

July 21, 1956

127 Ninth Avenue, North — Nashville, Tennessee

(Editor's Note: The Southern Baptist Convention is studying its methods of operation. The following article gives background concerning previous studies the Convention has made of its agencies and methods.)

#### LAST AGENCY SURVEY MADE IN DEPRESSION

NASHVILLE--(BP)--In 1933, when the United States was in what we commonly call "the depression," the Southern Baptist Convention numbered 4,173,928 members in its 24,270 cooperating churches.

The total gifts of that year were \$23 1/4 million. This included gifts to local churches, state conventions, and the Southern Baptist Convention itself. Church property was valued at \$204,376.

It was in 1933, too, that a committee of the Southern Baptist Convention recommended no change in the way the denomination organized and operated its agencies.

Virginia Baptists had proposed the revisions. They wanted to know if three seminaries then operated by the Convention could be consolidated and its Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board be merged.

The committee studying the proposal of Virginia Baptists, however, felt "it would be unwise to disturb. . . in any way the machinery of our denominational agencies." Its reason for making the recommendation was on account of "the unsettled financial conditions and the general unrest in the minds of all people."

Between 1933 and 1956, no committee has had the task of studying Southern Baptist Convention organization with an eye toward revising it. The 1956 Convention session at Kansas City asked a committee to undertake such a study and to report in 1957. It has set aside \$25,000 to finance the study.

Since 1933, Southern Baptists have been in one of their greatest periods of growth. They number now 8,474,741 members in 30,377 churches. Baptisms, which were about 211,000 in 1933, surpass 400,000 annually.

Americans are prosperous today. This is reflected in giving which last year reached \$335 million for local, state, and Southern Baptist Convention work. Total property value of churches is \$1 1/3 billion.

Prior to 1933, the Convention had several proposals to change its setup.

These were in 1880, 1914-17, and 1925-27. Among these were some proposals to merge the two mission boards, but these proposals were rejected.

The Convention also rejected a suggestion that it create a single, powerful Executive Board to direct all Southern Baptist Convention activities.

Carr P. Collins, Dallas, Tex., layman who is a member of the SBC Executive Committee, suggested the present study during the December, 1955, meeting of the Executive Committee.

He said he believed there is "a very acute need for intensive examination and study of work of agencies and boards of the Southern Baptist Convention" and that "nothing but good" could come from such a study.

In establishing a committee to survey Convention agencies, the 1956 session directed that the committee consider the agencies and their relation to each other, and also relations between the Southern Baptist Convention, state Baptist conventions, and individual churches.

Purpose of the study is to "find the most effective way of promoting the Kingdom (of God) through the Southern Baptist Convention."

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#### DENNY, ADAMS START ROUND-WORLD VISIT

NEW YORK--(BP)--Two Baptist World Alliance officers left here July 20 for a six-week, around-the-world official visit with Baptists in other lands.

The two are Alliance President Theodore F. Adams, who is pastor of First Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., and Robert S. (Bob) Denny, associate secretary for youth, Washington.

They will fly first to Madrid, capital of Spain. Other stops between there and San Francisco, where they land Sept. 6, include Rome, Athens, Beirut, Karachi, Calcutta, Bangkok, Singapore, Djakarta, Manila, Taipei, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Seoul, and Honolulu.

While in Hong Kong Aug. 19-24, Adams and Denny will attend the Asian Baptist Youth Conference.

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**ALABAMAN PRESIDENT OF  
SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD**

GLORIETA, N. M.--(BP)--B. Locke Davis, pastor of Parker Memorial Baptist Church, Anniston, Ala., has been elected president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

He succeeds W. A. Criswell, pastor, First Baptist Church, Dallas, Tex. J. Harold Stephens, pastor of Inglewood Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., was elected recording secretary.

The board's election came during its semi-annual meeting at Glorieta Baptist Assembly, one of two summer assemblies operated for Southern Baptists under supervision of the Sunday School Board.

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**HOSPITALS NOW GETTING  
FORD FOUNDATION FUNDS**

NASHVILLE--(BP)--Many of the 34 Southern Baptist Convention hospitals included in the multi-million dollar Ford Foundation grants last December have begun receiving the funds.

SBC hospitals are eligible to receive more than \$3 1/2 million of the total amount of \$200 million. The Ford Foundation included 3500 hospitals in its announcement.

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**90-YEAR-OLD BAPTIZED  
BY MINISTER GRANDSON**

PRESCOTT, Ark.--(BP)--R. G. Presley, 90-year-old resident of Delight, Ark., was baptized here recently by his grandson, Harold Presley.

The elder Presley became a member of Fairview Baptist Church in Delight. His grandson is pastor of First Baptist Church, Leachville, Ark.

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**NEW BBI DORMITORY**

GRACEVILLE, Fla.--(BP)--A new dormitory, to accommodate 50 men, should be ready for occupancy when Baptist Bible Institute here opens in September, according to Institute President A. H. Stainback.

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