



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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80-83

Annuity Board
Retains Aetna

DALLAS (BP)—The Southern Baptist Annuity Board has retained Aetna Life and Casualty of Hartford, Conn., as its insurance program carrier after 10 months of negotiations with major companies.

Four companies submitted bids to underwrite the board's church, agency and student insurance plans during its regular three to five year evaluation of its insurance arrangements.

More than 35,000 ministers, church and denominational employees and seminary students participate in the Annuity Board's life, medical and long-term disability insurance plans. Aetna has been the board's carrier since 1969.

The bidding prompted several improvements to the board's insurance system according to John Dudley, director of insurance services.

Effective July 1, medical coverage for agency employees will go to a three-tiered premium structure: for employees with no dependents, with one dependent and with more than one dependent.

Before, the board offered only two rates, one for the employee and another for the employee with one or more dependents. "This results in a more equitable distribution of costs," Dudley explained. He indicated generally the rate for an employee with one dependent will decrease.

Effective in October, an improvement in the agency special risk accident insurance plan will let agencies choose among five maximum amounts for protecting their trustees. Instead of a ceiling of \$50,000, agencies can choose coverage from \$50,000 to \$250,000.

The board's term life insurance program for ministers and church employees was improved with a premium waiver provision which allows the program to pay the cost of maintaining a participant's life insurance coverage during disability, that takes effect Sept. 1. Before, a disabled participant or the employer had to maintain the life insurance payments.

According to Dudley, a premium increase of about 15 percent, the first in 18 months, is expected Sept. 1 for the board's church medical program.

The bidding process, he said, included consultation with the Baptist Sunday School Board, Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board, which have large numbers of employees in the insurance system of the Annuity Board.

Kwangju Missionaries Leave; Riots Cancel Crusades There

KWANGJU, Korea (BP)---Southern Baptist missionary women and children left the Korean city of Kwangju after several days of intensive anti-government riots. Earlier, the Korea Crusade committee had cancelled both central and church crusades in Kwangju.

Missionary journeyman Judy Watts, from Huntsville, Ala.; Missionary Barbara Peterson from Kansas City, Mo., and the three Peterson children moved to Pusan May 22. Arnold Peterson, a native of Storm Lake, Iowa, is remaining in Kwangju.

George H. Hays, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board secretary for East Asia, said missionaries in Korea believe the situation is beginning to stabilize in Kwangju, but thought it wise for the women and children to leave.

They reported the riots in Kwangju were extensive and called them "serious and disruptive."

Florida Baptist team members assigned to Kwangju were reassigned to Pusan, where nightly crusade attendance averaged 5,000. More than 300 people accepted Christ as their savior during the Pusan central crusades.

Crusades scheduled for Taegu, Taejon and Seoul will go on as planned, Hays said, unless further developments require a change.

The Korean major city evangelism crusades are a cooperative effort of the Korea Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the Florida Baptist Convention. The crusades climax a three-year project to saturate five major cities of Korea with the gospel.

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Jimmy Allen Meets With Israeli Prime Minister

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JERUSALEM, Israel (BP)---During a 40-minute interview Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission President Jimmy Allen gave Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin a copy of the testimony he delivered the previous day before a committee of the Israeli parliament.

Begin, who has met with Allen before, promised to read Allen's proposal about the law now being drafted concerning the basic rights of man.

The Baptist leader and the prime minister, meeting May 20, discussed their mutual desire for guaranteed religious liberty and freedom of conscience. Allen encouraged Begin to renew the peace talks with Egypt and reminded him that Baptist Christians have a great deal in common with Jews.

"The taproots of our faith are in the revelation of God to and through Israel and we share in the continual common effort to combat discrimination and secure guarantees of freedom," Allen explained.

The Foreign Mission Board appropriated \$2,000 for the trip in September 1979 while Allen was pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas.

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Mike Creswell to Join The Commission Staff

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)---Mike Creswell will become an associate editor of The Commission magazine, the monthly publication of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, on Aug. 1.

Creswell, 30, a newswriter for the General Board of South Carolina Baptist Convention since 1974, will carry out writing and editing responsibilities and provide other assistance in magazine production, said Leland Webb, editor. His duties will also include overseas writing and photographic assignments on the mission fields.

He will join Webb and two others on the editorial staff: Martha Skelton, who was named as an associate editor in February, and Dan Beatty, layout and design artist.

In South Carolina, Creswell has written news and feature stories and done photography on activities related to the state convention and prepared a quarterly newsletter for church leadership. He has also led conferences for churches on working with newspapers and helped prepare audio-visuals and convention exhibits.

Creswell has been particularly active in interfaith witness in South Carolina and is writing a book for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board on witnessing to persons of other faiths.

Before going to the South Carolina Convention, Creswell was a reporter for the Greenville (S.C.) News; The Journal, West Columbia, S.C.; and the Wake Weekly, Wake Forest, N.C. He also was a newswriter for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, interim pastor of Stuart (Va.) Baptist Church and a student summer missionary for the South Carolina convention.

A native of Pelzer, S.C., Creswell is a graduate of University of South Carolina at Columbia and Southeastern Seminary. He and his wife Christie have two children.

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Tennessee Pastor Seeking
Southern Baptist Presidency

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5/22/80

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Knoxville pastor Jimmy R. Stroud has announced he wants to be president of the Southern Baptist Convention, an office up for election because of Adrian Rogers' unexpected decision not to accept a second term.

Stroud, 43, is pastor of the Third Creek Baptist Church in Knoxville. According to Baptist historians, he is the first person in memory, maybe ever, to publicly state he is seeking the office.

It is common practice in Baptist politics for potential candidates to be called by friends who ask if they are willing to allow their name to be placed in nomination. The friend who calls is likely willing to do the nominating.

To that procedure, Stroud said in a letter to Al Shackelford, editor of the Tennessee Baptist and Reflector, "It's time to bring Southern Baptist politics out of the basement and give the election integrity and maturity."

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"My candidacy is in contrast to the sham and hypocrisy of past campaigns carried on in secrecy until the expedient moment," he added. "I will not claim that the office is seeking me. I claim to be seeking the office with a sincere desire to serve within the powers and limitations spelled out in the constitution and bylaws of the Southern Baptist Convention."

No candidate should pretend he is not seeking election according to Stroud, who said, "I do not perceive honest and open political methods in attaining any elected position to be evil."

At least six other prominent Southern Baptists say they have been approached by friends about accepting nomination for president. The election process was caught unprepared by Rogers' announcement that he wouldn't accept a second one-year term, normally considered automatic. Only three others in the 135 years of the Southern Baptist Convention have declined to accept a second term.

The six listed in the Texas Baptist Standard as "definite prospects" for the nomination are Abner V. McCall, president of Baylor University and current first vice president of the convention; James L. Pleitz, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, and chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business; Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., and host for the "At Home with the Bible" series; Porter W. Routh, retired executive director of the SBC Executive Committee; Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church, Phoenix, Ariz.; and Bailey Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla.

Pleitz has indicated he will be nominated for the post. Of the others, McCall told the Standard if nominated he will not withdraw his name; Pollard said though many had asked about nominating him, he didn't have an answer yet; Routh had not decided if he would accept a nomination; Jackson said he would accept a nomination if "the right persons asked him;" Smith said "it does look like I may be nominated."

James Draper Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, who as president of the Pastors' Conference this year could expect to be in line for consideration because of the exposure, published in his church newsletter that he will not be a candidate for president.

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Cecil Sims Will Be
Northwest Nominee

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5/22/80

PORTLAND, Ore. (BP)--Cecil Sims, associate director of missions for the Northwest Baptist Convention, is the convention's executive board choice for executive director-treasurer.

The board will recommend Sims to messengers at a special called convention June 6 in Portland's Mill Park Baptist Church. The Northwest Baptist constitution requires an executive director-treasurer be elected by the convention in session.

The board voted to recommend Sims when he was presented to it May 15 by a search committee that looked seven months for a replacement for Dan Stringer who left to become executive director-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention.

Sims, 52, has been in the Northwest as a pastor since 1954. He became associate director of missions: Canada for the convention in 1978. He earned degrees from Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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While Sims' recommendation required a 70 percent approval from the executive board, his election at the special convention will require only a simple majority unless a contrary requirement is approved from the floor.

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(BP) photo mailed to Baptist state newspaper editors by the Northwest Baptist Witness.

Baptists Aid Prayer
In School Efforts

Baptist Press
5/22/80

WASHINGTON (BP)--A movement aided by such Southern Baptists as Adrian Rogers, Jimmy Draper, James Robison and William F. Powell to restore prayer in schools is gaining momentum in its goal of bringing to the House floor a bill that would deny federal courts jurisdiction in the matter.

Rogers, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, joined other religious leaders and conservative congressmen including Rep. Phillip Crane, R-Ill., and Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., in announcing the kickoff of National Prayer in School week--an intensified effort by an ad hoc coalition of religious, political, professional and civic persons and organizations to secure the required 218 signatures to bring S. 450 to the floor.

Robison, a Texas evangelist, is chairman of the Coalition for the First Amendment, a group of conservative religious spokesmen who seek to reinstate prayer in schools. Draper is pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas. Powell is publisher and former editor of the Southern Baptist Journal, a private magazine published by the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship.

Other supporters include Jerry Falwell of the Old Time Gospel Hour, E.E. McAteer of Religious Roundtable and a member of Rogers' Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., and William Murray, son of atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair.

Organizational support includes such groups as Religious Roundtable, Moral Majority, National Association of Evangelicals, Campus Crusade for Christ, and Christian Voice.

When S. 450 cleared the Senate in April 1979, it contained an amendment offered by Helms barring federal courts from ruling on prayer disputes. The measure was expected to die in the House Judiciary Committee unless supporters could muster the required signatures for the discharge petition.

Chances for the discharge petition appeared slim until a surge of 68 signatures in the past week brought the total to 132, according to Crane. Supporters for the petition claim that their efforts to flood representatives with letters and phone calls and to lobby in the halls have paid off.

The coalition's stance in support of prayer in schools conflicts with the official positions taken by the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in support of the Supreme Court decisions which barred state-written and enforced prayers as well as religious exercises such as Bible reading and recitation of the Lord's Prayer in school.

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