



**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Encouraged By Report,  
Educators Face Challenges

By Robert O'Brien & Jack Harwell

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--Bouyed by a report declaring Southern Baptist schools in good health, Southern Baptist educators spent three days here exploring ways to meet the challenges of education and tie in with denominational missions objectives.

One of the nation's leading evaluators of educational effectiveness, Earl J. McGrath, appeared before the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools (ASBCS) to present findings of a year-long study, which he said was more comprehensive than any of its kind.

McGrath, directing a research unit funded by a \$100,000 Lilly Endowment grant, surveyed trustees, faculty, students and staff from 49 of the 53 Southern Baptist colleges in compiling the voluminous report in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Education Commission and the ASBCS.

Giving the schools a high rating in relation to other schools across the country, he said they were sound financially, academically and in enrollment and declared that their unashamed church relationship and willingness to stand for values characterized their strength.

"To the degree you emphasize church relationship, you will attract students and donors," warned McGrath, former U. S. commissioner of education and a layman of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. "You will flounder to the degree you attempt to ape secularized schools."

The ASBCS voted to participate in a follow-up evaluation in cooperation with McGrath and his team and the Education Commission. Lilly Endowment has approved another grant of \$50,000 for use in follow-up. The ASBCS voted to zero in on careful examination of the schools' purpose, transmission of values and business management during the follow-up phase, in which each school will have the opportunity to use confidential, individualized versions of the McGrath study to evaluate its own strengths and weaknesses.

During the meeting of the ASBCS and subsidiary groups of Southern Baptist educational leaders, speakers dealt with ways to improve education, meet its challenges and tie it in with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Bold Mission goal to evangelize the world by the close of the century.

Ben C. Fisher, executive director-treasurer of the SBC Education Commission, and associate executive director, George Capps, reported on meetings with SBC mission organizations, such as the Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board and Woman's Missionary Union, and one they hope to set up with the Brotherhood Commission.

Capps said the schools and the SBC agencies have completed plans to assign contact persons on the campuses and in the SBC agencies to work together in undergirding the denomination's missions enterprise, which will call for unprecedented recruitment, training and financing of missionaries.

Christian education and missions, historical companions in Baptist growth, have been in the process of strengthening mutual support and communicating their joint concern for missions to SBC constituency since 1971. Those efforts, a forerunner of the Bold Mission effort, dovetail with it.

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In other action, the ASBCS and a companion organization of deans elected officers, conducted business and heard a series of speakers.

The ASBCS elected William K. Weaver, president of Mobile College, as president; Kenneth T. Whitescarver, president, Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy, vice president; H. I. Hester, retired, Liberty, Mo., secretary-treasurer, Milton P. Ferguson, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., will assist Hester.

The deans elected Jim E. Tanner, academic vice president, Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., president; Charles Martin, academic vice president, Mississippi College, Clinton, vice president; and Kirby Godsey, liberal arts college dean, Mercer University, Macon, Ga., secretary-treasurer.

Speakers covered a wide range of educational subjects, including the relation of education to the federal government, the concept of Christian freedom, faculty development, educational leadership, state Baptist conventions and local churches, the denomination's Cooperative Program unified budget, the value of Baptist secondary education, public policy and legal action and other subjects.

One pre-announced speaker, U. S. Sen. Mark Hatfield (R.-Ore.), had to cancel because of pressing Senate business.

James D. Koerner, program officer for the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, New York, gave the educators a progress report on the formation of a national blue ribbon commission, the Sloan Commission on Government and Higher Education, to explore solutions to the problems and misunderstandings resulting from increasing government regulation of both private and public education.

Outlining increasing federal intrusion into education, Don Anthony, executive secretary-elect of the Texas Baptist Christian Education Coordinating Board and current academic vice president of Texas Eastern University, urged Baptists to take constructive action to "restore reasonable balance to the federal-institutional relationship."

He said Baptists can engage in cooperative efforts with other educators, act constructively rather than assuming a reactionary stance, keep Baptist constituency informed, cultivate contacts with congressional delegations and federal agencies, and recommit Baptist institutions to their special and unique role "in support of the divine mission of the church."

Phillip R. Moots called on schools of all denominations to "take vigorous initiatives" in working together to help formulate government policy, prevent legal problems and inform supporters of college-government problems.

Moots, a lawyer from Columbus, Ohio, who has done extensive legal work for Methodist schools, told the Southern Baptist educational leaders:

"We really have no choice. We must overcome differences, seek a common ground and act on it, now!"

Moots cited a long list of U. S. Supreme Court rulings, federal regulations, school litigation cases and other legal precedents to document his case for urgent shared planning.

He said, "Our resources are terribly scarce; it only makes sense to share the expenses of information gathering, legal research and analysis and planning, legislative and administrative lobbying, etc. We simply can't afford the waste and duplication of trying to go it alone. It is surely not good stewardship for church or college."

Moots also urged individual colleges to make intensive "preventive planning" to make sure they understand government regulations, court rulings and legal pitfalls, so as to avoid unnecessary lawsuits and court actions.

Milton Ferguson, delivering the annual endowed H. I. Hester lecture to the ASBCS, challenged SBC educators to understand and teach freedom in three areas: denominational fellowship, "authentic Christian education" and the "complexities of our society."

He defined Christian freedom as "the actualization of the human person through appropriate relationships with the living God, with one's self and with other persons." He also described freedom as "life under discipline--the discipline of the kingdom, the rule of God . . . found only in that life-style which is the free servant . . . free yet bound, bound yet free."

And, he said Christian freedom "is a valid stance from which to relate to the complexities of our society."

Ferguson specifically linked this point to the church-state issue, saying that Baptist postures on separation of church and state were developed when Baptists were a minority group, but need to be restudied in light of "the responsibility which comes with influence and status."

He added: "Today, we confuse our people with absolutist pronouncements of the doctrine and mixed behavior in actual relationships. The result is confusion, anguish and increasing panic.

"A free church and free state inevitably will correlate, even cooperate, else neither is truly free, for there is no freedom in isolation," he said. "They must by nature remain corporately as free from each other as possible--yet relate in creative tension for the welfare of both."

James O. Teel of the SBC Stewardship Commission, addressing state Baptist education secretaries and SBC Education Commission members, re-emphasized that Baptist schools are inseparably linked with churches and the denomination's Cooperative Program unified budget which underwrites a substantial portion of their support.

He said the schools are "the breeding ground for missionaries" and urged continued efforts on the part of educators to inspire young people to missions involvement and support.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Wrapup

Editors See 'Openness' and  
'Unity' as SBC Hallmarks

By Robert O'Brien

NASHVILLE (BP)--Editorials in state Baptist newspapers generally radiated a sense of excitement, pleasure and pride about events which transpired in mid-June at the 120th annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Kansas City, Mo.

Editors expressed enthusiasm over the SBC's willingness to vote proposals calling for recruitment of 5,000 short-term missionaries and doubling of financial resources by 1982 as part of the SBC's Bold Mission effort to evangelize the world by the close of the century.

They used words like "openness," "unity," "unanimity of spirit," "healthy" and "wholesome" to describe the mood of more than 16,000 registered messengers.

Lurking in the background--directly and indirectly--of evaluations of several editors are vestiges of the bitter doctrinal shoot-out at the 1970 SBC in Denver--the yardstick by which most editorial observers have measured the moods of succeeding conventions.

"Gone are the bitter days of Denver, 1970," wrote J. Marse Grant, editor of North Carolina's Biblical Recorder, sounding a note several other editors alluded to indirectly in describing the positiveness and unity of the SBC's 1977 edition.

Quite a few editors praised the SBC's "openness," characterized by its vote to instruct its agencies to reveal salary information of their chief executives when asked to do so and its decision to reject a proposal to withhold vote totals in elections during the annual meeting.

R. Eugene Puckett, editor of the Maryland Baptist, predicted an avalanche of letters testing agencies on salary disclosure. He echoed another editor or two with this warning: ". . . woe be unto any agency that does not respond quickly and thoroughly. We doubt the issue is settled; it could appear each year for some time because openness is the mood of the times."

Several of the 17 editors who have editorialized thus far commented that the lengthy but non-bitter debates on vote and salary disclosure exhibited the only controversy in a convention aimed at inspiring Southern Baptists toundertake unprecedented worldwide goals in missions and evangelism.

"We conquered mountains (voting a \$63.4 million budget and Bold Mission advance) with little effort and muddled our time and energies with the molehills" (such as the salary dispute), wrote William Crews, editor of the Northwest Baptist Witness, reflecting views of several editors. "Southern Baptists can survive the molehills so long as we trust God to help us conquer the mountains," he said. "I believe this was done in Kansas City."

As usual, the editors varied in assessments of the convention's place in history, but several spoke of the long-term significance which they believe may characterize the ambitious plans launched in Kansas City for Bold Mission.

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"At this close range, it appears this 120th annual session will go down in history as one of the pivotal points in Southern Baptist life," said Bob Terry, editor of Missouri's Word and Way.

"This year we have probably inaugurated the greatest plans in the history of our convention," commented J. Everett Sneed of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine. "The convention took one of its greatest missions leaps ever in approving the Bold Mission Thrust," declared John Roberts of South Carolina's Baptist Courier.

The effect of President Jimmy Carter's successful urging of SBC messengers to incorporate the 5,000 short-term missionaries into the Bold Mission effort and his videotape message to the convention drew analysis from a number of editors.

James F. Cole, editor of Louisiana's Baptist Message, was the only one to discuss the church-state implications of Carter's participation in the convention, although C. R. Daley of the Western Recorder in Kentucky, said he would editorialize on it in the future.

"Some criticism was heard as to Carter's challenge (to increase number of volunteer missionaries) since it originated from the Oval Office," Cole wrote. "A few said that w as Southern Baptists would have criticized John Kennedy if he had issued such a statement after meeting with Catholics in the White House (as Carter did with Baptist agency heads on June 7 about two weeks before the SBC voted to accept his proposal).

"This is probably true, but our criticism would not necessarily have been valid," Col said. "Carter's challenge did not come as an executive order. That order was issued nearly 2000 years ago when the head of the church (Jesus Christ) said, 'Go ye.'

"Being President of the United States has not stripped Carter of laymanship," Cole said of Carter who has done volunteer mission work himself and served as an SBC agency trustee.

Daley observed: "The prayers of Southern Baptists for an open door to world evangelization in this generation have been amazingly answered. A Baptist deacon, unknown beyond his own community a few years ago but now living in the White House, has been used of God to give Southern Baptists their greatest visibility and opportunity in history. If we do not capitalize on this opportunity, we do not deserve another."

Commenting on the speed with which Carter's proposal became SBC policy, Daley added, "As a veteran observer and participant in Southern Baptist life, I would have said such an idea could not have bypassed established channels and won approval."

"It was thrilling for the President of the U. S. to say he'd personally support a volunteer missionary for two years," wrote Robert Hastings of the Illinois Baptist. "Jimmy Carter didn't think up the idea. It was already in the Bold Mission strategy. But the weight of his influence gave an air of excitement."

Several editors pointed out, though, that all the ambitious plans in existence won't work without dedicated implementation.

"It remains to be seen how effective we are in implementation--a problem which rests largely with the (SBC) agencies as they get the message into the churches," said John J. Hurt, editor of the Baptist Standard in Texas, who will retire July 15 after some 30 years in Southern Baptist journalism and become editor emeritus.

"There will not be any 5,000 short-term mission volunteers without a gigantic recruitment program," Hurt declared. "There will not be more big jumps in dollar giving without churches switching their prejudice for buildings and staff to mission boards.

"Baptists are long on projects and promotional efforts," added Don McGregor of Mississippi's Baptist Record. "Some of them live and some dwindle away for lack of interest. Bold Mission advance must be kept alive. Those who received the impetus applied at this convention must be the ones to carry the enthusiasm to others throughout the convention and keep the interest at a high pitch."

In other areas, the editors generally approved SBC resolutions condemning homosexuality as a sin but calling for compassion for homosexuals and dealing with a wide range of other social ills.

They responded with enthusiasm and respect for the job done by James L. Sullivan as SBC president and the election of Jimmy R. Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, as his successor.

"Plaudits must go to James L. Sullivan for outstanding service . . . God's hand must have been in his selection at a time when Jimmy Carter's election turned the global spotlight on a people called Southern Baptists," wrote Jack U. Harwell, editor of Georgia's Christian Ind x.

Jimmy Allen "is a forceful and dynamic leader . . . he knows how to present the Baptist position in a tactful and yet effective manner," wrote Jack Gritz of Oklahoma's Baptist Messenger.

Hurt felt as if the convention used too much video and questioned the wisdom of spending \$6,000 for a live satellite interview by a Southern Baptist television newsmen on the convention platform with a missionary in Hong Kong.

Other editors commenting on that, though, applauded the multi-media effort, such as Julian Pentecost of Virginia's Religious Herald, who praised a variety of media uses and commented: "This was the first known attempt (the satellite transmission) to 'literally wrap the world in prayer' and it was an inspiration to share in it."

Several editors summed up the thrust of Southern Baptist efforts:

"When we focus on our central thrust of missions and outreach, everything else seems to fit together properly," said Al Shackelford of Tennessee's Baptist and Reflector.

The convention was constructive and "messengers were not diverted to side issues . . .," said Theo Sommerkamp of Ohio's Baptist Messenger.

"The 1977 convention seemed to be more concerned about cooperating in witnessing to a lost world than arguing pet peeves," said Edgar Cooper of Florida's Baptist Witness.

"If our denomination maintains its central thrust of missions and evangelism, if we continue concern for the whole person, and if we do all things openly and together, and, above all, if we maintain our dependency on the Spirit of the Living God, Southern Baptists will be equal to this high calling of God," concluded Bob Terry of Missouri's Word and Way.

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Jaroy Weber Recovering  
From Heart Attack

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LUBBOCK, Tex. (BP)--Former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Jaroy Weber is resting comfortably in Methodist Hospital after suffering what doctors call a "mild heart attack," here June 28.

Weber, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lubbock, is listed in serious but stable condition.

He served as SBC president for two terms 1975-76.

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#### CORRECTION

In Baptist Press story mailed June 24, 1977, entitled "Tote Bags Help Spread The Gospel in Surinam," please change "Portuguese" to "Dutch" in line one of graph 4.

Thanks, Baptist Press