



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
480 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2000
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

September 15, 1977

77-163

Georgia 'Adopts' Baptists In N. Y., Praises 'Soap' Battle

ATLANTA (BP)--The executive committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention approved a recommendation that the convention adopt a "sister state relationship" with New York Baptists and praised the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's battle against "Soap."

Subject to approval of the annual convention in November, the executive committee endorsed a proposal to help the New York convention and its churches and associations in every possible way. They responded to a request by New York Executive Secretary Jack P. Lowndes, a native Georgian and former Georgia pastor, who had the support of Georgia Executive Secretary Searcy S. Garrison. The New York convention is one of the newer and smaller of the 33 state conventions covering Southern Baptist work in 50 states.

The action on "Soap" took note of the Christian Life Commission's efforts to prevent airing of the sex-oriented ABC-TV series. It commended the commission's battle against "Soap" and other such "degrading programs on radio and television airwaves."

The committee also approved employment of a staff employee to coordinate education and involvement in Christian ethics and social concerns "as soon as financial resources are available," to accelerate its activities in Christian family life and Christian personal and social ethics, urged churches and associations to form strong local public affairs committees, and requested a special study about better ways to use radio and television in communicating Baptist stands on public issues was requested.

Another action, subject to convention endorsement in November, approved a resolution condemning the U. S. Internal Revenue Service rulings spelling out what constitutes an "integrated auxiliary" of a church, association or convention.

-30-

Conversions In China, North Korea Reported

Baptist Press
9/15/77

RICHMOND (BP)--Although no formal missionary witness exists today in China and North Korea, a report has been received of continuing conversions, especially among young people, in these two areas, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board was told here.

George H. Hays, secretary for East Asia, said he heard Paul Kaufman, a former missionary to China, now directing an evangelistic organization in Hong Kong, tell of news he had received from peasants who pass back and forth across the border into Hong Kong and Macao.

In one Chinese city of 450,000 Kaufman said, it is estimated that 50,000 are Christians.

Kaufman told of a young Christian on a long march with other young people to a distant commune in the country. While he walked along he sang and talked to the others whenever possible. Finally, the group leader ordered him to stop his singing and witnessing. The young Christian asked permission to ask the guard a question.

"Are you happy?" he asked. The guard replied, "No, I am not happy, but that is not our objective. You are to remain silent."

Several weeks later at the commune, this same guard came to the Christian and asked him to walk with him in the woods. When deep in the woods the guard said, "Please tell me how to be happy. Since meeting you on the road here, I have not been able to get your question out of my mind."

-more-

Another story concerns a baptismal service. Kaufman said he was told about 100 young people who were to be baptized in a mountain lake. Secretly, the Christians made their way up the mountain. Word reached the authorities and they started up the mountain in their vehicles. Before they reached the spot where the Christians were, a dense fog moved in, making it impossible to continue. Meanwhile, the Christians had their baptismal service and quietly came back down the mountain.

Baker J. Cauthen, executive director of the Foreign Mission Board who formerly served as a missionary to China, said, "It is very difficult to validate stories coming from China, but every encouragement is of help and leads us to a solid conviction that Christian witness is continuing and people are being won to Christ."

-30-

S. C. Church Ordains
Husband-Wife Musicians

Baptist Press
9/15/77

MYRTLE BEACH, S. C. (BP)--A husband-wife team has been ordained to the ministry by a South Carolina Baptist church here.

Ocean View Baptist Church ordained Mr. and Mrs. E. Thomas Smith. He is the church's minister of music and she is the organist. Both were called by Ocean View and began duties June 1.

She is believed to be only the seventh woman ordained to the ministry by a Southern Baptist church in South Carolina.

Participants in the ordination service included the pastor, J. Kirk Lawton Jr., who delivered the sermon; Robert E. Nichols, associate pastor, who gave the charge to the church; and Thomas H. Westmoreland, director of the state convention's music department, who charged the candidates.

Mrs. Smith is the former Nancy Lyons of Sumter, S. C. Her father is chairman of deacons at First Baptist Church there. Her mother is organist at Alice Drive Baptist Church also in Sumter. Smith, 30, a native of Washington, D. C., formerly was music director at First Baptist Church Kannapolis, N. C.

She is a graduate of Furman University and was accompanist for the Furman Singers. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Alabama. Both received masters degrees in church music from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and he won the Faculty Voice Award during his senior year, 1974.

-30-

Texas Baptists Urged To
Send 1,000 Mission Volunteers

Baptist Press
9/15/77

DALLAS (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Jimmy Allen has challenged his fellow Texas Baptists to provide 1,000 of the 5,000 volunteers being sought by the new Southern Baptist Mission Service Corps.

"The Father (God) seems to be putting it all together," was Allen's concluding remark to an enthusiastic progress report on the corps to the Texas Baptist executive board here. Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, presented a similar update to President Jimmy Carter two weeks earlier. The SBC set the goal of 5,000 volunteer missionaries following a challenge presented by Carter last June.

Allen said the short-term volunteers with special skills in the corps will "complement" the work of the career missionary, allowing him to do "the preaching-teaching task."

The board adopted a resolution of appreciation for the late James G. Harris, the Texas Baptist president who died of an apparent heart attack on July 31. Harris was immediate past president of the SBC Foreign Mission Board.

-more-

Texas Baptist Executive Director Landes said that interest in starting new churches and missions in Texas has reached an all-time high as a result of the recent Good News Texas evangelistic thrust, which featured a \$1.5 million media campaign. He said a primary way Texas Baptists will 'extend the Good News' is through a program to strengthen family life.

-30-

Criswell Producing
Reference Bible

Baptist Press
9/15/77

DALLAS (BP)--Former Southern Baptist Convention president W. A. Criswell is leading in producing a reference Bible by a group of 15 Baptists.

Criswell, pastor of the 19,000-member First Baptist Church, Dallas, said the "Criswell Reference Bible" based on the King James Version will be released to the public in December, 1978.

Criswell and Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, announced the project at the signing of a contract with Thomas Nelson, Inc., publishers of Nashville, Tn.

Proceeds from the sales of the Bible will go to the Criswell Center.

The new reference Bible reflects "the free church tradition" and the distinct theological perspective of Criswell, according to Patterson.

"The new Bible reflects Dr. Criswell's 50 years as a pastor."

-30-

Tax Conference To Hear
Conflicting Viewpoints

Baptist Press
9/15/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--"The fat will be in the fire" at the conference on "Taxation and the Free Exercise of Religion," sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here, October 3-5, according to James E. Wood Jr., executive director.

Setting the tone of the conference and defending the freedom of the churches from "a systematic encroachment on the First Amendment by the Internal Revenue Code," Wood in a major address plans to make a strong presentation of Baptist concerns relating to taxation and the churches.

In announcing the speakers for the conference, Wood said that this will be an open meeting in which all viewpoints on churches and taxation will be aired. "Tax problems relating to the churches and their agencies are increasing daily," he said, "and it is time for church people to take a hard look at the situation before it gets out of hand. This is precisely why we chose the theme, 'Taxation and the Free Exercise of Religion.'"

Among the speakers will be a National Council of Churches executive, Dean Kelley, staff assistant for religious and civil liberty, who will advocate tax exemption for churches. He is the author of a book entitled, "Why Churches Should Not Pay Taxes."

The opposite view will be presented by a former American Civil Liberties Union representative, Hope Eastland, now a practicing attorney in the nation's capital. She will speak on "Why Churches Should be Taxed."

Other speakers for the 16th Religious Liberty Conference sponsored by the Baptist public affairs agency include congressmen, highly placed administration officials, Roman Catholic and Jewish constitutional lawyers, and denominational spokesmen.

The kick-off speech will be by Laurence Woodworth, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Tax Policy. He will discuss "Federal Tax Policy and its Impact on the Churches."

Roman Catholic Fr. Charles M. Whalen, S. J., professor of law at Fordham University, and Leo Pfeffer, Esq., Jewish attorney and widely known constitutional authority, will discuss a variety of problems relating to churches and taxation.

-more-

Congressmen James Corman (D.-Cal.) and Barber Conable (R.-N.Y.) will present legislative attempts to handle church-tax issues. Corman is a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, and Conable is an authority on church lobbying and related problems.

William Thompson, stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., a former attorney, will discuss "Churches, Public Issues and Tax Exemption."

Wood pointed out that different forms of church structures create special problems for government in working out fair and equal tax policies. This problem will be discussed by John W. Baker, director of research services of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Baker is a political scientist and a graduate of the American University Law School.

Many churches attempt to make payments to government in lieu of taxes, Wood said. This creates special problems in church-state relations, which will be discussed by Frank Patton from the Episcopal Guild of St. Ives, he said. The Guild is composed mostly of lawyers who specialize in tax problems related to churches.

Wood further pointed out that during the past year the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has created new problems for the churches by issuing regulations on "integrated auxiliaries of churches." This problem will be probed at the conference by Alvin D. Lurie, Assistant Commissioner of the IRS for Employee Plans and Exempt Organizations.

A special panel of American and Southern Baptists will offer a critique and respond to various views presented to the conference. These are: Melvin Cooper, executive director, State Ethics Commission of Alabama; Gary Nash, general counsel, Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention; Betty Miller, office of issue development, American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.; and Earl Trent, house counsel, national ministries, American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.

-30-

'Soap' Will Backfire
SBC President Says

Baptist Press
9/15/77

NASHVILLE (BP)--The president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), in a keynote address at the annual meeting of the Christian Life Commission here, called on Americans of all religious faiths to join efforts in washing ABC-TV's "Soap" off the air.

Speaking on the night of the controversial adult comedy series' first episode, SBC President Jimmy Allen predicted that ABC's attempt to create "a new breakthrough for smut in the American home" will backfire on the network.

"The kinky sex series," he said, "is creating a new sense of outrage and awareness of a need for the consumer to be heard in television programming."

"The consumers, who are the owners of the television airwaves, have been absentee landlords," Allen told the commission members. "They have been present to consume whatever their television sets have poured out, but they have not realized that they are supposed to be in charge of what happens on our airwaves."

That attitude is changing, he said, pointing out that the Christian Life Commission's hearings on television and morality conducted across the nation last year revealed "a grass roots feeling of frustration and indignation that has not been subject to analysis in the Nielson polls which simply record which sets are turned on at what hours."

Allen said that he hopes the protest over "Soap" will initiate a change of direction for America's media morality.

"Southern Baptists could be pivotal in that process," he added. "In so doing we will become the frontline of resistance to censorship as well as the frontline resistance to smut. If a way cannot be found for consumers to be informed and involved in matters of television programming standards, the reaction of extremely outraged citizens will produce a climate for censorship in our nation."

Christian Life Commission members adopted a resolution calling on ABC to withdraw "Soap" immediately and to "replace it with a program that is in keeping with ABC's responsibility to behave as a guest in the homes of the American people."

-30-

NOTE: Christian Life Commission wrapup story will be mailed Monday, Sept. 19.