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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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82-55

Committee to Withhold Report on Nominations

By Toby Druin

MIDLAND, Texas (BP) -- Southern Baptists will have to wait until the first day of the annual convention, June 15, to learn who the 1982 Committee on Boards is nominating to serve on denominational boards, commissions and standing committees.

Committee chairman Daniel Vestal, pastor of First Baptist Church in this west Texas city, said the committee voted at the conclusion of its March 29-30 meeting in Nashville, Tenn., not to reveal the nominees until the first day of the convention, following SBC bylaw 16:8, which says: "The report of the committee shall be published in the first day's Bulletin and may be amended on the floor of the convention by majority of vote of those voting."

The report of the committee on boards has been in the spotlight the last few years because of the stated goal of one faction to gain control of SBC boards, commissions and agencies.

The 1981 committee on boards broke from precedent and a strict interpretation of the bylaws stipulation to release its list of nominees in mid-April. The report ignited instant controversy in that several persons eligible for renomination were not renominated. Generally, persons may serve two four-year terms, and are renominated for the second term unless there is "good and sufficient reason" not to do so.

At the 1981 annual meeting, Kenneth L. Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church in Houston led an effort to return four of those "bumped." The messengers restored the four to their places, overriding the recommendation of the 1981 committee on boards. Another 1981 nominee was rejected in favor of a pastor who purportedly had a better record of denominational service and support.

Vestal said two or three persons eligible for renomination this year will not be renominated for "unique personal -- not doctrinal -- reasons." He did not elaborate.

Vestal said the controversial nature of last year's report was discussed during the committee meeting, but insisted the decision to withhold the release of the nominees was not dictated by last year's controversy. "We tried to see it not as a negative decision, but as a positive decision," he said, explaining the decision was not unanimous but a "strong" one.

The committee felt, Vestal said, emphasizing it was their decision, not his, that before 1981 the precedent was to release the list of nominees the first day of the convention. "This has been something the convention has done for years and it has served us well. We felt no reason to change it."

"We weren't trying to plow any new ground or set any new agenda. We were just trying to do the job ... the best way we knew. We think we did."

Vestal said he hopes the report, which will suggest more than 200 persons for various SBC posts will not be controversial. "I have been a Baptist long enough to know you shouldn't predict what might or might not happen, but I feel good about the report."

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Vestal said people who argue for release of the nominees early should trust the committee.

The committee laid down its own guidelines, eliminating some persons from consideration, Vestal said. Under the guidelines, he added, persons on the committee itself and on the 1981 committee on committees were not eligible for nomination.

The committee members, Vestal said, were diverse theologically and geographically, but "had a common commitment and, I felt, a tremendous sense of integrity. I really felt that. They had a desire to come and do the work of the committee in the name of Christ, in the spirit of Christ."

"I felt a sense of unity," he said, "not unanimity about every person or every issue, but I did feel a sense of unity."

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Southwestern Professor
To Become HMB Volunteer

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Cal Guy, professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for 36 years, will retire July 31 and become the director of the Center for Missions and Education at the Luther Rice homesite in Northboro, Mass.

Guy and his wife, Terrye, will become Mission Service Corps volunteers Sept. 1, according to Wendell Belew, director of the Home Mission Board's missions ministries division.

Guy will work through the Seminary External Education Division, a joint extension service of six Southern Baptist seminaries. He will teach, preach and assist with New England association conferences. Guy also will work with bivocational pastors beginning new churches in southern New Hampshire.

The birthplace of Luther Rice, organizer of the first national Baptist convention, was acquired by the Home Mission Board in 1968. It is now being renovated by Baptist volunteers as a visitors' center, historical library and seminary extension center. The property is also site of the Luther Rice Memorial Baptist Church and the Baptist General Association of New England. The homesite will be dedicated next year in honor of Rice's 200th birthday.

The Guys' interest in New England grew out of a sabbatical visit to Union Theological Seminary in New York where, Guy says, "I developed a major burden for the area and would have stayed if I hadn't already been called to teach."

The couple will live in an upstairs apartment at the homesite. Downstairs rooms are being furnished with period antiques by Mrs. Cecil Day of Atlanta, Ga.

The Guys will replace Rufus and Mrs. Crozier, who will be curators of the homesite until June. Crozier is former professor at Missouri Baptist College.

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Volunteer, 80, Takes Cab
To Counsel At World's Fair

By Leisa Hammett

Baptist Press
4/6/82

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Eighty-year-old Dovie Jones believes "you have to pay for everything in this world that's worthwhile."

During 16 days in May, Jones will pay \$16.85 daily to counsel and greet visitors at the Baptist pavilion at the 1982 World's Fair.

On her assigned days, Jones will rise at 4:30 a.m. to get ready for the 50-mile trip from her home in White Pine, Tenn., to Knoxville.

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At 5:30 a.m., she will take a cab to Morristown where she will board a bus to Knoxville for the 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. shift at the Baptist pavilion.

Jones is one of more than 700 Southern Baptist volunteers who will work at the Baptist pavilion during the fair's May to October run.

Volunteer duties include hosting pavilion visitors and counseling those who make inquiries following a multi-image media presentation.

The retired school teacher describes her volunteer assignment as a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

"It will be the climax of my life to give my Christian witness and meet people from all over the world," she says.

She asked that her 16 volunteer days be scattered throughout May to give her time to plant her annual garden. The month of May, she believes, will be the most exciting month of the fair, even though it will cost her a total of \$269.60 in taxi and bus fares to work without pay as a volunteer. She says she wouldn't miss the opening day of the fair, May 1, for anything.

The 50-mile trip from White Pine to Knoxville is nothing unusual for her. She makes the trip several times each month already to meet with several organizations. A poet who has written and edited two books of inspirational poems, Jones is a member of the National League of American Pen Women in addition to the Writers' Guild.

"The excitement of living," she bubbles, is what keeps the spry, octogenarian going.

"There are just so many things to do," she says. "Life is great as long as you live it under God's direction. Without him, life is meaningless."

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(BP) photo sent to Baptist state newspapers by Atlanta BP Bureau, available to others on request.

Hammett is director of communications for Baptist Ministries to the World's Fair.

Foreign Board Sends \$10,000
To Aid Refugees In Mexico

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4/6/82

VILLAHERMOSA, Mexico (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board released \$10,000 in hunger relief funds April 5 to aid Mexicans displaced from their homes by continuing eruptions of El Chinconal volcano in southeastern Mexico.

Harvey Walworth, Southern Baptist missionary who lives just 50 miles away in Villahermosa, said eruptions over the weekend brought an influx of refugees to that city Sunday evening April 4.

About 200 were housed in God Is Love Baptist Church in Villahermosa, he said.

News accounts indicate nearly 40,000 Mexicans have been left homeless as the volcano has spewed rocks, sand and ash. At least 21 persons were killed and about 500 others injured.

Another eruption was anticipated.

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'Warm Hands, Warm Hearts'
Cheers Chester, Pennsylvania

CHESTER, Pa. (BP)—Chester, Pa., takes third place in a contest no city wants to win.

This Philadelphia suburb was once a showcase for the American dream. European immigrants built their two-story, white frame castles and planted roses. Children skipped down sidewalks swept clean each morning.

Today, Chester is the third most economically-distressed city in the nation. Whole blocks of homes have been abandoned to the rats, wild dogs and the street people who forage shelter wherever they can.

More than a third of Chester's 45,000 residents are on welfare; 33,000 residents are black, 2,000 Hispanic. Chester's main employer, Sun Ship Company, laid off more than 3,000 workers.

"Chester is the saddest neighborhood I've ever seen" says Gaynor Yancey, Christian social ministries director for Delaware Valley Baptist Association. "People here have the mind that nothing can help."

The lone Southern Baptist church near Chester is Ukrainian Evangelical, of which Juan Kovalchuk is pastor. A Ukrainian reared in Argentina, Kovalchuk has "two hearts" for Ukrainians and Hispanics, Yancey says.

The pastor tried blending the two groups for worship, "but the older Ukrainians didn't like it," Yancey recalls. Instead, he started Spanish worship and Bible study on Saturday nights. Soon he came to Yancey, concerned about the Hispanics' critical need just to stay warm during Pennsylvania's frigid winters.

To show that Southern Baptists care about the needy in times of cold, Yancey began "Operation Warm Hands, Warm Hearts" to distribute blankets, caps and mittens to Chester's Spanish-speaking residents. The project, similar to "Operation Snow Blanket" which gave blankets to 780 people in Kensington, Pa., in 1977, was backed by Delaware Valley association.

A world away in Gentry, Ark., Dorothy Stump read in a Southern Baptist missions magazine about Yancey's campaign to warm Philadelphia's poor. Stump, a widow with grown grandchildren, works as an obstetrics nurse and is a backbone of Gentry's First Baptist Church.

During odd moments, Stump crochets scraps of yarn into warm caps. Yancey's campaign and Stump's caps brought the two women together across 2,000 miles.

To help, Stump mailed Yancey dozens of striped stocking caps. For "Warm Hands, Warm Hearts," she persuaded Gentry's Baptist women to provide more caps and mittens for "Gaynor's children."

On a numbing winter morning, Yancey and association volunteers gave 400 blankets, 1,000 caps and 2,000 pairs of mittens to Hispanics huddled outside the Hispanics civic center in Chester. In less than two hours, everything was gone.

Yancey hopes Baptists can make contact with Hispanic families from names and addresses they collected. Two Spanish-speaking student missionaries will help Kovalchuk start a Spanish church in Chester this summer.

In Gentry, Stump displays a snapshot of three youngsters sporting her red-and-white striped caps. Already she's crocheted nine more for next winter.

But Stump scoffs at admiration. "I just like having something to do," she explains patiently. "This way, doing a few caps at a time, it doesn't cost too much. It may be a help for Gaynor, but it probably does me mor good."

Israeli Baptists Find Warm Meetings Response

NAZARETH, Israel (BP)--Baptists in Israel recently participated in two international meetings sure to promote mutual appreciation and Baptist unity in the Middle East and Europe.

Egyptian and Israeli Baptists meeting in Nazareth agreed to encourage special conferences, speaking teams, youth exchanges and other forms of cooperation.

During a three-week Bible conference at Baptist Village in Petah Tiqva, believers from western Europe, eastern Europe and the Middle East gained a renewed zeal for personal evangelism.

About 40 participants in Petah Tiqva followed a weekly schedule of four days of Bible study and lectures on Christian leadership and church growth, and three days of field trips to biblical sites in the coastal plain, Galilee and Negev areas.

"A grass-roots desire for evangelism is beginning among believers in Europe and the Middle East," said William Wagner, Foreign Mission Board consultant for evangelism and church growth for Europe and the middle East. "They want to go out and win people to Christ."

In the Nazareth meeting Egyptians Milad Philipes, president of the Egyptian Baptist Convention and pastor of the Baptist church in Alexandria, and Sa'ad Hawash, pastor of Cairo Baptist Church, said they were "uplifted spiritually" during a weeklong tour of Galilee as guests of the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel.

They told Fuad Haddad, chairman of the association, they were happy to see growing Israeli Baptist churches filled with praying members and active laymen.

"We have been encouraged by their visit and feel this experience has emphasized fellowship among Baptists in the Middle East," said Haddad, who arranged for the Egyptian visitors to speak in churches, home prayer meetings, and school Bible classes and chapel services.

The groups already cooperate through music. Hymnbooks compiled by Hawash have been distributed to Arab-speaking congregations in Israel. Aided by cassette tapes, the groups are learning songs popular among Egyptian Baptists.

Eight churches and two Baptist centers comprise the Egyptian Baptist convention; seven churches and 10 centers make up the Association of Churches in Israel. Baptist membership in each nation is about 500.