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FCC Commissioner Lauds Baptist Television System

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Federal Communications Commissioner Anne P. Jones has commended Southern Baptists for their plan to establish a television network.

Jones told more than 300 participants in a national conference on broadcast ministries that she and other commissioners originally had reservations about the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission's plan for a satellite-fed network. The low-power stations were intended to increase local involvement in broadcasting.

But she said the American Christian Television System plan would apparently provide enough local programming to serve that purpose.

In her address at the conference sponsored jointly by the Radio and Television Commission and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Jones was less enthusiastic about processing the more than 5,000 low-power applications filed before the April 9 application freeze.

"Rules were adopted, almost inadvertently, that make (the applications) more difficult to process," she said.

Those rules call for technical analysis of all potential stations, as well as assessment of the proposed use of the station, before a license is granted. That process would be time-consuming and costly.

While the FCC has not settled on a more practical evaluation process, some suggestions have been made. Jones said the FCC likely will grant licenses to stations that are "non-exclusive," that is, that do not have another applicant filing for the same channel and location. Of the 5,000 or more applications on file, 35 are known to have no competition. Three of those have already been granted, she said.

It is not known if any of the Radio and Television Commission's proposed stations are among the 35 non-exclusive applications.

As one method of processing the remaining applications, a lottery for each city has been suggested, Jones said. This would probably not offer preference to noncommercial broadcasters such as the commission.

Jones did not speculate on what solution the FCC will reach, but did predict a partial solution would be proposed by fall.

Reacting to the rumor the FCC was considering banning religious television programming, Jones said the so-called "phantom rule" never existed. As a result of the rumor, the FCC received more than 150,000 letters opposing the move.

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"Let me take this opportunity to assure you the FCC is not attempting to remove religious programming from television," she said. "I would not have dared come here if that were the case," she said laughing.

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Organize Black Churches
Aggressively Smith Says

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INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (BP)--"The time has come for Southern Baptists to become aggressive in organizing black churches, and to invite nonaligned black Baptist churches to join our denomination," Sid Smith told the steering committee of the North Central Missions Thrust.

Smith, black consultant in the ethnic liaison unit of the Baptist Sunday School Board, said about 600 predominantly black churches with 220,000 members are now affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

"In addition, about 50,000 blacks belong to predominantly white Southern Baptist churches," Smith added.

"However," Smith pointed out, "on a given Sunday, only about 15 percent of black Baptists are in Sunday Schools, most of them children. Our biggest contribution can be our know-how in religious education. Blacks know how to reach people, and to reach them in big numbers. But they're lacking in training, and their leaders know it."

But Smith warned that sharing methods isn't enough. "We must make blacks feel welcome in our conventions, associational meetings, and the like," he said.

The committee which heard Smith is made up of denominational staff from seven states— Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. It meets semiannually to coordinate the North Central Missions Thrust, a cooperative effort to double Southern Baptist work in those states by 1990.

Illinois Executive Director Ernest E. Mosley, current president of the committee, said one byproduct of the North Central Thrust is that state leaders share ideas, then put them into practice on a state by state basis.

"For example, in this meeting, we learned how Michigan, which has the highest jobless rate in the nation, is coping with reduced income," Mosley said. "Their state offices are using about 15 volunteers who come in a day a week to do office work. Also, one layman, Ray Snell, 57, who took early retirement as an executive with Ford Motor Company, is giving practically his full time as a business consultant to Michigan Executive Director Robert Wilson."

At least six of the states anticipate big gains in the next year or so as the result of "partnerships" with older and stronger states. Arkansas Baptists are working on a linkage with Indiana, Kentucky with Ohio, Tennessee with Michigan, and Texas continues a long-term supporting role with Minnesota-Wisconsin. And in Iowa, Fred B. Moseley, recently retired from New Orleans Baptist Seminary, is coordinating a six-month partnership between Missouri and Iowa.

Jack Redford of the Baptist Home Mission Board urged the importance of reporting to churches and associations that render such help on a one to one basis. "Frankly, there are lots of churches in the South who are bitter as the result of helping mission chapels in northern states, then never hearing anything from them," he said.

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Robert J. Hastings, editor of the Illinois Baptist newspaper, said when mission pastors and church planters are employed, they should be required to send regular reports and news releases to supporting churches. "If church planters say they are too busy getting the work started, and don't have time to report, then they are busier than they should be," he said.

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Mission Day Camp
Set for Convention

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LOS ANGELES (BP)--Los Angeles' Griffith Park is the site of this year's Mission Day Camp sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission and the California men's ministries department.

The camp, for children of messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, is scheduled during daytime sessions Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, June 9-11. It will feature mission stories, mission games and other activities for children in grades 1-6.

The staff of trained day camp counselors, directed by Robin Hadaway, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Monterey Park, Calif., will supervise visits to the Los Angeles Zoo and Griffith Observatory and Planetarium. Southern Baptist missionaries will share mission experiences and park rangers will lead a nature walk through Griffith Park.

Registration fee is \$5 per day per child. Families with two children attending the camp will pay \$25 for the three-day session and families with three or more children participating will pay a maximum of \$35.

Registration for the camp will open Monday, June 8, at a booth in the SBC registration lobby at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

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SBC Resolutions Committee
Expected To Be Moderate

By Stan L. Haste

Baptist Press
4/30/81

WASHINGTON (BP)--Although Southern Baptist Convention President Bailey Smith's appointments to the committee on committees have drawn fire from some quarters within the denomination, his committee on resolutions is being praised for the moderation and denominational loyalty of its members.

Numerous sources have told Baptist Press that virtually to a person, the seven men and three women named by the embattled Smith to process and recommend resolutions to the June 9-11 session of the Southern Baptist Convention in Los Angeles can be expected to deal with controversial subjects in an even-handed manner.

Committee chairman Charles D. Graves, pastor of Nichols Hills Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, appears to reflect the composition of the group. A self-described "conservative" in theological matters, Graves said he has a "real desire to be fair." He added that he considers himself conservative theologically in the same way "every Southern Baptist I know is conservative."

Graves said he has yet to feel pressure from other Southern Baptists who will be pushing their favorite causes in Los Angeles before the resolutions panel. But he expects he will.

He is asking that proposed resolutions be submitted in advance to expedite the committee's work. They should be mailed at the earliest possible date to: Charles Graves, Nichols Hills Baptist Church, 2825 Northwest Grand Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73116.

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According to sources close to the Oklahoma City pastor, he can be expected to move the committee in a "positive" vein and to deal effectively with controversial matters.

Last year's resolutions committee was widely believed to have sparked more controversy than any previous panel, due in large measure to several members who pressed hard for their own causes. As a result, messengers to the St. Louis convention last June reversed the position of the convention on a number of highly volatile issues, including abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment. In addition, the committee recommended and the convention adopted "Resolution 16," a strong statement supporting biblical inerrancy.

This year's committee, composed of seven pastors, two pastors' wives and one laywoman, is widely perceived to be much more "balanced" than last year's committee which was appointed by former SBC President Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tenn.

Besides Graves, two other members of the panel currently serve on the SBC Executive Committee, as required by convention bylaws. They are Gordon Dorian, pastor of Olivet Baptist Church in Wichita, Kan., and John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La. Both are described as loyal to the denomination, while conservative theologically.

Other pastors on the committee are Bob Bacon, Del Norte Baptist Church, Albuquerque; Billy Barber, First Baptist Church of Tampa, Fla.; Morris Chapman, First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas; and Joel Gregory, Gambrell Street Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas.

Although all seven of the pastors are described in varying shades of theological conservatism, most have solid records of involvement in denominational affairs, especially at the state convention level. Bacon and Sullivan currently are presidents of the New Mexico and Louisiana conventions respectively, while Graves is a former president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

According to sources contacted by Baptist Press, none of the seven is known to be actively involved on either side of the inerrancy battle.

Of the three women named to the panel, two are wives of pastors active in denominational life. Jayne (Mrs. John) Dunaway is the wife of the current vice chairman of the SBC Executive Committee. Dunaway, pastor of First Baptist Church, Corbin, Ky., also has held a variety of offices in Kentucky Baptist life.

Carol (Mrs. John) Swartz is married to the pastor of Bethel Southern Baptist Church, Escondido, Calif., who in turn has served as chairman of the executive board of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California. She is a school teacher.

The other woman on the committee, Vivian (Mrs. Henry) Simpson, is a veteran in denominational affairs, having served two terms on the Home Mission Board and as a member of the program committee for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Her husband is director of missions, Little River Association in Lillington.

According to those interviewed, none of the 10 members of the resolutions committee is known to be a crusader on any issue in the public arena. Although most have the reputation of being sensitive to the needs of people, none is known to be coming to the committee with a "pet" issue to be pushed through at any cost.

If such observations prove true, this year's panel can be expected to approve and recommend to the convention resolutions in the mainstream of Southern Baptist thinking.

Japanese, Indonesian Baptists
Join For Missions Enterprise

By Erich Bridges

SEMARANG, Indonesia (BP)--In a significant move toward cooperative missions in eastern Asia, Japanese and Indonesian Baptists have agreed to explore an exchange of missionaries, preaching teams and student workers.

Representatives of the Japan Baptist Convention and the Union of Indonesian Baptist Churches have signed a pact committing both groups to aid each other in missions and to launch an "International Witness" campaign geared toward "winning Asia to Christ."

Sending Japanese missionaries to Indonesia will likely be the first result of the pact, according to Charles Whaley, Southern Baptist missionary to Japan. Representing Japanese Baptists, Whaley and Japan Foreign Mission Board Chairman Tooru Kato assured Indonesian Baptists that any Japanese workers sent would cooperate with the Indonesian Union and minister in accordance with local programs and policies.

Kato and Whaley also visited Baptists in Singapore and the Philippines, in the first stage of a survey project to "assess the possibilities" of Japanese participation in missions throughout Southeast Asia.

During the trip they received requests from the Mindanao convention of Southern Baptist churches for Japanese missionaries to help evangelize Mindanao, second largest island in the Philippines. Baptists in Singapore asked for missionaries to evangelize the more than 18,000 Japanese living in that city.

The Japanese initiative is not unprecedented in East Asia. The Chinese Baptist Convention of Taiwan has sent missionaries to Korea and Malaysia, and the Baptist Convention of Hong Kong has supported missionaries in Malaysia, South Vietnam and Brunei, a tiny nation off the north coast of Borneo. Korean Baptists recently sent a missionary couple to American Samoa to evangelize Korean fishermen working there.

The Japan convention itself has supported a missionary couple in Brazil since 1965.

However, while these partnerships have concentrated on a country-to-country basis, the Japanese survey and Japan-Indonesia pact lay the foundation for a comprehensive approach to cooperative missions that, if successful, could unite East Asian Baptists in a strategy for evangelizing the entire region.

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SBC Issues - A News Analysis

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LA Messengers To Face
Broad, Critical Issues

By Dan Martin

LOS ANGELES (BP)--The denominational presidency, its incumbent and powers, head the list of issues facing messengers to the 1981 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 9-11 in the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Sandwiched among an array of critical issues will be usual matters: singing, preaching, praying, business, hearing reports from the agencies, adopting a \$93 million Cooperative Program budget and listening to testimonies on missions, evangelism and Bold Mission Thrust.

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Among the controversial issues will be a proposed change in messenger qualification, the report of the committee on boards, which nominates trustees to the 20 SBC organizations, and the performance of those boards, agencies and institutions.

Floating underneath nearly every issue to come before the estimated 8,500 to 10,000 registered messengers is the question of doctrinal integrity, creedalism, biblical infallibility and inerrancy.

Much of the pre-convention thunder and lightning has centered on the office of president, a volunteer, nonsalaried post with a few key powers. Incumbent Bailey E. Smith, 42, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., was elected on the first ballot in the 1980 St. Louis convention, and will seek the traditional second one-year term as president of the 13.6 million-member denomination.

Abner V. McCall, 65, president of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, has announced he will allow his nomination to challenge Smith. Supporters say McCall's candidacy offers a clear choice between factions.

Other candidates are expected to emerge at the convention, turning what has traditionally been an unopposed reelection into an all-out campaign.

Much of the controversy centers on one of the few powers a president has: appointments. Under SBC rules, a president can exert enormous influence through appointment of the committee on committees, which in turn nominates the committee on boards, which is charged with nominating trustees to govern the 20 SBC agencies.

It is this power a faction of biblical inerrantists has focused on. Led by Paul Pressler, an appeals court judge in Houston, and Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, the group says it aims to control the presidency and with it the appointment of trustees, particularly those of the six seminaries.

In past years, presidential appointments have not been openly challenged. The issue arose during the presidency of Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., who bowed out in 1980 after serving only one term.

Rogers, an avowed conservative and proponent of biblical inerrancy, was accused of "stacking" his appointments with fundamentalists and inerrantists. The impact of his appointments will come before the 1981 convention, when the 1980-81 committee on boards makes its report.

A group led by Cecil Sherman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Asheville, N.C., and Kenneth Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church in Houston, will challenge the report.

One focus is the decision of the committee on boards not to reappoint some mid-termers, eligible for second terms.

Smith's appointments also have drawn criticism and praise, and both groups are closely watching for the nominees to the committee on boards.

Messengers will be required to deal directly with the question of presidential power in a recommendation from the SBC Executive Committee.

The recommendation would revise Bylaw 21, and require the appointment of the committee on committees by a committee of the president and the two vice presidents. The change, one of its sponsors says, is not in reaction to Rogers, but is an attempt to enhance the vice presidential positions and to diversify the power.

Another recommendation from the Executive Committee is almost certain to draw fire. It proposes a change in Article III of the Constitution, changing the method of qualification of messengers. The most controversial part of the change requires Cooperative Program giving to qualify messengers.

At least one association has gone on record opposing the change, and biblical inerrantists are critical of it, since many designate contributions to SBC causes, but exclude the seminaries, which many charge are filled with liberals who do not believe the Bible to be infallible and inerrant.

Among the other matters expected to arise:

--An effort to disenfranchise denominational employees from attending the convention as registered, voting messengers;

--Another effort to enforce "doctrinal integrity" in the institutions, following a strongly worded resolution passed in St. Louis exhorting trustees to preserve the doctrinal integrity of the institutions, and to ensure belief in an inerrant Bible.

--A challenge to the SBC Christian Life Commission, over a speech made by a Bible translator which was sharply critical of biblical inerrancy. The CLC has disavowed responsibility for the remarks of the American Bible Society translator, but criticism has continued.

--Resolutions concerning conservative causes, including anti-abortion, pro-capital punishment and other matters.

Many observers predict Los Angeles will be a pivotal meeting. Others, however, say it will be simply a prelude to the main confrontation which will occur at the 1982 meeting in New Orleans, which will be held in a location nearer to grassroots Southern Baptist strength and in a year when Smith's second term would expire.

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Autrey Easter Lily
In Mormon Country

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4/30/81

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (BP)—After only three years under 76-year-old C. E. Autrey's leadership, a mission church in the heart of Mormon country is filled to overflowing.

Autrey reports 34 people joined University Baptist Church this Easter Sunday; 29 came by profession of faith for baptism, 26 of them adults.

The decisions represent the resurrection Autrey's leadership gives the church. When he was called as pastor, University Baptist had five resident members, two of which moved away before he arrived.

Now Sunday School attendance averages 140 and membership has increased to 213. "We're picking up in every area," says Autrey. "We're getting additions right along—three or four per Sunday, at times."

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Autrey makes 400 visits or contacts for the church per month. He also keeps a calendar full of revival engagements. He studies up to five hours a day for the seminary extension class he teaches; intermittently he teaches Bible at the University of Utah. And almost every afternoon, Autrey dons his red cap and jogging shoes and walks briskly through the community.

His accomplishments are as extraordinary as the man: he has preached to an estimated 50 million persons; "upwards of 300,000" made decisions for Christ during his ministry of area crusades and tent revivals, says Autrey.

Yet the bespectacled Autrey cringes at too much emphasis on his past. He doesn't want to be introduced as "former" director of evangelism for the Home Mission Board or "former" seminary professor. "I want them to tell what I'm doing now," he says sharply. "I'm interested in what's going on now and in the future. I'm not on a shelf gathering dust."

Autrey is "doing" a world-wide ministry. Located three blocks from the University of Utah and its 23,000 students, University Baptist touches a dozen nationalities, most of them students working on post-graduate degrees. About half of University Baptist's members are foreign, ranging from Bolivians to Malaysians.

The church also sponsors a mission for 85 Cantonese-speaking Chinese and has launched an outreach to Vietnamese. Already they have located four Vietnamese families. "Sixteen persons from four families now attend regularly," states Autrey. "Our big problem is not Mormons but space. I'm amazed that people keep coming when we have to stack them on top of each other."

The Mormon church claimed to have 30,000 missionaries on the field in 1980. Newsweek magazine reported in September 1980 nine doors opened for every 1,000 homes Mormon missionaries visited. This resulted in 152,000 converts in 1978; 193,000 converts in 1979.

"Baptists join Mormonism every day," says Autrey. "They think Mormons are Christians because the Mormons tell them they are; but they're not. To be a Christian, Christ must be your savior, and they denounce that."

Autrey estimates about 30 percent of Mormons are not devout and could become Christians. Often, however, persons rejecting Mormonism wind up rejecting all religion. Comments one former Mormon, "You're reared with the concept, 'It's us or nobody.' So if you do any investigation and say, 'Gee, it sure can't be the Mormons,' the tendency is to say, 'Well, I don't believe any of it.'"

Autrey's loving involves visiting, calling, writing letters to those who visit his church. The cornerstone of his ministry is continuous contact, especially with new converts.

"You have to keep going back," he explains. "When they're Mormons or Buddhists, they become isolated by their families."

"I visit the faithful because they are faithful; I visit the lax because they are lax," he adds. "It's a constant knocking on doors."