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean.

"This pastor, working primarily on Cayman Brac, has maintained a close relationship with missionaries of our board throughout the Caribbean," Bryan says. Until now, those who have gone have been short term personnel. Now an invitation has been extended for a permanent career missionary.

The new work on Grand Cayman will be an outreach of the association on Cayman Brac, although distance will preclude more than a limited participation.

In South Africa, the Baptist Union of South Africa has extended an invitation for Southern Baptists to work among the more than four million "coloureds" (persons of mixed race) in that country. Three couples have been requested initially, one in theological education and two in evangelism and church development.

In Swaziland, South African Baptists asked Southern Baptists to assume responsibilities for an English-language congregation in the capital of Mbabane. South African Baptists have filled this need for the past two years. Swaziland is enclosed on the northwest and south by Transvaal and on the east by Mozambique and Natal.

In the Seychelle Islands, work will begin on the main island of Mahe, with emphasis on a youth ministry in Victoria, the capital. These islands are located east of Northeast Tanzania.

One of two Baptist groups at work in Bolivia has invited Southern Baptists to initiate work in that country. The invitation came from the Baptist Convention of Bolivia (related to Brazilian Baptist work) which sponsors a school of more than 1,400 students and a riverboat ministry. Five missionary couples are engaged in convention work.

J. Bryan Brasington, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's secretary for western South America, says the board will respond initially in Bolivia by transferring two experienced missionary couples from other missions to do evangelistic outreach, theological education and lay leadership training. Later, Brasington says, he hopes "others in the States will be called by the Lord to look toward serving in Bolivia."

(The other Baptist group is the Baptist Union of Bolivia, related to Canadian Baptist work. It has 23 missionaries sponsoring schools in three major areas, medical clinics through churches and a radio station in Las Pas.)

Allen, Kendall Decline  
Re-election at SBC Meeting

NASHVILLE (BP)--Clifton J. Allen and W. Fred Kendall, two Baptist leaders who have long performed the arduous task of recording annual Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) meetings and registering ever increasing numbers of messengers to those meetings, will step down at the end of the SBC annual session, June 14-16, Kansas City, Mo.

Allen, 75, retired editorial secretary for the SBC Sunday School Board, Nashville, was first elected recording secretary for the SBC at the Dallas convention in 1965. He will complete 12 terms in the post in Kansas City.

Kendall, 69, retired executive secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Brentwood, was elected at the Atlantic City convention in 1964 and will complete 13 terms as registration secretary.

Both men cited appreciation for the opportunities their offices have given them over the years but told Baptist Press that they feel it's time to step down and allow a younger person to take over their responsibilities.

Earlier, SBC President James L. Sullivan of Nashville, retired president of the denomination's Sunday School Board, announced that he would not allow his name to be placed in nomination for a traditional second term as SBC president.

Kendall, who retired as chief executive of Tennessee Baptists in 1972 after 16 years, said part of his reason for stepping down in Kansas City is that it will give him the chance "to bow out in a place that's meant so much to me over the past 50 years."

His first pastorate began in the area on July 1, 1927, when he served concurrently as pastor of two churches--in Amsterdam, Mo., and Slater, Mo.--about 60 miles south of Kansas City.

The Kansas City convention will mark his 50th year in the ministry and the 36th year of his marriage. He married in Kansas City, June 6, 1931.

Allen, who retired from the Sunday School Board in 1963 after 41 years of service, now lives in Winston-Salem, N.C. Kendall lives in Nashville.

Combined, the two men have attended 85 annual SBC sessions--45 for Allen (including the last 42 in a row) and 40 for Kendall.

The offices of recording secretary and registration secretary are filled each year by a vote of the messengers. The recording secretary also serves as an ex officio member of the SBC Executive Committee.

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Court Won't Hear Case on  
Church Building Denial

Baptist Press  
4/27/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court declined to review a Nashville, Tenn., church property case in an action announced here.

Trustees of the West Meade Church of Christ in Nashville had asked the justices to declare unconstitutional a restrictive covenant which prohibited erecting a church building in the city's West Meade subdivision.

The trustees contended in a written brief that they had entered into an agreement to buy land in the subdivision under a contract which contained no reference to restrictions on building a church. Three months later, they claimed, they accepted title to the property by a deed which made reference to certain "restrictive covenants" but did not specify them.

Still two months later, John and Evelyn McDonald, residents of the subdivision, asked a Davidson County court to prohibit the use of the property for church services or for "any public gathering."

The chancery court of Davidson County agreed with the McDonalds and an injunction against building the church was issued. The Tennessee Court of Appeals upheld the lower court.

The church trustees argued in their brief to the Supreme Court that their First Amendment free exercise of religion right was being violated by the lower courts' actions.

The high court's decision not to hear the case means, however, that those actions stand and that the West Meade Church of Christ has lost its final appeal.

Seminary Honors President,  
Approves \$1.6 Million Budget

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Trustees of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary here honored President Harold K. Graves for 25 years service as the school's chief administrator, voted to participate in a \$30 million capital/endowment campaign with the other five Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) seminaries, approved an \$8.7 million capital needs request, and approved a record \$1.6 million budget for 1977-78.

The trustees also received a \$50,000 challenge gift for the school's chair of evangelism, named a new student housing village for an early executive secretary of the denomination's Home Mission Board, promoted six faculty members, and authorized a new professor in religious education (who will be named later), in cooperation with the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

Also approved was a 15 percent student growth projection for Golden Gate over the next five years, as recommended by the trustees' long range planning committee, and participation in a branch of the seminary in Phoenix in cooperation with Grand Canyon College and the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

The seminary's constitution was changed to give clarification to the interpretation of the doctrinal relations between the seminary and the member churches of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The constitution now includes a revision of Article VIII which reads: "The cardinal beliefs on which the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary is founded and in harmony with which it will operate are expressed in The Baptist Faith and Message approved by the Southern Baptist Convention in session at Kansas City in 1963, and appearing on pages 270-281 of the Convention Annual for that year; to these principles, trustees, administrative officers, and faculty members must subscribe."

A search committee for a successor to Graves, who will retire this summer, gave "an optimistic report" but did not name a candidate. "Tentative plans call for another meeting of the trustees in Kansas City on June 15, to give consideration to the election of a president to succeed Dr. Graves," a spokesman said.

Graves was honored at the trustee-faculty annual dinner, during which he and his wife, Frieda, received an oil portrait and a specially designed seminary ring. Then it was Graves' turn, as he presented longevity awards to seminary employees who had served 5, 10 and 20 year terms under his administration.

The seminary's retirement and recognition activities committee reported on plans to honor Graves on his 25th anniversary in Kansas City on June 15. A Silver Jubilee Celebration and retirement luncheon is planned in the Radisson Muehlebach Hotel on Wednesday, June 15, at 1 p.m.

Trustees also authorized a special committee to study the problem of faculty housing, due to the skyrocketing costs of housing in Marin County, asked Graves to write a history of the seminary and approved a nomenclature change for non-degree programs in theology, religious education, and church music from certificate to diploma.

The new student housing village, near completion on the campus, was named the Tichenor Village as a memorial to a former executive secretary-treasurer of the Home Mission Board, Isaac Taylor Tichenor. The three apartment buildings in the village were named in honor of three of the successors to Tichenor: Baron Dekalb Gray, John Benjamin Lawrence and Courts Redford.

Trustees received the \$50,000 challenge gift for the chair of evangelism from an anonymous donor, with the provisions that the amount be matched by Dec. 31, 1977, and that the chair be named the E. Hermond Westmoreland Chair of Evangelism in memory of the deceased long-time chairman of the Golden Gate trustees, who also served as chairman of the building committee of the trustees.

The committee was responsible for building the Strawberry Point campus, Mill Valley, Calif. Westmoreland served for many years as pastor of the South Main Baptist Church, Houston, Tex., and in many major leadership roles in the denomination.

The seminary administration was authorized to participate fully in the \$30,000,000 campaign for Southern Baptist seminaries now being coordinated by the Committee of 16, chaired by Cwen Cooper of Yazoo City, Miss.

The new budget of \$1,616,800 represents an increase of \$115,454 over the budget for the previous year. Major increases are projected in utility rates and a 6 percent increase in salaries.

The \$8,739,630 capital needs request will be presented to the SBC Executive Committee. The major portions of capital needs are represented in requests for the library and for student housing. Both student and faculty housing are critical to the growth of Golden Gate, a spokesman said. The student growth rate now exceeds 12 percent per year, requiring an additional 20 to 25 new housing units per year, he said.

Faculty promotions included the election of Ron Bostic to assistant professor of church music; Robert L. Cate advanced in grade as associate professor of Old Testament interpretation and awarded tenure; and in-grade advancements to Miss Geil Davis, professor of religious education, and Francis M. DuBose, professor of missions. James R. Patterson was named contract professor of systematic theology; Fred L. Fisher reappointed director of the Southern California Center in Garden Grove, Calif.; and Levi W. Price, reelected for a one-year term as chairman of the advisory committee of the seminary's Southern California Center.

The current trustee officers, reelected, are Charles A. Carter, Jackson, Miss., chairman; E. Glen Paden, Sacramento, Calif., vice chairman; Thomas A. Jackson, McLean, Va., secretary; and Wayne Barnes, Zachary, La., assistant secretary.