



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355

W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Richard T. McCartney, 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) L. Bracey Campbell III, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2798
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

September 20, 1979

79-158

Wrapup

Executive Committee Receives
Investigation, Conducts Business

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention received a report on an investigation of the registration procedure at the 1979 SBC meeting in Houston and conducted numerous items of business during a three-day meeting here.

The committee also officially inaugurated its new executive secretary-treasurer Harold C. Bennett, who succeeded Porter Routh in the top administrative post, Aug. 1.

The investigation by SBC registration secretary Lee Porter into alleged registration irregularities at the Houston meeting revealed no massive irregularities, but did uncover some problems calling for corrective measures by both churches and the SBC to eliminate flaws, ambiguities and "sloppy" procedures which could threaten the integrity of the SBC's balloting system.

Porter's report, which will be studied by subcommittees of the Executive Committee and reported to its February 18-20, 1980, meeting, indicated that 284 registrations were unquestionably out of line. He said another 1,000 registrations involved messengers technically not elected by their churches, but that they included many pastors and wives whose churches had voted to provide travel funds for them to go to the convention. He said failure to elect them officially probably resulted from misinterpretation of ambiguous instructions on messenger registration cards.

He emphasized that the investigation, launched by a vote of the SBC in Houston amid charges of irregularities, was an investigation of registration and not of the election of Adrian Rogers as convention president. He said that the irregularities revealed no theological, doctrinal or sectional bias which might have indicated they would have voted for any particular candidate. He added that the investigation did show 200 Houston-area churches were part of a "get-out-the-vote" campaign, but that, he said, is not illegal.

In receiving the report for study, the Executive Committee commended Porter for his investigation, expressed gratitude that most Southern Baptists showed integrity in the process, and denounced the irregularities which did occur.

The Executive Committee also laid the groundwork to increase the use of skilled laymen in the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust efforts to proclaim the message of Christ to the entire world in this century.

The committee requested the Bold Mission Thrust steering committee to call together an ad hoc consultation of skilled laymen to think through the implementation of BMT, asked the Brotherhood Commission to assume responsibility for organizing and staffing at least 10 regional conferences on lay involvement and report back, requested the SBC agencies

-more-

involved in Volunteers in Missions to add names to volunteer lists of laymen with special skills for use by the denomination in ad hoc groups and special projects, asked SBC seminaries to consider various uses of qualified laymen, and suggested that state conventions and SBC agencies form ad hoc advisory committees and workgroups to facilitate use of qualified lay people.

A host of other actions included:

--Adoption of a proposed SBC Cooperative Program budget goal for 1980-81 of a record \$90 million, including \$74,500,000 for total basic operating budget, \$2,500,000 for capital needs and \$13,000,000 in Bold Mission Thrust challenge funds.

--Adoption of a proposed 1979-80 Executive Committee budget of \$744,020 and SBC operating budget of \$1,319,500 and 1980-81 SBC operating budget of \$1,435,000.

--Approval of use of image magnification screens at the annual SBC meeting in St. Louis in 1980 at a cost of \$39,500 and disapproval of use of image magnification at the 1981 meeting in Los Angeles.

--Disapproval of a proposal to televise via satellite the evening sessions of SBC annual meetings.

--A series of actions were adopted to raise Executive Committee staff salaries 7 percent in a cost of living adjustment, evaluate staff performance, study employee retirement benefits and work with the Annuity Board in developing a uniform retirement plan for SBC agencies, study Executive Committee staff salary structure, adjust employee housing allowances and approve dental insurance as part of the Executive Committee's medical insurance.

--Established a policy limiting exhibits at the annual meeting of the SBC to SBC agencies and committees, the local committee of the host city, the local committee of the host city for the following year, the Baptist World Alliance, state conventions and local associations, the American Bible Society and members of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

-30-

Belmont Plaza Transferred
To Baptist Laymen Group

Baptist Press
9/20/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Tennessee Baptists will transfer the lease of Belmont Plaza, a high-rise retirement center, to a group of Baptist laymen as a result of action taken by the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

The board's action in effect rejected a recommendation from an appointed study committee to sell the facility to Lawler-Wood Inc., Knoxville, Tenn. At a special called session of the Tennessee Baptist Convention April 5, messengers voted to sell or transfer the center to relieve the convention of any liability.

The group of laymen is forming Belmont Plaza Inc., and will take over financing and operation of the 123-unit facility which was constructed by the Tennessee Baptist Service Corporation, but not opened because of lack of operating funds.

-more-

The transfer will cost Tennessee Baptists an additional \$572,000 including: \$456,858 currently in reserve to be given to the new corporation; \$75,000 expenses during a 60-day option period for the corporation to raise \$1 million in syndication funds; and \$40,000 to rewrite the original \$5 million bond indenture making the Tennessee Baptist Convention liable for the debt instead of the Tennessee Baptist Service Corporation.

Since February, the convention has paid \$227,400 to keep the facility from going into default.

Belmont Plaza has been in trouble since December 1978 when it was discovered it could not open for lack of operating funds. Money from the original \$5 million bond indenture was planned for operation, but it was discovered too late that under terms of the bond agreement, no funds could be used for operating expense.

Under terms of the new agreement, Tennessee Baptists will have the option to buy back the facility at the fair market value at the time of repurchase or for the amount the investors have in the project, whichever is greater.

Lawler-Wood Inc., offered \$3.5 million for the facility. The bonds would have been recalled and paid off.

Raymond Langlois, spokesman for Belmont Plaza Inc., said the concern of the Baptist laymen is to maintain the ministry of Belmont Plaza and to save Baptist integrity. He said by Sept. 13 the proposed corporation had already subscribed \$850,000 of the \$1 million syndication. Langlois is a member of the Tennessee Baptist executive board and pastor of Judson Memorial Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn.

-30-

Zambian Prime Minister Asks
Baptist Aid in Development

Baptist Press
9/20/79

LUSAKA, Zambia (BP)--Zambian Prime Minister Daniel Lisulo urged Baptists to accept economic development and national unity as part of their work as he opened the fifth general meeting of the Baptist Convention of Zambia in Lusaka.

Lisulo, the first high government official to address the convention, especially asked the more than 200 delegates to develop programs for seventh grade "squeeze outs," said Franklin A. Kilpatrick, Southern Baptist missionary press representative for Zambia.

These "school leavers," one of Zambia's greatest social concerns, are forced to end their education because of limited openings in Zambia's secondary schools.

Lisulo said that the church, because of its non-racial and non-tribal character and international nature, can act as a most powerful instrument for unity in the country, according to a report in the Zambia Daily Mail, a Lusaka newspaper.

The prime minister attended the conference at the request of Zambian President Kenneth D. Kaunda, who had agreed to open the convention officially. Kaunda cancelled when his departure for the conference of non-aligned countries in Havana, Cuba, was moved up a day.

-more-

W. A. Shibemba, who was reelected executive secretary of the convention, said it is growing in maturity and is on the verge of a progressive program that could be the beginning of the convention that Zambian Baptists need.

-30-

Relief Effort Fires Church

DALLAS (BP)--Relief efforts for victims of Hurricane David in Dominica have taken Wilshire Baptist Church of Dallas by storm, said Pastor Bruce McIver.

Members have given about \$20,000 to support the relief work of a 15-man team of volunteers from the church and to help meet emergency needs of hurricane victims.

Soon after the storm, the church received an offering of \$2,300 for hunger relief. Then McIver announced that the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board had asked for a team of volunteers to spend 15 days rebuilding homes in the storm ravaged area.

Within a week, members responded with a team and with offerings and pledges totaling \$17,000, and gifts were still coming in.

Special project dentist in Dominica, John Ross, and his wife, Lisa, were commissioned by Wilshire this summer. They were on the island when the storm hit, but neither was hurt.

"This is bold mission in action," said McIver. "The only way we're going to reach the world for Christ is to get our lay people involved. When there's a person-to-person involvement, missions really gets hold of the people."

Ruth Ann Harris, who with her missionary husband Jerry in Barbados, is helping to support the relief effort in Dominica, told a first-wave disaster squad, "It's the churches that have men go out on trips that are so much more active and aware."

The volunteers will build 10 small homes for hurricane victims and re-roof a missionary residence in the town of Boetica. They went entirely self-sufficient, carrying their own food, tents, sleeping bags and medical supplies.

-30-