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## Cothen Expresses Optimism About Baptists' Future

By Linda Lawson

OLIVE BRANCH, Miss. (BP)--Sunday School Board president Grady Cothen said her that today's society demands new methods for reaching people, but that he is more optimistic about Southern Baptists' future than he has been in 20 years.

Cothen cited the increasing size and number of ethnic groups, changing societal values and the fact that most Americans have a low spiritual awareness as factors making "the context in which we work totally different."

"I think we stand on the threshold of the best era of Sunday School work since the 1950's and maybe in our history," he said at the spring meeting of state Sunday School directors and staff of the board's Sunday School department.

Cothen said Baptists must change their traditional mindset that only white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant types make good prospects. Of the black, Hispanic, Oriental and other growing ethnic groups, Cothen asked, "Are we who claim His (Christ's) name going to be content and pass them by?"

Norms of society no longer support ethical and moral standards, Cothen said. Th refore, "The message related to sin is not easily understood because there are so few norms left."

Within churches, leaders should challenge members to service out of spiritual motive, he said, adding, "Folks don't respond much to duty any more."

The emphasis of church ministry must be on meeting a person where he is--physically and spiritually, Cothen said. "We must ask ourselves what we can do to meet his hurt or feed his hunger, whether he ever comes to the First Baptist Church or not. If we do things only to build up our church, we are going to blow it," he said.

Cothen said Christians must show the world "That we are different--the community of love."

Christian families who have stayed together, Christians who have a tranquil spirit and who care "will make others want to be like us," he said.

"The best community of love ought to be the Sunday School class."

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## Ethnic Consultant Says It's A New Day in SBC

By Jerilynn Wood

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A new day exists in the Southern Baptist Convention in th area of multi-ethnic church relations, said Sidney Smith, consultant, ethnic liaison unit, office of planning at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"It's hard to believe that Southern Baptists could build a multi-ethnic commitment in the 1800s and then through tragic mistakes lose it," he said. "But I contend that things ar changing and it's a new day for Southern Baptists b cause of the encouraging things we are finding in contemporary tr nds of race relations."

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"Many people are surprised to discover that when the Southern Baptist Convention was founded in 1845 there were 100,000 black Southern Baptists, one-third of the total membership at that time," said Smith, who is black.

He said that blacks were commissioned during the early days of the Foreign Mission Board and that possibly the majority of missionaries on the field were black.

Smith noted that despite the involvement of blacks since 1845, Southern Baptists lost almost all of its black membership at the turn of the century due to the rise of the Jim Crow system and the emergence of the National Baptist Convention.

"In recent years Southern Baptists have reached some important milestones," Smith said. These include arriving at the day:

--When the admission of multi-ethnic churches is no longer a problem within our state conventions.

--When there are at least 250,000 multi-ethnic Southern Baptists and every state convention has multi-ethnic churches.

--When multi-ethnic men and women are welcomed into positions of leadership on the local, associational, state and national level.

A major factor in determining these milestones is that Southern Baptists are learning to adjust, Smith said.

"We are learning that policies that thrill one group, may chill another; that singing that soothes one group, may snore another; that preaching that electrifies one, may electrocute another; and that methods that attract one, may distract another."

Sometimes adjustment is painful but it makes us better, and a vanguard of people of goodwill are committing themselves to being Christian and making the adjustment, Smith said.

"The walls of separation are beginning to crumble as God moves in the heart of his people and causes them to realize that it is morally wrong for the 11 a.m. service to be the most segregated hour of the week," he said.

"Southern Baptists must dedicate themselves anew to the commitment of serving Christ and loving people so that we can hasten the day when the rainbow of God's children all over this world can join hands together around the table of brotherhood in the church and sing, 'the more we get together, the more Christian we'll be.'"

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers by the Sunday School Board Bureau of Baptist Pr ss.

Enthusiasm High For  
Astrodome Extravaganza

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HOUSTON, Texas (BP)--Growing enthusiasm points to a record breaking attendance at the Bold Mission Thrust Rally in Houston's Astrodome, June 13, which will travel via two satellites to locations all over the country, according to Southern Baptist Convention President Jimmy R. Allen.

The rally, scheduled as the Wednesday evening session of the 134th SBC annual meeting, will be fed to Western Union's Westar I and RCA's Satcom I "to maximize the number of earth stations which can receive and relay the signal," said Robert Taylor, the SBC Radio and TV Commission vice president coordinating technical arrangements.

Billed by Allen as the first time in history that a convention session of a Christian group has been carried via satellite and electronic media simultaneously to many points across the United States, the rally has attracted growing attention.

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Satellite rallies have been scheduled in at least a dozen cities, which may attract about 75,000 persons to large screen presentations from the extravaganza in the Astrodome. It will also be screened at numerous churches and on a variety of commercial and cable TV outlets as Southern Baptists dedicate 1,100 missionaries.

Allen, who has spearheaded the effort, hopes to fill the 57,000-seat Astrodome itself with persons who have come to see Southern Baptists focus the eyes and ears of the world on Bold Mission Thrust, the SBC's plan to present the gospel to every person on earth by the year 2000.

Evangelist Billy Graham will close out the meeting with a message and challenge for more than 1,000 persons to dedicate themselves to missions. Challenges will also be issued at satellite rallies. Before Graham speaks the 1,100 missionaries, appointed for terms ranging from a year to a career, will kneel beside an equal number of persons from a wide range of Southern Baptist leadership and pray. An 8,000-voice choir, led by Graham team member Cliff Barrows, will sing.

Texas Baptists are working hard to develop the 8,000-voice choir and a busing program to fill the Astrodome, said executive director James H. Landes.

The choir will involve the Texas Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Band and church choirs. Sam Prestidge, secretary of the Texas Baptist church music department, said choirs will come from large and small churches in and out of Texas. Out of state churches include First Baptist Church, Valdosta, Ga.; First Baptist Church, Bowling Green, Ky.; and First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.

Prestidge said the nine associations surrounding Houston have 18,000 youth and adult choir members. The churches in the area have been asked to aim for a goal of 50 percent of their total choir members.

Ed Laux, director of the Texas Baptist special services division, said more than 600 buses have been committed by churches to bring people to the rally.

Landes said churches are also urged to bring their young people to a youth rally at Astroworld Wednesday afternoon, June 13, and then to the Bold Mission Thrust Rally during the evening.

The program will get underway at 7 p.m., Central Time, and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, with a flag processional of all the 50 states and 94 nations where Southern Baptists have missionaries and feature a program packed with missions.

The evening will feature messages by Baker James Cauthen, executive director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va., and William G. Tanner, executive director of the Home Mission Board, Atlanta, Ga., and testimonies from home and foreign mission personnel.

They include Scott Appleton, former professional football player now a Mission Service Corps volunteer; Cherry Chang, church growth consultant to Asians in Los Angeles for the Home Mission Board; John Cheyne, associate consultant on relief ministries for the Foreign Mission Board; and Ronnie Boswell, a furloughing foreign missionary from Brazil working this year with Texas Baptists.

Appleton, a former All-American football player with the University of Texas and winner of the prestigious Outland Trophy for outstanding college lineman, played professionally with the Houston Oilers and the San Diego Chargers.

A recovered alcoholic, Appleton accepted Christ because of the ministry of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas, where Allen is pastor. He now serves as a Mission Service Corps volunteer in San Antonio under the sponsorship of the church, operating the church's unique restaurant ministry, the Fourth Street Inn.

Mission Service Corps is the SBC program to send volunteer missionaries for one to two years service to work with career missionaries on home and foreign mission fields.

Just before Graham speaks, Allen will deliver a challenge to the missionaries and Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham, Ala., will lead a dedicatory prayer.

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Brotherhood Nominee Withdraws;  
Search Committee Reorganized

By Al Shackelford

Baptist Press  
5/18/79

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The search committee seeking a new executive director for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission was reorganized and given additional guidelines by the commission's trustees when the committee's nominee withdrew without explanation just prior to the May 16-18 meeting.

A five-member search committee was elected by the trustees last November to recommend a successor to Glendon McCullough, who was killed in an automobile accident last year.

The nominee of the committee was to have been William E. Hardy Jr., minister of education at First Baptist Church, Columbus, Miss. Hardy had served as chairman of the Brotherhood Commission, 1976-78. He was elected last November as chairman of the search committee, but withdrew from that post when the committee began to consider him as a possible nominee.

Hardy's nomination as executive director was approved unanimously by the search committee on March 11 and by the commission's executive committee on April 19.

At the opening session of the meeting May 9, Jack Deligans, acting chairman of the search committee, told the trustees that earlier in the day Hardy had asked "that his name not be presented to commissioners for consideration at this time."

The three other remaining members of the search committee are Jack L. Knox, president of QS Storage-North American Van Lines, Germantown, Tenn.; Lee Prince, pastor of Union Avenue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.; and Carl E. Voda, Alexandria, La., businessman.

The trustees formally accepted Hardy's resignation as chairman and as a member of the search committee. They expanded the committee to seven, electing Billy Rogers, a real estate broker in Earle, Ark.; Reginal Stokes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove, Ala.; and Jack Harwell, editor of the Christian Index, Atlanta, Ga. Knox will serve as chairman.

The trustees also created the position of "alternate member" on the search committee. The alternate member, James Gardner, attorney from Blytheville, Ark., will attend all meetings but will not vote unless he becomes a permanent member of the committee if another member is unable to serve.

Additionally, the committee asked Robert Dixon, director of Texas Baptist Men, Dallas, to serve as the search committee's contact with state Baptist Brotherhood leadership, who have expressed great concern with the process to secure a new executive director. He was named with the understanding the committee will invite him to attend meetings as needed.

In other action related to the search committee, the Brotherhood Commission trustees approved a recommendation from the search committee "that from this date and following none of the present or future members of the search committee shall be eligible for consideration as executive director."

The trustees also approved "a suggested profile" of characteristics for the new executive director. The profile had been worked out by the search committee.

During the meeting, the trustees were told more than 100 names had been submitted for the post. The search committee had narrowed these down to seven. Four of these who had expressed an openness to be considered were interviewed by the committee.

The next scheduled meeting of the Brotherhood Commission will be Nov. 7-9.

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