



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

July 21, 1982

82-104

Cothen Will Request
Medical Retirement

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptist Sunday School Board President Grady C. Cothen announced July 20 he is asking the board's trustees for medical retirement effective March 1, 1984.

Cothen, 61, said, "this entire matter has been discussed in detail with the officers of the trustees and with the plans and policies committee of the trustee board. The planning process was under way long before the Southern Baptist Convention meeting" in June in New Orleans, La.

Cothen emphasized there is "no relationship" between his request for medical retirement and current conflicts within the Southern Baptist Convention.

He said he was notifying the trustees 18 months in advance of his retirement date "to allow ample time for an orderly transition which will include the selection of a search committee, the election of a new president and a time of orientation to the job before March 1984."

Cothen noted that the process he outlined is almost identical to that followed upon the 1975 retirement of his predecessor, James L. Sullivan.

The president of the institution with a 1982 budget of more than \$125 million said he had planned to make a formal announcement of his retirement request at the Aug. 3-4 meeting of the trustees.

"The release of the erroneous story by the Nashville Banner (July 20) made it necessary for me to communicate with the trustees by telegram immediately," said Cothen. The Banner story quoted unnamed "Southern Baptist sources" as speculating that Cothen might resign due to the "volatile situation within the Southern Baptist Convention...rather than health."

Cothen said he was advised by his physician almost a year ago to consider retirement. In March 1980 he underwent abdominal surgery for a malignancy. At that time 75 percent of his stomach was removed.

"There has been a general decline in the state of my health during the last year," said Cothen. "While there is no evidence of the recurrence of the malignancy, there are inescapable physical complications that are aggravated by the necessary functions of this office."

Cothen returned to work July 19, following urological surgery June 29. At the time of the surgery, Cothen said it was not related to the earlier stomach surgery.

Cothen said: "If health allows--and I think it will--I expect to be president of the Sunday School Board in every sense of the word until March 1984."

-more-

After notifying trustees by telegram, Cothen announced his plans to the 1,100 Nashville employees in a called meeting. More than 1,600 persons are employed by the board in Baptist Bookstores, two conference centers and the Nashville central office.

-30-

African Baptists Launch
Continent-Wide Fellowship

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
7/21/82

LIMURU, Kenya (BP)--African Baptist leaders from across the continent concluded an intensive three-day exploration of ways to strengthen African evangelism and education by forming an All Africa Baptist Fellowship.

"The AABF will weld Baptist churches of Africa together in a strong fellowship," said Samuel T. Ola Akande of Nigeria. "It will enable us to carry out evangelism with greater force and increase partnership and exchange of ideas and missionaries among African nations.

Noting that two previous attempts to form the fellowship had failed, Joao Makondekwa of Angola said, "The formation of the AABF is historic because Baptists of Africa now have a body to serve as a platform for an exchange of ideas for spreading the gospel. All things have their time in history. The time has come for the AABF."

Following the formation meeting at Brackenhurst Baptist International Conference Centre, the General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, approved the AABF as its fifth regional fellowship. It also voted \$15,000 to help launch it, elected Akande as BWA regional associate secretary for Africa and set a joint BWA-AABF day on the first Sunday in February 1983, with an offering to go half to the BWA budget and half to the AABF.

The BWA had worked with African leaders to encourage the formation of the new fellowship and sponsored the preceding evangelism and educational conference at Brackenhurst, where more than 130 persons from 27 nations explored evangelism in Africa.

Forty-one voting delegates at the AABF formation meeting elected Akande, general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, as AABF general secretary-treasurer and approved location of the AABF office in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Makondekwa, general secretary of the Bible Society in Angola, Luanda, paid tribute to the work of missionaries in an address following his election as AABF president.

"Sometimes missionaries doubted the work would grow, but out of their labor, good will and dedication, the churches of Africa have grown," Makondekwa said. "Increasing numbers are turning to Christ. Someone is always behind things to make the ball roll. The missionaries have labored many years in Africa with the belief that God sent them. We are here today because of them."

Besides Akande and Makondekwa, the AABF elected two vice presidents, Derek Mpinga, general secretary of the Baptist Convention of Simbabwe, Gwelo, and Solomon Kimuyu, assistant general secretary of the Baptist Convention of Kenya, Nairobi; two associate secretaries, Wellington Selebano, moderator of the Baptist Convention of South Africa, Krugersdorp, Soweto, South Africa, and Kikama Kividi, assistant director of evangelism for the Western Baptist Community of Zaire, Kinshasha; and two at-large executive committee members, Osadolor Imasogie, president of Nigerian Baptists and principal of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho, and Wilson Chiko, general secretary of the Baptist Convention of Kenya, Nairobi.

-30-

Families Should Be Conscious
Of "Birthrights," Expert Says

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
7/21/82

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Christian families need to deal with the reality that in almost every family, one of the children receives the parents' "blessing" or "birthright," even though the parents may not do so consciously, a family life expert says.

-more-

Karl Olsson, a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church (Swedish), author and authority on family life, spoke to Southern Baptist chaplains at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center during Home Missions Week.

As Southern Baptists begin a three-year emphasis on strengthening families, Baptists need to be aware that the biblical tradition of giving one child "the blessing" still exists unconsciously in most families today, Olsson said.

The unconscious "blessing" can cause rivalry, resentment, authoritative control taking, psychological problems among family members, and conflict within the family, Olsson said.

It Baptists are going to be effective in strengthening families, they must deal with this natural, human tendency with love, understanding and sensitivity, Olsson added.

Among the families in the Old Testament, there was almost always the "chosen son" (and the "unchosen" son) who received the father's blessing and birthright," Olsson said. The classic example is the story of Jacob stealing the birthright from his brother, Esau, who was "the chosen one" in the family. Another classic example is the story of Joseph and his "coat of many colors," Olsson said. In the New Testament, the best example is the story of the prodigal son who was "the chosen one" and the elder brother who was "unchosen," he said.

Even today, in many families parents "choose" one child to inherit certain family heirlooms or items with sentimental value. This often causes resentment among the other children who feel the brother or sister is loved more by the parents, and granted special privileges, he said.

Olsson said this natural tendency among parents today is not necessarily bad, "it is just human." But it does sometimes cause problems.

To deal with it, Olsson said parents should show love to the "unchosen" and seek to assure them, "I'm going to give you as much love as I can possibly give you." But they also need to recognize "the blessing is a mystery that is beyond control," and to "accept that which they cannot change."

Another way to deal with such family problems is to invite all family members into what Olsson called "the family of grace," the church, where the separation between the blessed and the unblessed is transcended in Christ, and where all are spiritual equals.

Although Olsson said there is no data to back his hypothesis of the "blessed" and "unblessed," he believes many pastors and religious leaders turn to the church and ministry because they are the "unblessed" ones in their families and find their "blessing" by ministry in the church.

Olsson called for emphasis in the family and the church on "loving and levelling" in which all members of the family are loved and accepted as equals.

In an interview, Olsson said many of his concepts about the family were developed in personal conversations with Myron Madden, a Southern Baptist who is director of pastoral care and chaplaincy at Southern Baptist Hospital in New Orleans. Olsson and Madden have been friends for 38 years and were chaplains together during World War II.

In 1972, both Madden and Olsson wrote books on the concept of the blessing; Madden's "The Power to Bless," and Olsson's, "Come to the Party," (based on the story of the Prodigal son).

Olsson said another Southern Baptist who "changed my life" was Howard Butt, who invited him to Laity Lodge in Leakey, Texas, in 1967 for a conference that ultimately led Olsson to resign as president of North Park College and Seminary in Chicago and begin leading conferences and workshops for churches and religious groups both in the United States and Sweden.

Ben Loring Leaves RTVC
For Oklahoma Pastorate

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Ben E. Loring Jr. has resigned as vice president of counseling services for the Radio and Television Commission to become pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Okla., effective Aug. 1.

The Dallas native joined the RTVC in 1980 to supervise the agency's counseling program and develop additional ministries to people responding to RTVC programs. He was responsible for the telephone counseling strategy used for "Invitation to Life" and other RTVC evangelistic programs.

Before joining the Commission, Loring was director of program planning for the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1973-80. He was minister of evangelism at First Baptist Church, Houston, 1970-72, and a fulltime evangelist before that.

Loring is a graduate of Baylor University (BA-79) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv-72, DMin-75).

-30-

First, They Learn to Read--
Dysons Teach So They Can Reach

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press
7/21/82

ZARIA, Nigeria (BP)--A stack of unread gospel tracts changed Bert Dyson's life.

On a weekend witnessing trip to a village near the Niger Baptist College where he taught, Bert, his wife, Ruth, and some of the college students had passed out tracts to those who seemed most interested in their message.

When they returned a few weeks later and stopped for their customary visit with the local chief, Bert saw the tracts stacked neatly on the floor.

"I was probably a bit vexed as I asked the chief why the tracts were being kept in his house," Dyson recalls but "I will never forget his answer: 'My people are keeping them here until someone comes to teach us to read.'

"From that day God has not allowed my life to be the same," he admits.

For the first time, the Southern Baptist missionary couple from Texas and Tennessee became aware of the masses of illiterate adults too old for school but with most of their lives ahead of them. As they read about literacy work in other parts of the world, the Dysons realized that Nigeria, where about one-fifth of all Africans live, was ready for literacy evangelism.

Today churches are teaching people to read, and literacy evangelism has become a major tool for evangelism and church growth, not only in Nigeria, but across West Africa.

Success stories are many. Most recently, literacy training has led to a breakthrough in reaching the Maguzawa tribe of Northern Nigeria. About five years ago, a member of this tribe, Dawuda Bazai, became a Christian. Soon afterward he learned to read and began reading the Bible to others in his tribe and teaching them to read. He has used literacy teaching as a tool for establishing Baptist congregations in at least six villages in the past three years while a student at the Baptist Pastor's School, Kaduna.

"Frank Laubach, the pioneer in literacy missions, used to say that each word we teach an illiterate adult to read is like a thread of love tying his heart and the teacher's heart together," Dyson points out.

Dyson once requested those in a group of adults who had their lives saved by surgery to raise their hands, then asked if anyone remembered the name of his doctor. No one could.

Next he identified those who had learned to read as adults and asked if they remembered their teachers' names. They responded in a chorus, "Oh, we can never forget the name of the person who taught us to read."

-more-

Today more than 15,000 students are learning to read in Nigeria alone, and Dyson has advised missionaries who've begun literacy work in other West African nations. He also cooperates with the Nigerian government and with literacy workers of other affiliations in West Africa.

For years the Dysons carried literacy to Nigeria by packing their cots and camping stools and traveling from village to village. They provided literacy classes in exchange for meals during their stay.

But today they spend most of their time preparing literacy literature while Nigerians teach and organize classes in the churches. Today Nigerian Baptists are naming literacy superintendents for each of the nation's Baptist conferences, and they provide more than \$30,000 a year to their Adult Education Department, which Dyson heads until a Nigerian leader can be found.

The Nigerian government has launched a mass literacy campaign for 1982 to bring every adult citizen to the level of functional literacy and Dyson is urging Nigerian Baptists to take part fully.

The reason, he says is simple: "Both individual churches and our Nigerian Baptist Convention seem to hold their head higher for the fact that they are not only teaching their membership to read the Bible, but also are becoming known through Africa as a body of believers who care enough to invest in offering 'Life more abundantly' to the whole man in the whole community."

-30-

Adapted from *The Commission*, magazine of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

(BP) Photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.
