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82-68

President Reflects On Term  
Smith Credits Beliefs  
For Forging 'New Peace'

By Dan Martin *CD*

DEL CITY, Okla. (BP)--Bailey E. Smith believes the "new peace" in the 13.8-million member Southern Baptist Convention is the greatest contribution he has made during his two years as president which end June 17 at the close of the 1982 annual SBC meeting in New Orleans.

While controversy over a remark he made about Jews and their prayers is the "most memorable" event of his presidency, Smith says he believes his "greatest contribution is ... bringing harmony to the convention."

The greatest surprise has been the "national exposure" afforded the president of the denomination. "I had no idea the visibility I would have," he says. "The leader of the denomination is in a different world. The president of the Southern Baptist Convention is a world leader. My name has been in every major newspaper--not only in America, but in Europe as well."

During his term of office, Smith has been in the White House three times, once with Jimmy Carter, and twice with Ronald Reagan. Once, he stood by Reagan while the president signed a bill. "I was there not because I was Bailey Smith, but because I was SBC president."

Smith, 44, the youngest man in more than a century to be SBC president, was thrust into the national spotlight less than three months after his first-ballot election in July of 1980 in St. Louis. In August, he preached at the National Affairs Briefing, a religious-political rally in Dallas and during his sermon extolling the virtues of Christ, he commented that "God Almighty does not hear the prayers of a Jew."

The comment was slow to gain attention, but then exploded into a national news story. In the aftermath, Smith met leaders of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and later toured Israel as their guest.

"I have been gratified that Jewish leaders said the remark brought about great improvements in Baptist-Jewish relationships," Smith said.

Smith has faced scrutiny and controversy within and without the denomination and even is the first incumbent president in recent memory to face serious challenge for re-election. Traditionally, SBC presidents are elected to a second one-year term without opposition but Smith was challenged by Abner McCall, retired president of Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Smith won with 60 percent of the vote.

"I was not offended somebody was nominated against me in Los Angeles, he says. " I had bathed my life in prayer and knew God had put me in this position for the sake of the denomination."

Los Angeles, he said, was a "harmonious convention. going on to say that "only a man who believes in inerrancy could have brought the harmony...only a man who believes as I do could have brought the conservative forces together."

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"I believe if the convention had a president who said the Bible had faults, mistakes and errors, he would never have been trusted by the majority of conservatives and been able to bring about the harmony I was able to bring.

The harmony was brought about, he says, because the "'moderates' thought I wasn't too radical, and the conservatives know I am an evangelistic, soul-winning, Bible believing person ... who believes in the infallible, inerrant word of God."

Recent controversy has revolved around the issue of biblical inerrancy, and the overt aim of one faction to gain control of denominational machinery -- including the presidency and its appointive powers--in an effort to enforce adherence to inerrancy as the test of denominational loyalty.

Smith defined inerrancy as believing the original Bible manuscripts are literally true and without error. "I believe God has given us exactly what he wants us to have. It was given inerrantly. I even believe God has protected the translations and has given us his perfect word."

Smith added that "inerrancy is not a side issue. It is a very vital issue. It doesn't need to be a club to hit people with, but it is a vital commitment."

The SBC in Los Angeles "voted we believe the Bible is inerrant," by adopting a motion proposed by former SBC president Hershel Hobbs of Oklahoma City, reaffirming the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message Statement, with Hobbs' explanation that the "Bible is truth without any mixture of error" included in the minutes.

"So the denomination believes in inerrancy. Those who believe in inerrancy are not exceptional; it is the ones who do not who are abnormal," Smith said.

Reinforcing his comment that inerrancy is a vital issue, Smith noted: "It is an error to say that we don't need to worry about the Bible, but about missions. We will have no missions if the Bible is full of errors. If Genesis One could be fictitious, so could John 3:16, or the Great Commission. We must believe it ALL. I do."

He commented on the "new conservative effort and mood" within the denomination, and said: "I wish everybody in the SBC believed in inerrancy. I wish there were some way by which we could assure that no professor in our seminaries and colleges would believe otherwise."

The president said: "We have men in high denominational post who believe in inerrancy, but won't use the word because they think it will give credibility to some people they don't like. I think that is immature of them. If they believe it, they ought to be willing to say they believe it.

"Inerrancy is what we believe; we went on record saying that is our belief, although we did not use that word. I don't believe the word needs to be included in the Baptist Faith and Message (statement). It is good enough. But it needs to be enforced."

He explained that he meant by "enforcement" that "we ought to instruct our agencies to abide by the action, but then leave it at a gentlemen's agreement. It would be an honor system, and anyone who could not believe what we believe ought to have the integrity not to accept a post in our denomination."

He went further and noted that "we ought to deal with the matter and if there is a professor who refuses to abide by the statement, he ought to be dismissed."

Smith added: "Maybe Baptists have become too loose in interpreting how we abide by the statement. I have been told we cannot get qualified men (to teach) if we do abide by it. I think we can. I think we must protect the purity of our teaching. I agree with academic freedom, but we ought not give people the freedom to teach falsehood, and when anyone teaches that the Bible is full of myths and errors, that is falsehood."

The problem of liberals within the denomination is "not great" Smith said, adding: "We do have an element of liberalism that we do not need to have. It is not great, but any liberalism is too much."

While he sees the problem as a crucial one for the denomination, Smith does not expect any action to come before the 1982 convention because of the 1981 action. "We've already taken action," he said.

He also said the "new boards (of trustees) are turning more conservative. They are the cure."

For the 1982 convention, Smith said he is "praising God that we have made the leap from political haranging to having the burden of the lost world on our hearts. Last year we were talking about politics and rival nominations; this year we are talking about Bold Mission Thrust."

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Wrapup

Historians Trace SBC Growth  
From Site of Earliest Church

Baptist Press  
5/3/82

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)—Southern Baptist historians traced the denomination's rapid expansion from its earliest origins, meeting in the city where its oldest congregation is celebrating its 300th birthday.

South Carolina Baptists and Charleston's First Baptist Church must be given an important place in those beginnings Robert A. Baker told the joint annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and Society.

Baker, retired chairman of the church history department at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, was awarded the Historical Commission's first Distinguished Service Award for longtime contributions to Southern Baptist history.

Baker said First Baptist "was busy with domestic missions before there was another Baptist church in the South."

He noted that William Screven "organized a Baptist church in Kittery, Maine, on Sept. 25, 1682, and that he and his church migrated to South Carolina in 1696 . . . . The best evidence reveals that Screvens brought his church to Charleston in the fall of 1696 where, after a brief period, the older group of Baptists around Charleston united with this church."

The South Carolinians established preaching points and missions, innovated the "associational missionary movement," and made strides in Christian and ministerial education. In fact, the Charleston Association "became the distinctive archetype for the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845," Baker noted.

J. Glen Clayton, curator of the South Carolina Baptist Historical Collection, said it isn't likely that Southern Baptists today would rally around one man, "even if we had another Richard Furman or William B. Johnson," two early leaders in South Carolina Baptist history.

Southern Baptists have capable leaders today, Clayton noted, but the situation is vastly different from the days of Furman and Johnson when cultural unity marked Southern Baptists.

"We are now diverse," Clayton said, and a once strong denominational loyalty is "now being strained on many fronts."

Clayton attributed the "cracking" of the SBC synthesis, to stresses in the cultural, denominational loyalty, financial, creedal and theological realms. The greatest threat, he added, was in what he called "ecumenical fundamentalism."

"The evangelicals are trying to dupe Baptists into thinking that there are no differences and that we all believe the same things," Clayton asserted.

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In the area of Southern Baptist expansion, growth in the South from 1800-1914 can be attributed to several factors, including racism, according to the chairman of Auburn University's history department.

J. Wayne Flynt, who won the commission's annual Norman W. Cox Award for the best article published by the agency in the past year, said Southern Baptists took the cultural position on critical issues such as race.

"They were no better or worse than the Presbyterians, Methodists, village atheists, Unitarians, and secular southern intellectuals," Flynt said. "They both drew strength from their culture and by their endorsement reinforced and deepened its racism."

The SBC today has some 600 black churches affiliated and more than 200,000 black Southern Baptists (based on 1980 figures).

Other factors contributing to SBC growth, Flynt noted, included individualism, an appeal to the common man, and revivalism. Beyond their cultural endorsements, Flynt noted, Southern Baptists worked hard to win converts, with effective results...they (were) well served by bivocational ministers and the ease with which uneducated men could enter the ministry."

More recently, G. Thomas Halbrooks pointed to a 1942 decision at the annual SBC meeting in San Antonio, Texas, to admit to membership the Southern Baptist Convention of California as the point where Southern Baptist expansion officially began.

"California was different," said Halbrooks, history professor from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. "Southern Baptists had migrated there and started new churches that were Southern Baptist from their inception."

In 1951, the national convention met in San Francisco, Calif., and "reaffirmed the removal of territorial limits and asserted that the Home Mission Board and all other convention boards and agencies were 'free to serve as a source of blessing to any community or any people anywhere in the United States,'" Halbrooks said.

Rapid expansion came with the commitment and 15 new state conventions affiliated with the SBC between 1941 and 1978, the professor noted.

Bringing the cause and effect of growth and expansion to the present, H. Leon McBeth, chairman of the commission and of the Southwestern Seminary church history department, declared that present controversies within the denomination are related to geographic expansion.

Such controversies have centered around charges of liberalism in the denomination, over scriptural authority and biblical inerrancy in recent years.

"Many people assume that expansion means just more of the same," he said. "Expansion has modified our emphasis so that we have new diversities that are cultural and yet deeper than dialect (or language)."

Describing the geographic expansion of the SBC as "healthy," McBeth said such growth requires a price that must be paid in an increase of tension.

McBeth charged that Landmarkism, a 19th century movement that in essence viewed Baptists in a light of succession from New Testament times and the early church to the exclusion of other denominations, "has provided the seedbed, the militant spirit, and some of the views of the theological controversies confronting Baptists in the 20th century."

In its annual meeting, the Historical Commission approved the hiring of a fulltime communications director, effective Oct. 1, recommended a proposed 1983-84 budget of \$453,500, and presented awards to Baker and Flynt.

Creation of the new assignment, which will be filled by another furloughing missionary when Philpot returns to Mexico in July, is part of a continuing effort to use all resources to combating world hunger, said John Cheyne, the board's relief ministries consultant.

Philpot will be liaison with agricultural mission fellowships, plan overseas agricultural projects and develop contacts with agricultural schools to inform faculty and students about happenings in agricultural missions.

From his Shreveport, La., residence, Philpot will work closely with the Agricultural Missions Fellowship based in Yazoo City, Miss. He and his successors will encourage the organization of new chapters of this and other agricultural missions fellowships. Agricultural Missions Fellowship is a nonprofit organization that supports Southern Baptist agricultural evangelism work overseas.

Gene A. Triggs, a chemical corporation executive from Yazoo City, is president of Agricultural Missions Fellowship and was elected chairman of the Foreign Mission Board in April. He said he feels the assignment of the missionary liaison offers "tremendous potential for creating interest in agriculturally oriented laymen who might get involved in agricultural missions. We (at Agricultural Missions Fellowship) are thrilled that James Philpot is the first person in the position because he is the first missionary we assisted with a small loan for an agricultural project years ago."

Philpot, a native of Polk County, Ark., is now chairman of the organization of Southern Baptist representatives in Mexico, but was an agricultural consultant and coordinator in Oaxaca, Mexico, for seven years. He was assistant agricultural agent in Independence County, Ark., and Ellis County, Texas, before his missionary appointment.

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Hymnal Second to Bible  
as Christianity Text

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Baptist Press  
5/3/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Among Southern Baptists the hymnal is second only to the Bible as a textbook about Christianity, says a noted church music professor, arranger and conductor.

Donald Hustad, professor of church music at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told participants in a convocation on congregational singing in Nashville, Tenn., "We are successors of those who believed we teach best that which we sing."

"We as evangelical believers have been known as a people of the Book," he said. "Actually, we are a people of two books--the Bible and the hymnal. When our pilgrim forefathers went to and from church, they carried two books--the King James Version of the Bible and the Bay Psalm Book."

Hustad said most people are more interested in the tune than they are in the words. However, "a hymn is a text," he said. "It says something God has said or it puts in my mouth a response to God."

Hustad suggested using the hymnal for poetry and praise in personal devotions. "A hymn is always a positive affirmation of Christian truth," he said. "The hymnal can provide an outline for a complete exercise of personal worship."

"When you read a hymn," he urged, "look for theology and for scripture." He also encouraged the use of hymns based on the meaning in the text. "Some hymns have been sung so often they are recited just like rosary beads. "The hymn should respond to the message and not just be a 'forever favorite.'"

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Smith Names Key  
Committee Leaders

DEL CITY, Okla. (BP) -- Bailey E. Smith, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has named Homer G. Lindsey Jr. as chairman of the committee on committees and Norris Sydnor Jr. as chairman of the resolutions committee.

Lindsey, a former president of the SBC Pastors' Conference, is pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., and Sydnor is the bivocational pastor of Riverside Baptist Church, Oxon Hill, Md., a mission of Seabrook Baptist Church in Seabrook, Md. Proposed resolutions may be sent to Sydnor at 10605 Parrish Lane, Mitchellville, Md. 20716.

Sydnor also is vice president for development for Booker T. Washington Foundation in Washington, D.C., a research and development organization for minority business enterprise.

Sydnor, a black, sees his appointment as a sign of Smith's progressive spirit in the SBC presidency. While he sees no new issues surfacing for the convention, he anticipates theological issues rising. "It would be wrong to presuppose or speculate what they would be," he said.

Smith announced the appointments in a telephone interview with Baptist Press, but declined to reveal the other members of either committee until the first day of the 1982 annual meeting in New Orleans, June 15.

Earlier, Smith said he "probably" would not announce membership of the two committees. The withholding of the appointments is the second such action in two months. In late March, the Committee on Boards officially voted it would not report its nominees until the first day of the convention. The committee on boards nominates persons to serve as trustees of the SBC institutions and agencies.

"I will not release them (the appointments)," Smith told Baptist Press. "There is no reason I should; I am not required to do so."

Part of his reason for refusing to make the appointments public is that he did announce them in April 1981, in advance of the annual meeting in Los Angeles, setting off a wave of criticism and controversy. Smith revised both committees in the wake of the furor.

While some persons have said the early announcement allowed for full discussion and contributed to a harmonious meeting, Smith disagrees. "The criticism and all of the ugly things said last year just made my job harder. The discussion did not clear the air; it just muddied the water. Some people took the list of appointments, misprinted it and even put in fictitious names. Some even put in information about people (appointees) that was just not so."

His decision not to release the names this year will "avoid misuse" of the list, he said.

Smith added the early release of the list in 1981 was the first time the nominations had been made available before the first day's Convention Bulletin.

Under the SBC constitution and by-laws, the president -- in conference with the two vice presidents -- names the committee on committees and the resolutions committee. The appointment authority is one of the few real powers an SBC president possesses.

The committee on committees, composed of two representatives from each qualified state convention, nominates persons to serve on any special committee authorized during the convention. It's most important function, however, is appointment of the committee on boards, which in turn nominates persons to serve as trustees of the SBC agencies and institutions.

The bylaws specify the president shall appoint the committee on committees at least a month before the annual meeting of the convention, and that the names shall be published in the first issue of the Convention Bulletin.

The bylaws say the committee on resolutions, consisting of 10 members, three of whom shall be members of the SBC Executive Committee, shall be appointed at least 60 days before the convention. Bylaw 22 does not specify how the names of those appointed shall be made public.

Bylaw 22 also specifies that copies of proposed resolutions be submitted to the committee chairperson at least 30 days before the convention "in order to make possible more thorough consideration and to expedite the committee's work."

While the bylaw says the president shall appoint the two committees "in conference with" the two vice presidents, Mrs. A. Harrison Gregory of Danville, Va., first vice president, says she only has had one communication from Smith concerning the two committees.

She told the Baptist Standard, news journal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, that she received a letter in late February from Smith asking if she had any suggestions. She said she was requested to send the suggestions "by return mail."

Gregory did so, she said, and had no further contact from Smith. She was informed of the appointments of Lindsey and Sydnor by the Standard.

Smith said later he contacted her April 30 to tell her of the nominations.

Don Kim, pastor of Berendo Street (Korean) Baptist Church in Los Angeles, was in Brazil and unavailable for comment.

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Hunger Concert At SBC  
To Feature Nutt, Clawson

Baptist Press  
5/3/82

NEW ORLEANS, La. (BP)—A world hunger benefit concert featuring Christian humorist Grady Nutt and Dove Award winner Cynthia Clawson will be held after the evening session of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans June 15.

Billed as "a celebration of commitment," the concert also will feature recording artist Gary Rand, Bob and Jan Salley, gospel duet and founders of World Hunger Relief, Inc.; and Darrell Adams, composer and artist of "God! What a World."

The concert, to be in the chapel at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, is sponsored by SEEDS an Atlanta-based magazine and educational ministry by Southern Baptists concerned about hunger. Concert co-sponsors are St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans and the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Hunger Committee.

Nutt, self-styled "prime minister of humor," is a regular cast member of the syndicated television program "Hee Haw." Clawson, voted gospel music's top female vocalist at the 1981 Dove Awards ceremony for the second consecutive year, also won a Grammy in February.

Ken Sehested, director of program for SEEDS, reported all donations from the concert will go to the hunger relief funds of the Home and Foreign Mission Boards of the Southern Baptist Convention. The artists have agreed to donate their time and travel expenses.

"The concert is a way of entertaining Southern Baptists and making them more aware of world hunger," Sehested said. During the convention, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary students will hand out 30,000 leaflets urging messengers to lead their churches in preparing for the SBC's World Hunger Day Oct. 10.

First-quarter receipts for 1982 to the Foreign Mission Board's hunger relief and disaster response have totaled \$1.4 million, a \$350,000 increase above first-quarter offerings for the record giving year of 1980, according to SEEDS spokesman Andy Loving. Giving could approach \$7 million by year's end, he predicted.

Home Mission Board receipts for domestic hunger also are up, with \$45,489 received in the first quarter of 1982, compared to \$19,000 for the same period in 1981, and \$2,881 in 1980.

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Free transportation from the Superdome will be provided to the concert. Buses will shuttle back and forth approximately every 20 minutes.

An earlier concert is scheduled at 7 p.m. for New Orleans area Baptists and is open to the public, Sehested said.

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Argentine Baptists Pray;  
Missionaries Hope to Stay

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press  
5/3/82

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (BP)--As combat broke out between Argentine and British forces in and around the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands, Argentine Baptists joined together May 2, to pray for peace.

More than 3,000 Baptists gathered for a Sunday morning prayer service in the Plaza San Martin in Buenos Aires. Leaders of the Argentine Evangelical Baptist Convention, which sponsored the service, called on Baptists in other areas of the country to offer peace prayers during church services.

Meanwhile, Southern Baptist missionaries in Argentina repeated they would not leave unless it became an "absolute necessity," according to missionary Frances Roberts who works in Buenos Aires. Roberts said May 3 that she knew of no incidents of "outward hostility" directed at any of the 54 Southern Baptist missionaries in Argentina. The announcement of U.S. government support of Britain in the dispute has provoked widespread public resentment of the United States, she added.

That resentment, she said, had not yet caused any harassment of U.S. citizens in Buenos Aires. "One has to live each day," she said. "We're continuing our work as usual."

She said that anxiety caused by the fighting gave Baptists new opportunities for witness and ministry, such as the outdoor prayer meeting, which drew considerable public attention and media coverage.

The Baptist convention's executive secretary, Ignacio Loredo, led the meeting, which included at least 30 Baptist pastors. The crowd sang the national anthem and the hymn "Our Fatherland for Christ," and prayed for a "just and peaceful solution" to the conflict.

After the prayers, Loredo, Baptist Convention President Miguel Bollatti and other leaders walked across the street to the Argentine government's foreign ministry. Met by an official, they presented a letter congratulating the government on diplomatic efforts to end the crisis, assuring national leaders of Baptists' support and prayer and repeating an offer of chaplains for the Argentine military.

On April 2, the day Argentine forces invaded the Falklands, Loredo sent a letter to Argentina's President Leopold O. Galtieri, supporting the action, but asking for a peaceful settlement of the situation.

Approved by the executive committee of the Baptist Convention, that letter congratulated the government for bringing about the "end of colonialism" on the Falklands, known in Argentina as the Malvinas Islands. It also urged the military to name evangelical chaplains and offered pastoral leadership for an evangelical church in Port Stanley, East Falkland, reportedly one of three churches on the islands.

Loredo said the letter was speaking in the name of "100,000 Baptists and sympathizers." There are some 27,000 members of 476 churches and chapels related to the Baptist Convention in Argentina.

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April Cooperative Program  
Continues Rampant Gift Pace

Baptist Press  
5/3/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--April mission gifts through Southern Baptists' national Cooperative Program continued a fiscal-year trend that surpasses all budget projections.

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April's undesignated total of \$7,847,634 surpasses April 1981 by \$1.5 million, a 23.1 percent increase. Receipts for the first seven months of the fiscal year are \$54,839,170, nearly \$7.5 million or 15.8 percent ahead of the same period last year.

The rate of increase is twice that of the current inflation rate.

Designated giving also continued strongly. In April, Southern Baptists designated \$6,139,375 for national convention causes, an increase of 11.2 percent over April 1981. For the year, designated gifts are \$58,189,661, or 13.8 percent ahead of the same period last year.

Total designated and undesignated gifts forwarded by 34 Baptist state conventions to the national work of the Southern Baptist Convention in the first seven months of the 1981-82 fiscal year are \$113,028,831, an increase of \$14.5 million, or 14.8 percent.

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Missions Day Camp  
Plans Set for SBC

Baptist Press  
5/3/82

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, in cooperation with the Brotherhood department of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, and the New Orleans Baptist Association, will again sponsor a missions day camp during day sessions of the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans.

Children who have been in grades one through six during the current school year may register for the camp, which will be at Audubon Parkland Zoo, about eight miles from the Louisiana Superdome, site of the Southern Baptist Convention meeting June 15-17.

Camp registration opens Monday, June 14, at the Missions Day Camp booth in the registration lobby at the Superdome. Parents may leave their children at a designated place in the Superdome beginning June 15. Parents are to retrieve the campers at the close of the morning session on Wednesday, June 16, and the close of the afternoon sessions June 15 and 17.

Camp cost is \$5 per child per day. For two children in a family, the cost is \$25 for three days; for three children, \$45. Cost covers insurance, two noon lunches and transportation between the Superdome and the camp site.

This is the ninth year the Missions Day Camp has been provided for children whose parents attend the Southern Baptist Convention. This year the Day Camp is under the direction of Jimmy Autry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Westwego, La. Karl Bozeman, director of Crusader Royal Ambassador Services, Brotherhood Commission, is general supervisor.

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Camping, Large Group  
Housing May Be Open

Baptist Press  
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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Two more housing opportunities are available for Southern Baptists planning to attend the annual meeting June 15-17 in New Orleans.

Although space among hotels cooperating with the convention housing bureau is long gone, three local universities and the YMCA have large-group space available. Also, there are four campgrounds within 20 minutes of the Louisiana Superdome, site of the meeting.

Persons still wishing accommodations for large groups should contact Blake Touchstone, Tulane University, 504-865-5426; Monica McClure, University of New Orleans, 504-286-6585; Manny Kinard, Loyola University, 504-865-3622; or Loraine Hofmann, YMCA, 800-568-9622.

There is no on-site overnight camping at the Superdome. Four nearby campgrounds and reservation telephone numbers are: Park D'Orleans I, 504-241-3167; Parc D'Orleans II, 504-242-6176; New Orleans Travel Park, 504-242-7795; and New Orleans West KOA, 504-467-1792. A fifth campground, New Orleans East KOA, is within 35 minutes of the Superdome, phone 504-643-3850.

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