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Inerrantist Pressler
Meets SBC Chief Exec

By Norman Jameson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Paul Pressler, Southern Baptist biblical inerrancy advocate, has met privately for an hour and a half with the chief executive of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

Though neither Pressler nor Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary of the Executive Committee, would talk extensively about the conversation, it is the first extended discussion between the two since Pressler, acknowledged leader of Southern Baptist "inerrantists," gained prominence with his call in 1979 for a "return" to "the historic Baptist position of biblical inerrancy."

"The fact that we met shows an openness on his (Bennett's) part to communicate with all elements of the convention," said Pressler, "and that's what he needs to do as our executive secretary."

Bennett, who also has met with Bill and Cecil Sherman, leaders of a group opposed to Pressler's political methods, would not discuss the meeting other than to say he intends to maintain open communications.

Following the meeting, Pressler, in Nashville to enroll his daughter at Vanderbilt University, talked to Baptist Press.

He reiterated his previous claims that the Southern Baptist Convention will lose its effectiveness as a missions enterprise if it continues to condone "liberal" teachings in its seminaries and colleges.

Pressler sees the results of trustee elections at the annual SBC meeting in Los Angeles in June as evidence of a turn to his brand of conservatism.

He was not upset that seven decidedly conservative trustee nominations were overturned in favor of returning seven trustees eligible for reelection to their positions. He favors putting conservatives in trusteeships through normal attrition.

Pressler also attached "tremendous significance" to the defeat of two Executive Committee proposals at the convention. One would have converted the appointive powers of the president to a three-person committee consisting of the president and two vice presidents. The other would have enlarged the resolutions committee.

A proposal to change messenger membership requirements was withdrawn before the convention when it became apparent it would not pass.

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"The defeating of the Executive Committee proposals showed Southern Baptists preferred the president to have the power," Pressler said. "There is tremendous significance attached to the fact the Executive Committee was defeated in its various proposals.

"The fact they were presented by a committee chairman, John McCall, son of Duke McCall (Southern Seminary president), concerned many people...

"The Executive Committee would do well in light of the manner in which their proposals were regarded to examine their position in the minds of grass-roots Southern Baptists."

Against charges that inerrantists are a divisive element in the convention, Pressler claims inerrantists are holding the convention together.

"The conservative movement is seeking to restore our institutions to where rank and file Southern Baptists can have complete confidence in them," he said. "Only when we have confidence in what's being taught in our institutions can we effectively work together to meet a lost and needy world with the gospel of redemption."

Pressler likened the feeling among vocal conservatives to that of a homeowner who finds robbers stealing everything he owns. "When he protests and asks them to stop, he's called the troublemaker," Pressler said.

Pressler, 51, has been active since 1975, two years after formation of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, alerting Southern Baptists to his perception of problems in the SBC.

The Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship has a similar goal, but Pressler says he does not work with BFMF spokesman and editor of its journal, William A. Powell Sr. "We have a difference in approach and although I love him as my brother in Christ, we are not working together," said Pressler.

He would not speculate on an inerrantist candidate for the pivotal 1982 convention in New Orleans. He has never endorsed a candidate, he said, but "there are many people I'd be glad to vote for."

He did say: "The 1982 convention is, fortunately, in the heartland of Southern Baptists. I hope it is extremely well attended. If it is well attended, we'll continue to see processes work to restore our convention to its historical biblical base."

Pressler thinks he has seen the "turnaround" begin, but would put no date on its anticipated completion. Though others in his camp have voiced a 10-year goal, he would say only, "We didn't get into a mess overnight and we're not going to get out of it overnight."

Generally, Pressler said he was pleased with his contacts in Nashville, which included an address at Park Avenue Baptist Church, a talk with former SBC president and pastor of Nashville's First Baptist Church, Franklin Paschall, and other pastors, and an interview on a Christian radio station.

In his Park Avenue address, he claimed Southern Baptists are in a "life or death struggle for our denomination and for this book (Bible)." In the interview he admitted the convention is not actually in a struggle for the Bible "because God has for centuries preserved his Word."

The Houston appeals court judge, accused by opponents of seeking control of the convention under the guise of theological reform, told the Park Avenue congregation, "My wife and I will be the happiest people in the world when we go back to obscurity because that will mean the people have acted and things are turned around."

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HMB Commissions 26
US-2 Missionaries

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
9/3/81

ATLANTA (BP)--Twenty-six young adults are slated to begin two years of mission service with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

They were commissioned US-2 missionaries by the board during services at First Baptist Church of Avondale Estates, an Atlanta suburb.

"The 26 US-2 appointees will perform 22 different responsibilities in 19 states plus Puerto Rico," said Irvin Dawson, director of HMB missionary personnel.

US-2ers are college graduates who serve in various mission endeavors throughout the United States for two years. Dawson explained US-2ers fulfill vital missions needs while the program "provides young people an opportunity to do mission service and determine if this is a life-time call."

Blair and Rebecca Faulk of Savannah, Ga., echoed Dawson's words, saying their appointment opened "opportunities to expand our witness full-time while giving us a taste of career missions." The Faulks were assigned to coordinate seaman's ministries in Tacoma, Wash.

A "great desire to minister to the needs of others" drew Steve Waechter of Edmond, Okla., a church extension appointee, to the US-2 program. "I feel burdened to spend time working outside the school environment, meeting needs and serving others." Waechter added US-2 was a "good start on ministering between college and seminary."

Following the commissioning service led by HMB President William G. Tanner, and a group orientation in Atlanta, the new appointees will disperse to their fields of service.

The US-2ers, their hometowns and their fields of service are:

Special mission ministries: Susan Faith Barlew of Chattanooga, Tenn., appointed to Cincinnati, Ohio; Gwen Sue Blythe of Knoxville, Tenn., serving in Knoxville, Tenn.; Rebecca Ann Finley of San Angelo, Texas, to serve in Pocatello, Idaho; Erma Yvonne Hildreth of Birmingham, Ala., appointed to Chicago, Ill.

Also appointed were John and Suzanne Lawrimore of Jefferson City, Tenn., serving in Honolulu, Hawaii; Linda Faye McKnight of Tulsa, Okla., appointed to Orlando, Fla.; Wanda M. Sauley of Griffin, Ga., to serve in Myrtle Beach, S.C.; and David Howard Williams of Whistler, Ala., serving in New London, Conn.

Christian social ministries: Mary Ellen Anderson of Appling, Ga., serving in Baltimore, Md.; Karen Anne Brooke of Okahumpka, Fla., appointed to St. Louis, Mo.; Elizabeth Anne Chapman of Winchester, Va., to serve in Wichita, Kan.; Melinda Keeney of Louisville, Ky., serving in St. Louis, Mo.; and Rosalyn Gay Smith of Langdale, Ala., appointed to Chelsea, Maine.

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Church extension: Richard and Gayle Hein of Lincoln, Neb., to serve in Allegan County, Mich.; Ray Minardi of Lawrenceville, Ga., appointed to Eaton, Conn.; Steven Lloyd Waechter of Edmond, Okla., serving in Madison, Wis.; Stephen Dwayne Williams of Rolla, Mo., to serve in Binghamton, N.Y.; and Mark and Tambia Worsham of Holly Springs, Miss., appointed to Atlantic, Iowa.

Language missions: Blair and Rebecca Faulk of Savannah, Ga., serving in Tacoma, Wash.; Daniel A. Gutierrez of San Antonio, Texas, appointed to Spartanburg, S.C.; and Robert Lee Hurt of Jennings, Mo., to serve in Denver, Colo.

Evangelism: Deborah Elizabeth Scott of Lanham, Md., appointed to San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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New TV Station Owner
Forces Church Off Air

By Toby Druin

Baptist Press
9/3/81

EL PASO, Texas (BP)--After 10 years of televising their worship services, First Baptist Church of El Paso has been forced off the air by an edict issued by the new owners of KVIA-TV.

Joe Trull, pastor, said he has been informed that Marsh Media, new owners of the station, is prohibiting all paid religious programming on its stations. Marsh Media also owns KVII-TV in Amarillo.

Trull, in a preface to his sermon, explained to viewers and the congregation that the telecast will be discontinued after Sept. 6.

Trull quoted a letter from Wayne Roy, station manager of KVIA, and also a deacon at the church. The new policy "is directed because of religious profiteering that takes place in some religious programming, and because of political implications reflected in some religious programming."

Trull protested the action, noting first that his church's worship service is the only one broadcast over the wide area and saying he was "deeply disturbed" by a policy which punishes his church "for the actions of others."

"First Baptist Church has televised this broadcast since 1971--more than 500 programs--and not once have we been involved in fund raising or politics."

"For the last 10 years we have served the public as responsible tenants, and now we are being ousted for being responsible. This is indeed illogical."

Marsh Media managing partner Stanley Marsh told the Baptist Standard that no shows are being canceled. "Just as contracts run out they aren't renewed," he said.

The fact that the stations will not carry paid religious programming does not mean they will have no religious programs, he said.

"We are not anti-religious," he explained. "We intend to carry public affairs programming which will include religion because it is a part of the community life."

"It's just that we will not carry programming from a certain church which is under control of that church and not under control of the television station."

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Marsh, who said his personal religious convictions are private and didn't make any difference in the decision, refused to single out any specific persons or programs which had been guilty of "profiteering" or "politics" which prompted his new policy, although he was quoted in the El Paso Times as saying that "because of the Moral Majority and many other political implications, many paid time periods for religious programming are no longer neutral."

"There is a great deal of pressure on television stations now to sell time to various religious programs," he said. "Some of those have a political nature to them. We didn't wish to be in a position where we are making judgments over which religious programming is good or which is bad.

"We certainly are not opposed to religious programming and we know that a great deal of it is very admirable. But as a policy we are not going to sell any more time."

Roy said that his position as station manager and also as a deacon in the church had put him in an "awkward" position but controversy is nothing new to the manager of a television station.

Jimmy R. Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, said he regrets Marsh's decision and "I deplore the idea that the station has now on the basis of the activity of some religious entities passed a negative judgment on a very responsible community religious organization."

"I think it is a regrettable decision and it is my hope that it does not represent a trend, that it only represents one owner's point of view."