



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Executive Committee
Chairman To Resign

ATLANTA, Ga. (BP)--J. Howard Cobble, 46, chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, will resign that post in early September when he moves from Georgia to Kentucky.

Cobble, who has been pastor of First Baptist Church of Avondale Estates, a suburb of Atlanta, has accepted a call to become pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church of Elizabethtown, Ky.

"I will resign from the Executive Committee when I leave Georgia," Cobble said. "According to our bylaws, I will become ineligible to serve."

The Georgia pastor was elected to a second one-year term as chairman at the 1981 SBC in Los Angeles. He also is in the final year of a second four-year term on the Executive Committee.

"I have enjoyed the opportunities I have had," Cobble told Baptist Press. "I have served at a time when our denominational leadership has changed. And, while it has been a time of controversy, the most significant thing which has happened has been Bold Mission Thrust."

In addition to serving as chairman, Cobble also has been chairman of the program and budget subcommittee and was chairman of the committee which devised a six-year capital needs program which was adopted at the 1978 SBC in Atlanta.

Cobble also has been active in Georgia denominational life and has been a member of the Georgia Baptist Convention executive committee, vice president of the convention, president of the pastors' conference and a member of the Georgia Baptist Hospital Commission.

The church to which he moves has been the top church in Cooperative Program giving in Kentucky for the past 13 years, contributing \$120,298 in the year which ended Aug. 31, 1980. Severns Valley Baptist Church has more than 2,000 resident members.

Harold C. Bennett, executive director of the Executive Committee, said: "Personally, I will miss Dr. Cobble's keen leadership as chairman of the Executive Committee. He has made many significant contributions. Yet, at the same time, I rejoice in God's leadership in his life as he becomes pastor of the great Severns Valley Baptist Church."

According to Executive Committee bylaws, vice chairman John Dunaway, pastor of First Baptist Church of Corbin, Ky., will "perform the duties" as chairman until a chairman is elected.

Freedom, Rights Highlight
Baptist, Marxist Dialogue

NEW YORK (BP)--Discussions of religious freedom and human rights highlighted a six-month series of meetings between Southern Baptists and Soviet Marxists held in New York this spring.

The discussions marked only the second time since the end of World War II that Soviet Marxists have participated in such meetings with Christians, said Elias Golonka, director of United Nations and International ministries for the Baptist Convention of New York.

Focusing on the concept of freedom, Southern Baptist pastor Maurice Fain reminded the Soviets of the words of Christ: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

From the Christian viewpoint, freedom is the liberty to realize one's own potential, said Fain, pastor of Rockland Baptist Church, New City, N.Y.

He pointed to the moral structure of the universe, noting: "Political freedom does not always guarantee spiritual freedom; violence and war do not make people free; neither does irresponsible assertiveness make a person free."

Marxists also believe in freedom, added Edward Baskakov, chief of the U.S. office of Moscow News.

According to Soviet law, citizens are guaranteed freedom of conscience—"the right to profess or not to profess any religion, and to conduct religious worships or atheistic propaganda," Baskakov said.

That concept is ideologically compatible with American philosophy of human rights, expressed by DeLane Ryals, director of church extension for the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association.

While American laws and government have been influenced by Christians and the Bible, the United States is not a strictly Christian nation, Ryals said. He traced the American concept of human rights to revolutionary thinkers who were deists concerned with man's freedom.

Ryals noted the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution guarantees religious freedom, which excludes a state religion but includes the right to worship, or not to worship, and to assemble and propagate faith.

The Marxists did not include the right of worship in a list of undeniable rights. Rather, they stressed that the basic right of every human being is the right to life.

That right currently is being threatened by the continuing arms race and the stockpiling of military weapons, said Yuri Romantsov, chief of the Tass news agency office in New York City. He called the situation "a real threat of annihilation of all mankind."

Concluding their discussions, participants from both sides agreed to support the survival of humanity and the search for means to reach such a goal, to seek to improve the quality of life for all human beings and to encourage discussion between religious, political and social groups so that peaceful goals may be achieved.

MK Nabs Thief
In Philippines

MANILA, Philippines (BP)--Robert Gopffarth was waiting for his luggage to be unloaded from the bus when he heard a woman yell that her purse had been stolen.

When he saw a small man running through the crowd, the son of Southern Baptist missionaries William and Darlene Gopffarth of Texas gave chase. A friend who had just spent a week with Robert at summer camp followed.

Robert almost lost the man among the vendors, buses and swarms of people in the crowded market area, but spotted him again and closed the gap. The thief, in an apparent attempt to slow down Robert, hurled the stolen purse back at him, narrowly missing him.

But Robert lunged at the man and both ended up on the ground. As the thief scrambled to get away, Robert tripped him. His summer camp friend arrived to help just as Robert grabbed the man. Together they held him until police came.

A quick search revealed several billfolds on the man.

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Missions Commitments Prove
Directors on Cutting Edge

By Bill Webb

Baptist Press
8/6/81

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--When four associational directors of missions and their spouses committed themselves to foreign mission service recently, Sam Pittman really wasn't surprised.

The commitments came at the conclusion of a recent conference for directors of missions held during foreign mission emphasis at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

The decisions confirm what Pittman, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's executive assistant for denominational relations and director of the special conference, has long believed--that directors of missions are on the cutting edge of foreign missions at the grassroots level of Southern Baptist life.

A former director of missions himself, Pittman is quick to point out that the purpose of the sessions is not to recruit directors of missions as career missionaries.

Rather, he hopes the conference enables them to be better resource persons and interpreters of foreign missions within their associations.

The 47 directors and several wives in attendance participated in an intense week of Bible study, presentations by more than 20 board staff members and discussion and feedback sessions.

Representing 19 states, the directors explored the purpose and philosophy of the board, the association's place in missions, mission finances, mission needs, missionary qualifications, volunteer programs, medical resources, the future of missions, furloughing missionaries and other topics.

Pittman doubts that any of the commitments made in conjunction with the conference were spontaneous decisions.

"Few decisions like this are made on the spur of the moment," he said. "It (the commitment) is a response to one's total experience and God's working in that life."

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In one instance, he noted, the director of missions admitted his commitment was 20 years in coming.

Another said he had been dealing with a call to foreign missions in South America for a year and a half.

Still another had been influenced by his experience as a missionary journeyman years before.

Pittman's belief in the importance of directors of missions has prompted his office to key in on them at the associational and state convention levels as vital communication links between the Foreign Mission Board and Southern Baptists in local churches.

In addition to conferences at Ridgecrest and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, the board holds similar meetings in individual states in cooperation with state conventions. On other occasions, directors of missions come to the board's offices in Richmond, Va., for sessions.

In every conference, Pittman tries to get ideas for improving the quality of services the board offers to churches and associations. "We're in a listening posture as these men share with us," he maintains.

Though attendance at the Ridgecrest and Glorieta conferences is by invitation only as Pittman's office consults with state directors of missions, he hopes to work the more than 800 associational directors of missions into a five-year rotation for mission interpretation and update.

The board provides other services to associational directors on a continuing basis.

Every director receives a quarterly cassette tape, "Missions Update," with overviews of overseas missions and current developments at the board. Each also receives other resources regularly from the board to be utilized in leadership training or mission emphases in local churches.

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Cothen Lauds Smith
For Stemming Crises

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--SBC President Bailey Smith has been lauded for his effort at stemming expected controversies at the Southern Baptist Convention in Los Angeles.

Following an address by Smith to Sunday School Board trustees, board president Grady Cothen said, "Before the SBC I was among those concerned that there were strong pressures within our denomination to lead us to become a creedal people."

Cothen said he was one of several who felt the crisis might be overcome "if Bailey Smith would take a strong stand on the traditional Baptist position that the Bible is our sole rule of faith and practice."

"He did and we did and I will forever give thanks to God for Bailey Smith," said Cothen. "We made history in that moment."

Smith told the trustees that accomplishing denominational outreach and evangelism goals will require uncomfortable sacrifices.

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"I don't think I can continue to be the Christian I am and change the world," said Smith. "We may well have to be the best Christians who ever lived or we may be the last."

Smith said Southern Baptists "need revival. If we experience it, we can change the world."

He warned denominational church leaders that their professional relationships with churches, the Bible and Christian people could cause them to lose excitement about their faith.

"It could be that you and I are so close to the physical things of Jesus that we forget his lordship," said Smith.

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Missionary Helped Save
Vice President's Life

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8/6/81

MANILA, Philippines (BP)--It happened 37 years ago, but missionary Hut Parkman has the letter to prove it. He helped save Vice President George Bush's life.

Parkman, business manager for the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in the Philippines, was a lieutenant assigned to the submarine USS Finback on Sept. 2, 1944, when Bush's plane was shot down by the Japanese in the South Pacific. The submarine picked up Bush after he had been in the water nearly two and a half hours.

Parkman didn't associate the young navy pilot his submarine crew rescued with the vice president of the United States until after the election when he saw a television profile of Bush that included a movie clip of the rescue.

To substantiate his belief, Parkman wrote to the historical center for the Department of Navy and received a declassified photocopy of the USS Finback's patrol report for the period including the rescue date. An accompanying letter from D.C. Allard, head of operational archives, stated, "I know you will be interested to note that one of the aviators picked up at that time was the present vice president of the United States."

When Bush visited recently in the Philippines, Parkman's wife, Doris, sent him a letter of welcome.

Bush answered, "I'm sorry that we didn't get to visit while I was in Manila, but things were very, very hectic. The Finback seems a million years ago, but then again it is always with me that you did save my life."

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Record BSSB Budget
Approved By Trustees

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8/6/81

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--A record 1981-82 budget of \$126.5 million was adopted by trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board during their semi-annual meeting at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

The budget represents an increase of \$16.6 million over the projected 1980-81 income of \$109.9 million.

The two-day meeting was held with 11 of the 82 trustees unable to attend because the air traffic controllers strike cancelled some flights.

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In other actions, the trustees approved a change in the formula for board contributions to the Southern Baptist Convention, authorized a contribution to the SBC Executive Committee and approved a 1982 conference center rate increase.

The formula change, effective 1982-83 pending approval by the Southern Baptist Convention, is expected to provide an additional \$100,000 to the convention the first year.

An average increase of 11 percent in 1982 summer conference center rates was approved. The conference service fee for persons seventh grade and older will increase by \$3.50, from \$24.00 to \$27.50. Rooms and food service rates also will increase.

As part of board plans to establish a denominational telecommunications network to churches, the trustees authorized the leasing of a satellite transponder and subleasing of unneeded time to recover some of the \$2.1 million first-year cost.

One new product, a resource kit for use with Children's Bible Study materials, was approved to begin publication Oct. 1, 1982.

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Trustees Authorize
Transponder Leasing

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
8/6/81

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board have approved leasing a transponder on a satellite to be launched early in 1984, moving the board one step closer to establishing a denominational telecommunications network to churches.

The transponder, part of Space Net One Satellite to be launched by the Southern Pacific Communications Company, will lease at a cost of \$2.1 million annually.

To recover part of the cost, trustees authorized the board to sublease unneeded time to other groups. Subleases are expected to recover at least \$1.3 million each year.

Calling the proposed telecommunications network "one of the great breakthroughs in communications for the Sunday School Board," board president Grady Cothen said the system will enable the board to beam telecasts to churches, seminaries, state conventions and other Baptist groups.

"We do not propose to go into homes," said Cothen. "We propose to go to Baptist churches to try to help build the strength of the churches."

Southern Baptist programming for a nationwide network is being developed by the Radio and Television Commission and a subsidiary corporation, the American Christian Television System (ACTS), which will use another transponder on the same satellite.

While specific programming topics for the board's telecommunications network have not been developed, Cothen said some of those under study include leadership training for lay workers, training helps for church staff members, music training for various sizes of churches and specialized help for small churches. Resources also may be offered for ministry with families, senior adults and single adults.

Also, he said he hopes the Home and Foreign Mission Boards and other agencies will develop missions information programming for use in Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong emphases.

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In addition to leasing the transponder, Cothen said the board expects to build an uplink station in Nashville in late 1982 from which programming will be beamed to the satellite and into churches with receiving equipment.

At present rates, Cothen said the satellite receiving dish and other equipment a church would need to receive telecommunications can be purchased at prices ranging from \$7,500 to \$18,000. He said costs are expected to decrease somewhat in the next few years.

Cothen said the telecommunications network initially will include approximately three hours of daily programming. As programs are beamed from the board, they will be scrambled. Church equipment will include decoders to unscramble the signal.

Cothen said the board hopes to offer several levels of training packages at different prices for various sizes and types of churches. Churches will be able to show programs as they are broadcast or record them for later use.

"The Sunday School Board is in the position to furnish to the denomination a live link to churches," Cothen said. "The more we study the potential of this, the bigger it gets."

He said he believes the telecommunications network will enable the board to use the latest technology to "help churches do what God commissions them to do--bring men and women to God through Jesus Christ."

"I don't want to let the next generation of Southern Baptists down," said Cothen. "I don't want them asking us, 'Why didn't you do your job then so we can do our job now?'"

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.

Budget Bill Clears Congress;
Retains Nonprofit Subsidy

Baptist Press
8/6/81

WASHINGTON (BP)--In completing action on the package of budget cuts which will reduce federal spending by \$130 billion over the next three fiscal years, Congress preserved the phasing subsidy for second-class, nonprofit publications such as Baptist state newspapers.

The conference report on the budget reconciliation bill cleared the Senate 80-14, and was agreed to by a voice vote in the House July 31. The \$696 million it authorizes to subsidize preferential rates given to second, third and fourth-class mailers in fiscal 1982 is less than the Postal Service needs to avoid rate increases for nonprofit categories, but the conferees specified that the shortfall be applied to third-class bulk nonprofit mail.

The action preserves for second-class, nonprofit publications the phasing subsidy Congress set up in 1970 to permit nonprofit mailers to move gradually toward paying full costs of their mailings instead of forcing them to do so at once. The phasing subsidy reached Step 10 of a 16-year process last June.

Under a Reagan administration proposal which the Senate had earlier approved, the phasing process would have been eliminated and such nonprofit publications would have faced an immediate doubling of their postal rates Oct. 1.

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