



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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March 19, 1981

81-47

'Religious Right' Figure Gets High Education Post

WASHINGTON (BP)--Robert Billings, a key leader of the religious right, was named March 18 as special assistant to the secretary in the Department of Education.

Billings, who two years ago opened Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority operation here, becomes the first well-known figure from the religious right to be named to a high position in the Reagan administration.

In the \$51,000-a-year job, Billings will be charged with finding ways in which the federal government can help private schools. That effort is expected to include heavy lobbying of Congress for a tuition tax credit bill, a measure Billings favors.

Billings' assignment also will include being the voice of Christian schools to the secretary of education and representing the secretary on special projects.

Billings, a Bob Jones University graduate, left his position as executive director of Moral Majority during last year's presidential campaign to work among evangelicals for Ronald Reagan's election. He also campaigned actively for other Republican candidates.

In a Baptist Press interview, the independent Baptist said he is "really not that unhappy" with Reagan's appointments thus far. The president has come under heavy attack in recent weeks from the New Right for not appointing more hard-line conservatives to top jobs in his administration.

"I have to be a pragmatist and realize that the president of the United States is president of all the people," he said. At the same time, he added he "would be less than honest" if he did not wish for the appointment of more born-again evangelicals to posts in the government.

Billings said his own studies of last year's presidential election show that evangelical voters provided Reagan with his margin of victory in many states and accounted directly for 249 of the 270 electoral votes needed for victory.

As though to underscore his high expectations of the new administration, Billings predicted Reagan "will go down in history like Washington and Lincoln" in that all three "tried to turn the country around."

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Reward Is Offered
In Seminary Slaying

Baptist Press
3/19/81

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A \$5,000 reward has been offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the death of Ethel Louise Robbins.

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Mrs. Robbins, 68, wife of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary professor Ray Robbins, was beaten to death and robbed in her seminary apartment the evening of Jan. 27.

Trustees of the seminary, meeting in their annual session, appropriated the \$5,000 out of non-Cooperative Program funds at the request of the New Orleans Police Department.

"This is the next step in the investigation," said NOBTS Executive Vice President Don Stewart. "The funds have been placed in a special account in the Hibernia Bank and at the disposal of the New Orleans Police Department."

Stewart added police apparently have no strong leads or clues in the case.

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Home Mission Board Urges
Prayer for Atlanta Children

Baptist Press
3/19/81

ATLANTA (BP)--Expressing grief and anger over the senseless murders of 20 black children, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board called on Baptists throughout the nation to observe Sunday, April 19, as a day of prayer for Atlanta's black children.

In their spring meeting in Atlanta, the board of directors for the national mission agency urged President Ronald Reagan to proclaim April 19 as a national day of prayer "for an end to this senseless killing and for a break in the investigation of the murders."

April 19 is both Easter Sunday for Christians and Passover Sunday for Jews.

In other major actions, the 80-member board reaffirmed its 1976 action approving the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement as its theological basis and guideline for employment of staff and missionaries, re-elected Howard Cockrum of Knoxville, Tenn., as chairman, adjusted its 1981 budget and approved a new church bond program as a part of the board's church loans division.

In reaffirming the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message Statement, the board responded to a resolution passed by the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis last year exhorting the trustees of all SBC agencies to preserve the doctrinal integrity of the denomination.

The resolution asked that the agencies "only employ...staff who believe the divine inspiration of the whole Bible, infallibility of the original manuscripts and that the Bible is truth without any error."

In its response, the board endorsed the section of the Baptist Faith and Message statement on the Scriptures which states: "The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of himself to man...It has God for its author, salvation for its end and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter..."

Presenting the response to the board on behalf of its administrative committee, Emmett Henderson of Atlanta told board members, "This action is an opportunity to proclaim the commitment of this board to biblical faith and the Bible as the inspired word of God."

During discussion of the motion, Perry Sanders, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lafayette, La., supported the action but added, "The next time anybody says something about this, I hope we will save this and show it to them and then be done with it. We believe it, and let's quit reaffirming what we've already said."

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The directors voted to beef up their refugee resettlement program by utilizing World Relief Refugee Services, affiliated with the National Association of Evangelicals, in addition to Church World Service. Last year Southern Baptists resettled 4,031 refugees, most through Church World Service, including the largest number of Indochinese refugees for any Protestant denomination in America.

Adopting a resolution on the observance of the Hispanic Centennial, the board encouraged Southern Baptists to observe Aug. 9, 1981, as "Hispanic Centennial Day" in celebrating 100 years of Southern Baptist work with Hispanic churches.

Anticipating increases in income, mostly through interest income, the board hiked its 1981 budget of \$36.6 million to \$36,875,000. Most of the \$275,000 increase will be used to cover increased travel costs for 1,400 summer missionaries.

Board members approved five recommendations from its church loans committee, saying it hoped the action would help provide financial resources to increase the number of SBC churches from 35,500 to 50,000 by the year 2000.

One recommendation created a broker-dealer subsidiary of the board called the HMB Service Corporation to help churches issue bonds to finance new buildings. The board approved using the Broadway Plan Service Corporation of Houston as the trustees for the bond program, and the First International Bank of Houston as paying agent.

Church Loans Committee Chairman Clifton R. Tennison, pastor of First Baptist Church, West Monroe, La., praised the arrangement, saying the paying agent would charge no fee for its services and would pay churches 5 1/4 percent interest on sinking fund deposits.

Another recommendation from the committee asked for permission to conduct a fund raising campaign in cooperation with the SBC Stewardship Commission to raise \$10 million for new church sites and buildings. The proposal will go to the SBC Executive Committee for approval before it can be implemented.

Due to increased interest rates, the board approved a request to increase the interest rate charged on loans from the division of church loans from its current 11 percent with three points discount, to 12 percent with three points discount.

Board members heard a report on the progress of Bold Mission Thrust, the denomination's plan to proclaim the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000, which reported the assignment of 395 Mission Service Corps volunteers through the Home Mission Board as of Feb. 25, 1981. The combined goal is 5,000 through 1982 by the Home and Foreign Mission Boards.

Board members paused to pray after adopting the resolution urging Baptists and the entire nation to pray for Atlanta's black children. "The Home Mission Board has a special concern because it is based in this city where fear stalks our city's children, and because of the involvement of our missions program in the city," said the resolution.

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Involvement in Politics
Urged at Fete for Dunn

Baptist Press
3/19/81

WASHINGTON (BP)--"Politics is the means by which we in a democracy translate what we believe into public policy and practice," District of Columbia delegate Walter F. Fauntroy said at a congressional reception honoring James M. Dunn.

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Fauntroy, pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church in Washington as well as the district's only representative in Congress, addressed the reception welcoming Dunn to Washington as the new executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The minister/congressman said he often is asked what a minister is doing in politics. "I always respond that the gospel is not just good history, it's good news," Fauntroy said.

"It's good history that the master fed 5,000 people 2,000 years ago, but it's good news when his followers of today act in the living present to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and set at liberty the captives."

Fauntroy said he had just come from a budget briefing and that the poor "are about to receive some bad news from those here at the command posts of power in the nation." He cited proposed cuts in the food stamp and child nutrition programs as examples.

The Baptist minister lauded the Baptist Joint Committee for "the extent to which it has remained relevant to the issues of the marketplace."

Fauntroy co-sponsored Dunn's reception with House Majority Leader James C. Wright Jr., D-Texas, and Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., for members of Congress and the religious community.

Dunn came to the Washington-based public affairs agency after serving 14 years as director of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Commenting on Dunn's move, Wright said, "Texas' loss is Washington's gain."

Also attending the event was Brooks Hays, former Arkansas congressman and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dunn credited Hays with getting "some of us into this business of trying to apply the gospel to the political arena," and pointed to the former SBC president's mediating role in the 1957 Little Rock, Ark., integration confrontation.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Washington bureau of Baptist Press.

Board Makes Staff Changes,
Names 36 to Mission Posts

Baptist Press
3/19/81

ATLANTA (BP)--Home Mission Board directors approved three staff changes and appointed 36 persons to mission service during their March meeting.

Two of the staff moves involve new appointments and the other creates a new position.

Directors named Margrette Stevenson as director of the board's business services division effective May 1. She will replace Hettie Johnson, who is retiring.

Stevenson, HMB director of payroll and employee benefits services since 1975, will oversee the board's five business services offices: auxiliary services, data processing, mission property, payroll and employee benefits and purchasing and building services.

Sam Choy, director of cooperative missions for the Hawaii Baptist Convention, was elected associate director of the missionary personnel department where he will assist in recruiting, screening and recommending candidates for missionary appointment.

The new staff position, assistant director of the Mission Service Corps, was created because of the "weight of the present workload of the Mission Service Corps volunteer program,"

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said David Bunch, the board's MSC director. "And the more people we have working to recruit volunteers, the more volunteers we can enlist."

The 36 mission appointments include six missionaries, five missionary associates, two mission pastor interns, six persons who were approved for language pastoral assistance and 17 people who were granted church pastoral assistance.

Elected missionaries were Diane Griffin of Louisville, Ky.; Carolyn Jean McClendon of New Orleans, La.; Preston and Pat North of Browning, Mont.; and Hai Minh and Nguyet Bich le Tran of New Orleans.

Appointed missionary associates were Cheryl Boots Allen of Spartanburg, S.C.; John Bruce Copeland III and Jacqueline (Jill) Copeland of Louisville, Ky.; and Donoso and Geanine Escobar of Stone Mountain, Ga.

Griffin will move to Philadelphia, Pa., where she will direct weekday ministries at Trinity Baptist Church. She is a graduate of St. John's River Junior College, Florida State University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. She has been a US-2 missionary and missionary associate/student intern, special education Sunday School and program director at Wesley Community House in Louisville.

McClendon, formerly serving as a missionary associate, will remain in New Orleans and direct Friendship House, a Christian social ministries facility. She began working at Friendship House in 1978 and became acting director there in June 1980. She also has been director of children's ministries for a New Orleans church. McClendon is a graduate of Southeastern Louisiana University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Norths will relocate in North Dakota, and he will become director of associational missions for the eastern part of the state. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, and has been pastor of churches in Oklahoma, California and Montana.

The Trans, natives of Vietnam, will move to the District of Columbia. He will become a catalytic missionary, starting new work among Indochinese people. He has been a pastor of congregations in Vietnam, Florida and Louisiana, and is a graduate of the National University of Education in Vietnam, Saigon University of Law, Hoa Hoa University and New Orleans Seminary.

Allen will relocate in Tarzana, Calif., where she will be a church planter apprentice. She is a graduate of Winthrop College and Southwestern Seminary, and she has been an HMB summer church planter, a Christian social minister and singles minister.

The Copelands will return to Alaska, where he was stationed while in the U.S. Army and where he served as a summer church planter. He will become a church planter apprentice. Copeland is a graduate of North Georgia College and Southern Seminary.

The Escobars, natives of Nicaragua, will remain in the Atlanta area, where he manages the SBC refugee resettlement unit. He has been pastor of churches in Nicaragua and in Arkansas. He is a graduate of Seminario Biblico Latino Americano in Costa Rica and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Named as mission pastor interns were Steve and Peggy Melissa Davidson of Camarillo, Calif.

Granted language pastoral assistance were John Peter and Elaine Chow of Cupertino, Calif.; Chin and Young Ja Chung Kim of Stafford, Texas and Pete and Doris Mayse of Overland Park, Kan.

Approved for church pastoral assistance were Gene and Frances Bolin of New York, N.Y.; James Richard and Carol Burns of Rainier, Ore.; Ervin Earl and Mary Joyce Cope of Mt. Washington, Ky.; James William and Valerie Ferguson of Helena, Mont.; Ray Hand of Sanger, Texas; Ben L. and Linda Jennings of Olympia, Wash.; Charles and Barbara O'Neal of South San Francisco, Calif.; Richard W. and Romaine Porter of Derry, N.H.; and Edward Lamar and Jennifer Sue Smith of Mammoth Lakes, Calif.

SPECIAL FEATURE

SERVICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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March 19, 1981

81-47A

EDITORS: This information provided by Don Hepburn, public relations director for the Southern Baptist General Convention of California.

All Forms Available In Local LA Transportation

LOS ANGELES--Most messengers to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention will be strangers in Los Angeles. And nothing makes a stranger feel stranger than not knowing how to get around.

So here is a synopsis on local transportation, both by auto and airplane.

Upon arrival at the Los Angeles International Airport, a variety of local transportation will be available for getting to your hotel. All bus and taxi stands are located on islands in front of each baggage pick-up terminal.

Bus Services--Tickets and information for Airport Service is available at booths in front of baggage claim areas, or bus driver, if booth is not staffed. To downtown Los Angeles, Hollywood, Beverly Hills, and Westwood, the current charge is \$3.10.

RTD (City Bus)--offers seven direct lines, connecting service to all of Greater Los Angeles areas. Board minibus (#206) at RTD signs for transportation to nearby transfer depot where connections with direct line buses may be made. Minibus operates at 10-20 minute intervals daily from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. (Bus #607 express to downtown Los Angeles costs 95¢)

Taxi Service--Only taxicabs bearing Los Angeles City franchise seal are authorized to solicit fares. Cabs should only be taken from authorized cab stands. Typical fares: Downtown Los Angeles, \$18; Beverly Hills, \$16; Hollywood, \$18. Fares vary with exact destinations and traffic conditions. Riders may share cost.

Car Rental Services--Each terminal has booths allocated for the major car rental companies. Other car rental agencies have direct phone lines to their offices. All car rental services provide minibus or van pickup service at the baggage claim areas.

Arrival by Automobile

Four major interstate highways enter Southern California; each offers sights of the picturesque mountains and deserts.

I-8 enters the state from Yuma, Arizona and goes directly to San Diego. From there, messengers would travel north on I-5 into Los Angeles.

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I-10 enters the state from Arizona, near Blythe, California, and continues across the Mojave Desert. It comes through Palm Springs, San Bernardino, and finally ends in Los Angeles.

I-15 enters from Las Vegas, Nevada, and continues southwest toward Barstow, into San Bernardino. There you will get on I-10 West.

I-40 enters from northern Arizona, across the Colorado River into Needles, California. I-40 continues to Barstow, where you'll need to get on I-15 South to San Bernardino, and get on I-10 West.

Entering Downtown Los Angeles --I-15 and I-10 have downtown exits where most hotels are located. However, because of the numerous freeways and interchanges in the downtown area, messengers are cautioned to be alert for exits. Rush hour traffic coming into the city is heavy between 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. Afternoon traffic out of the city is heavy between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.