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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 21, 1982

82-133

Draper Names Key  
Committee LeadersBy Dan Martin 

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) -- A Texas pastor and an Ohio denominational executive have been named to chair two key committees for the 1983 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Pittsburgh.

SBC President James T. Draper Jr. announced the appointments during the September meeting of the Executive Committee, following through on a post-election pledge for "openness" and that he will be a peacemaker in the strife-ridden denomination.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Tex., also named seven other denominational leaders to committee posts and promised that he will name the other members of the key committees by Jan. 1, far in advance of the June meeting of the 13.8 million member denomination.

The president also said he has requested that the committee on boards report be released 60 days in advance of the June annual session, and has received an affirmative answer from committee chairman, Charles Stanley of Atlanta.

Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church of Austin, Texas, was named to chair the committee on committees, and Tal Bonham, executive secretary of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, was named as chairman of the resolutions committee.

Draper also named three members of the Executive Committee to serve on the resolutions committee, as required by the constitution and bylaws. They are LeRay Fowler, pastor of West University Baptist Church of Houston; Thurmond George, pastor of First Baptist Church of Gilroy, Calif., and Lois Wenger, a member of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla.

Jere Mitchell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Fayetteville, Ark., was named to chair the credentials committee, and James H. Landes, retiring executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas, will be chairman of the tellers committee.

Draper named two parliamentarians for the 1983 annual meeting in Pittsburgh: James Semple, pastor of First Baptist Church of Paris, Texas, and Jack Johnson, executive secretary of the Arizona Baptist Convention.

Draper said all of the appointees "represent a very strong commitment to the Southern Baptist Convention," and included background information containing the level of giving to the denomination's unified giving plan, the Cooperative Program in his announcement of the appointments.

He said Smith is a former president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and has led the Austin church to give more than \$275,000 to Cooperative Program causes this year. Bonham, he noted, is a former secretary of evangelism for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, former president of the Arkansas Baptist Convention, and led his last pastorate, First Baptist Church of Pine Bluff, to be in the top 25 churches of the Arkansas convention in Cooperative Program giving.

He said the remainder of his appointments--including 51 persons to the committee on committees and six to the resolutions committee--will be "made by Jan. 1. I am doing this because I believe there is no reason not to do it. I do not expect you to applaud all of them but you will know who they are and I am doing it as quickly as I can."

"The reason it will take until then (Jan. 1) is that I am calling all of them myself. I am also checking with associational missionaries and state executive directors because I do not want to appoint any ringers...people who do not qualify as cooperating Southern Baptists," he said.

Draper's early release of the nominations is in contrast to the practice followed last year by Bailey E. Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., who declined to make his nominations known until the opening day of the New Orleans convention.

SBC bylaws specify only that a president must announce the appointments on the opening day, but do not preclude early release of the information.

Draper said in making the selections, he received recommendations from state convention executive secretaries and presidents, individual Baptists and from the two vice presidents who serve with him, but specified that the "decision is ultimately mine. I will not be bound by any of these procedures, but all of these steps have been made prayerfully and each suggestion has received and will continue to receive careful consideration."

He noted the two vice presidents -- John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church of Shreveport, La., and Gene Garrison pastor of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City -- have "given up to this point approval of the appointments...."

Sullivan, also a member of the Executive Committee, told Baptist Press he had "been in on" the selection process "since the beginning."

"The ones he appointed, I gave him suggestions, along with others. I did not make any specific recommendation but they all came out of suggestions we came up with together," Sullivan said, adding he has called both Smith and Bonham to "tell them I am pleased (with the selections)."

Draper said he has requested that Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, release the report of the committee on boards 60 days in advance of the 1983 annual meeting.

He said he is requesting that the report be released early so any "concerns and unhappiness about any nominee be brought back to committee so the committee can reconsider it before bringing it to the convention floor. This could save us the embarrassment we have suffered the past several years."

He referred to the past two conventions in which nominees suggested by the committee have been challenged from the floor and replaced. Draper noted Stanley "has given me an affirmative response."

In another far-reaching suggestion, Draper recommended a six-point program to improve the resolutions process at the annual meeting, which last year saw 47 resolutions presented and 21 adopted during the three-day session.

The proposals include having the resolutions committee meet prior to the annual meeting to "get acquainted," study all resolutions adopted in the past 10 years, review anticipated resolutions in advance, hear presentations by agency and commission heads, that denominational news media request resolutions be sent to the committee chairman at least 30 days in advance of the convention and that the resolutions be considered "first come, first served" to encourage people to submit the resolutions early.

At the convention, Draper said he estimated "45 minutes to an hour and a half" could be saved by having resolutions simply brought to the platform without having each presenter take time at the microphone.

Nighttime Intruder Brings Ruin,  
Tennessee Baptists Provide Help

By Charlie Warren

TRENTON, Tenn. (BP)--Johnny Floyd, a 68-year-old black man, woke up late in the night to the sound of heavy rain, loud claps of thunder and a strange rumbling sound.

As something struck the front of his small frame house he fumbled for his .38-caliber pistol and opened the door. The intruder, the Forked Deer River, rushed into his living room and began to take possession. A thief had come but Floyd and his pistol were powerless to stop the culprit. "Scared to death," he waded through knee-deep water toward the town square and waited out the night in the backseat of a car.

By morning, water was five feet deep in his home and Floyd spent the day wandering around talking with other Trenton flood victims. When the water receded, a layer of mud covered everything in his home and he wandered into a parking lot where Southern Baptists were setting up the Tennessee Baptist Convention's disaster van.

Civil Defense officials estimated 30 percent of Trenton was underwater and damage to hundreds of homes and about 50 businesses was more than \$4 million with crop damages adding another \$11 million to the total.

The Baptist diaster relief team discovered many victims were unable to get to the van or were fearful of leaving their homes unprotected so the men drove into several areas, delivering meals. The team served about 800 meals, not counting coffee and donuts.

The unit always carries Bibles to give to people who need them and the volunteers took advantage of other opportunities for spiritual witness--sharing Christ, offering prayer or simply saying "God bless you." They also had opportunities to tell people who Southern Baptists are and what they believe.

After a second night in the backseat of a car, Floyd returned to the van for a breakfast of coffee and donuts. At noon, still unable to prepare what little food in his home that hadn't been destroyed, he came back to find a well-balanced meal of chicken and dumplings, corn, fruit cocktail and fruit-flavored drink.

Returning for the evening meal Floyd encountered a longtime acquaintance serving plates: Walter Hunt, a member of First Baptist Church, Trenton and a retired county judge. Floyd and several of his 12 children had faced Hunt in court many times through the years and Floyd had been sentenced to jail by Hunt.

Yet Floyd spoke of Hunt as a long-time friend. "He helped us lots of times," Floyd confided. "He took time to talk to us and tried to straighten things out."

Now, years later, the retired judge was once again offering help, dipping hot food for his friend in need. "When people are so good to you, it makes you want to cry," Floyd said, tears welling up in his weary eyes.

Turning to Archie King, Tennessee Baptist Brotherhood director and coordinator of the diaster unit," Floyd said, "I sure do appreciate what you folks are doing for us."

-30-

Baptist Beauties Use  
Pageant For Witness

Baptist Press  
9/21/82

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (BP)--Two young women deeply involved in their Southern Baptist churches were contestants at the 1982 Miss America pageant. Though neither won the title both are convinced God was glorified through their participation.

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Desiree Daniels, Miss Tennessee, came within one point of being crowned Miss America. "I thought the Lord wanted me to win," she admitted. "I had prayed, 'Lord if you want me to have it, let me win; if you do not want me to have it, do not let me win.'" When emcee Gary Collins called her name as first runner-up, "I was disappointed but then I realized whatever happened was His will."

Jaleigh Jeffers, Miss Illinois, also went to Atlantic City hoping to win, but "all week long I had a peace from God. I prepared and did my best." Being in the Miss America competition was quite a jump for someone who unsuccessfully tried out for cheerleader for six consecutive years in junior high and high school.

Daniels is a member of Central Baptist Church in Chattanooga and is active in the church choir, handbell ensemble, and age-group activities and is also a member of the Baptist Student Union at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga.

She won the swimsuit competition and feels she did well in the interview with judges where she discussed the need to have stricter penalties for those driving under the influence of alcohol. Her father was killed in an accident caused by a drunken driver.

Jeffers, who has grown up in Mt. Carmel First Baptist Church, was one of the featured speakers at the Illinois state Acteen Conference the week after the pageant. She challenged 650 girls at the conference, "not to limit yourselves--God doesn't put dreams in our hearts that can't come true."

She recalled that one reason she didn't make cheerleader was, "I refused to sacrifice my morals just to be popular. I was never part of the 'in crowd' during high school and I remember with gratitude how my parents and others started opening our church on Friday nights after ballgames so we could go somewhere to have fun and still live our beliefs."

Daniels expressed a thought that appears to be shared by both women. "The Lord can have a purpose for Christians in beauty contests," she said. "For example Cheryl Prewitt (Blackwood), a former Miss America, was able to spend the whole year telling of her Christian beliefs. I don't think pageants are egotistical, cheesecake or unspiritual. I know it was the Lord's will for me."