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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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78-185

D.C. Baptist Convention
Retains Present Name

WASHINGTON (BP)--The District of Columbia Baptist Convention will retain its present name rather than change to a name some felt would be more descriptive of the actual boundaries of the convention.

At its annual session last year, a motion to change the name to Baptist Convention of Greater Washington was laid on the table for a vote this year.

Reversing itself, the executive board of the convention brought a recommendation this year that the name change not be voted on until further study. The Southern Baptist Convention by-laws recognize the D. C. Convention as a state convention. Some fear that any change in name could result in a change in status with the SBC.

The delegates to the convention adopted a budget of \$461,715, a slight drop from last year. Ten percent of all undesignated receipts to the convention go to the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., Inc. The D. C. Convention is dually aligned.

The D. C. Convention extended congratulations to the Roman Catholic Church upon the election of Pope John Paul II and promised to pray for him. They called upon him to "use his good office to work for world peace and religious freedom for all people," focusing on Ireland, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa.

The convention also adopted a resolution commending U. S. President Jimmy Carter, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin for their efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East. It also urged the use of government resources "to assist... suffering people who will be the victims as plans and programs are carried out."

In response to attempts to crack down on drug use in the public schools in the D.C. area, the convention passed a resolution commending efforts to enforce drug use laws and to convict those who sell illegal drugs.

R. Carrington Paulette, pastor of East Washington Heights Baptist Church, Washington, D. C., was elected president of the convention. Next year's meeting will be held Nov. 15-16 at the First Baptist Church of Carrollton, New Carrollton, Md.

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Boswell To Retire in 1980;
Taylor Named Successor

WILLIAMSBURG, Ky. (BP)--J. M. Boswell, described as "an educational legend" in the Appalachian Mountains in Eastern Kentucky, has announced his retirement from his 33-year presidency of Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Ky.

The 72-year-old educator will step down from the helm of the Kentucky Baptist co-educational senior college, Aug. 1, 1980.

Trustees of the school have elected James H. Taylor, 33, the school's vice president for development for the last five years, as Boswell's successor. He will serve as president-elect until Boswell's retirement.

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

A native of San Antonio, Texas, Taylor attended high school in Pontiac, Mich. He received the bachelor of science degree from Cumberland College, the master of arts degree from Union College, Barbourville, Ky., and doctor of education degree in higher educational administration from Nova University, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Taylor has been on the Cumberland staff 11 years, serving in admissions, alumni and development capacities. He served pastorates in Monticello and Saxton, Ky., during student days.

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Gamblers Dealt Loss
In Three State Votes

By Norman Jameson

Baptist Press
11/13/78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Gambling proponents lost three races Nov. 7 when voters in Florida, New Jersey and Virginia turned back efforts to legalize casino gambling, jai alai betting and parimutuel horse racing betting.

In Virginia and Florida, large circulation Baptist newspapers spearheaded the anti-gambling efforts.

Opponents of casino gambling in Florida, which already has horse and dog tracks and jai alai, found themselves in strange company when parimutuel interests joined religious groups and chambers of commerce to defeat casinos almost three to one.

Casinos lost 1,614,068 to 644,638, with spokesmen for every major religious denomination and the governor fighting casinos on moral grounds; chambers of commerce saying, "Casinos are bad business;" and the parimutuel interests protecting themselves in the background.

Floridians didn't bite the "Help Florida, Help Yourself" carrot dangled by the casino interests. In north and central Florida where Baptists are strongest, the issue lost five to one. Edgar Cooper, editor of the 87,000 circulation "Florida Baptist Witness," came out strongly against the casinos, which failed to carry a single county in Florida.

Virginians told their state legislature, by a vote of 577,731 to 535,897 through a non-binding referendum, that they wanted no part of parimutuel gambling. A bill to legalize and control parimutuels passed the state's general assembly for the first time, by a single vote, after passing the senate several times in the past.

But when put to a referendum, "a unique demonstration of unity by the religious leadership" of Virginia led to defeat, according to Julian Pentecost, editor of the "Religious Herald," state Baptist newspaper. Although the referendum was not legally binding, Pentecost said several members of the legislature indicated they would not implement the parimutuel plan if it was defeated in referendum.

Pentecost and the "Religious Herald," with 50,000 circulation, and Clint Hopkins, secretary of the department of social ministries for the Baptist General Association of Virginia, were credited with significant roles in the referendum's defeat.

As late as election day, proponents of parimutuels predicted as much as a two to one victory margin. More realistic late predictions were for the referendum to pass by about the same number of votes that sealed its defeat, according to Pentecost.

In New Jersey, where legalization of casino gambling in 1976 has failed to revitalize decaying Atlantic City, jai alai betting was squashed by 901,858 to 625,352, carrying only one of 21 counties in the state.

The New Jersey Christian Conference on Legislation, under the leadership of Samuel Jeanes, fronted an information blitz with a fact sheet to 3,000 churches, every Chamber of Commerce and mayor in New Jersey and with letters to the media. The sheet detailed results of findings by the University of Connecticut department of sociology and other crime statistics to show the promised benefits of legalized gambling never materialize.

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Jeanes, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Merchantville, N. J., an American Baptist church, said his group spent about \$1,200 to defeat the referendum, compared to the admitted \$150,000 spent by pro-jai alai forces.

Jeanes, who has fought gambling in New Jersey since 1953 when bingo was legalized, warned then that "you'll never stop" gambling forces if they're given an opening. He said that in the first six months of 1978, when the overall crime rate in New Jersey dropped 3.1 percent, crime in Atlantic City rose by 27 percent.

"They'll make efforts to try and revive the issue," said Jeanes. "But I have a feeling if they come back, we'll be able to defeat them again."

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Black Preacher Recalls
Bitter-Sweet Memories

By Robert J. Hastings

Baptist Press
11/13/78

ALTON, Ill. (BP)--Donald Sharp, the first black in the 72-year history of Illinois Baptists to preach the convention's annual sermon, paid tribute to what Southern Baptists have meant to him and recalled some bitter-sweet memories.

The pastor of Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chicago, warned his listeners that he might go overtime "since I've got 72 years of preaching to catch up."

Other blacks have been on the Illinois Baptist State Association program numerous times but not as preacher of the annual sermon.

Sharp, who grew up in Chicago and became a Southern Baptist in 1969, paid tribute to friends such as John M. Whitman, former managing editor of the "Illinois Baptist," who made him feel welcome from the start.

"On one of my first visits to Springfield (Ill.), Whitman embraced me and kept me in his home overnight," he said.

Sharp said a great deal about his own search for self-identity and feeling of worth. He described how it felt to grow up poor, in the ghetto of Chicago, a child born out of wedlock.

He told how he felt as an adolescent boy when his mother explained why his daddy "had a different last name than you do," then with tears streaming down her face, "hugged me and said she loved me and that I was a somebody."

"Statistically speaking, I should be an alcoholic, a drug addict, a victim of the garbage heap," he continued. "But God changed my life, not because of the circumstances of my birth, or who I was, but because he loved me."

Sharp warned about a pseudo interest in going overseas to "win the natives amid all those crocodiles and alligators, but never being willing to serve in the inner city here in the States."

He said that he's sometimes called an "Oreo" in the black community, meaning, "You think just like the white folks." Then he said, "I believe in America, good or bad, and I'm not about to get on a boat and go back to Africa." One of the faults he sees in some American churches is "starting 'Christian' day schools just because you don't want your children to sit in classes with other races" in the public schools.

Much of his message was punctuated by humor, and an effort to dispel myths about black people. "You think all black preachers drive around in Cadillacs," he said. "Well, I'll tell you, if I had the money, I'd buy me a Cadillac. But let me tell you something else, if I did have the money, and I did buy one, my deacons wouldn't fire me for doing so!"

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"My Father (God) is rich in houses and lands," he said, "and I don't think it's wrong to enjoy a little prime rib once in a while."

Then, in a good-natured closing, he said, "I see you white pastors driving around in these little Pintos, all patched up and pasted up, trying to make an impression on your congregations, so they won't think you've gotten too big for your pants."

He invited his listeners to visit the black churches in Chicago. "Some of you ask if it's 'safe' to visit our churches? Let me ask you if it's safe for a black man to visit in some of your white communities?" he asked, recalling the time in some Illinois towns when signs were posted, warning all "Niggers" to be out by sundown.

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CBS Will Feature Landry
And 'The Athletes' Series

Baptist Press
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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Tom Landry, no stranger to national television, will be on CBS's "Lamp Unto My Feet" on December 3 telling how God calls the plays in his life.

Landry, head coach for the Superbowl champion Dallas Cowboys, is featured in the film, "Tom Landry," a 15-minute episode of "The Athletes" series produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

John Stevens, vice president, television operations and producer/director of the film, will be interviewed about his work with "The Athletes" and the Radio and Television Commission.

"Through the series we show professional and amateur athletes as three-dimensional people," Stevens said. "We feature them as family people with a variety of interests outside sports. Most sports-minded people see the athlete only in action. In 'Tom Landry' we show the man's secret in coping with pressure--through faith in Jesus Christ."

In the film Landry says, "When I became a Christian...my outlook changed tremendously. Because I had a commitment, I knew I was in God's hands. From that point on I have never had to worry about the future."

Landry goes on to say that if God is the number one priority in a person's life then his family, work and other interests will be deeply enriched.

"The Athletes" series has been distributed to stations across the nation as well as the Armed Forces Television Network.

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