



BAPTIST PRESS

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November 8, 1982

82-158

Reports Scarce After Coup Topples Upper Volta Ruler

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Indirect reports indicated conditions in Upper Volta were returning to normal after a Nov. 7 coup overthrew the government of Col. Saye Zerbo.

A disruption of communications with the capital city of Ouagadougou had prevented contact with Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers as of Nov. 8.

U.S. government officials say they have received no indications of any American deaths or injuries.

John Mills, Foreign Mission Board director for west Africa, said the government officials told him the American School in Ouagadougou was scheduled to reopen Nov. 9 and the airport was expected to reopen soon.

Mills said reports from other sources indicated business in the capital, including lower level government offices, was going on as usual Nov. 8.

News reports indicated disgruntled soldiers overthrew the Zerbo government and formed a junta.

Southern Baptists had 20 missionaries and 25 to 35 volunteers in the country at the time of the coup. Eight missionaries and three volunteers are stationed in Ouagadougou. The remaining volunteers and missionary couples are working in Diabo Circle where the Tennessee Baptist Convention is cooperating with missionaries and Voltiac Baptists in a development project encompassing several villages.

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(A listing of the missionaries and their home states is being mailed to Baptist state newspapers by the Richmond Bureau of Baptist Press.)

Elections Dim Chances For
School Prayer, Abortion

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
11/8/82

WASHINGTON (BP)—Abortion and public school prayer legislation—unsuccessful in the current Congress—apparently face even stiffer resistance in the 98th Congress set to convene in January.

A New York Times/CBS survey comparing views of present House members with those of the new Congress, as well as post election comments by politicians on both sides of these emotionally-volatile issues, underscore the diminished chances of enacting such social legislation.

While the New York Times/CBS survey showed 51 percent of the present House members oppose a constitutional amendment permitting organized prayer in public schools, that opposition jumps to 56 percent for the new Congress with 77 percent of the new freshmen members against the measure.

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On abortion the survey found opponents of a constitutional amendment allowing states to prohibit abortion increasing from 54 percent in the present Congress to 58 percent in the new one. Nearly three-fourths of the freshmen members oppose the proposed amendment.

The Nov. 2 elections lessened the chances of President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment on school prayer, according to an aide to the House sponsor of the measure, Rep. Thomas N. Kindness, R-Ohio. Though the Ohio congressman plans to reintroduce the measure in the next Congress his aide told Baptist Press, "The far right agenda has been de-emphasized by the election results."

The prayer amendment's chances in the new Senate are uncertain, but don't appear to be improved because the election made little change in that body.

"Our emphasis needs to be on fiscal matters," said an aide to Sen. J. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., chairman of the Senate Judiciary committee, who has promised President Reagan to re-introduce the prayer amendment in the next Congress.

While Thurmond fully supports the prayer measure the aide said his priorities in the new Congress are the balanced budget amendment and the crime package.

The fate of a constitutional amendment on abortion pushed by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, also remains uncertain. The amendment was withheld from floor consideration this fall after Senate Majority Leader Howard H. Baker Jr., R-Tenn., agreed to give Hatch ample time to debate the measure in the next Congress.

Asked about prospects for the abortion amendment in the 98th Congress, Hatch's top aide on the subcommittee on the constitution said it is "too early to say."

In a post election press conference, Senate Republican campaign chairman Bob Packwood of Oregon said he would advise colleagues not to bring up controversial social issues such as school prayer and abortion during the next Congress.

Pointing to the 1984 elections when Republicans will have more Senate seats on the line than will Democrats, Packwood warned that Republican candidates could not win on the school prayer and abortion issues.

"These are major concerns of a small number of people," he said.

However, one political consultant who supports the school prayer and abortion legislation downplayed the election's damage to these causes.

While admitting that anti-abortion and pro-school prayer forces lost ground in the House, Edward E. McAteer, president of The Religious Roundtable and a Baptist layman from Memphis, Tenn., said they "came out stronger" in the Senate.

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Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptists
Plan New Convention for 1984

Baptist Press
11/8/82

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (BP)—Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptists, during the 13th annual session at Northwest Baptist Church, launched a "Double-in-a-Decade" emphasis and looked toward organization as a regional convention to begin operation Jan. 1, 1984.

Focus of the meeting was the "Double-in-a-Decade" emphasis, the Minnesota-Wisconsin expression of Bold Mission Thrust. By strengthening present congregations and starting 120 new chapels they hope to double the overall SBC impact in the region by the end of 1992. This will be accomplished through linking relationships of Minnesota-Wisconsin and Texas churches. Texas has been sponsoring conventions for Minnesota-Wisconsin since 1956.

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The convention noted plans for organization as a regional convention next Nov. 11-12 occurs 30 years after the first SBC congregation began in Madison, Wis. Executive Director Otha Winningham outlined requirements for recognition as a SEC convention and discussed Home Mission Board guidelines to assure "a healthy birth" and financial stability in a new convention.

Latest reports show 11,984 members in 70 churches and 36 chapels. Sunday School enrollment showed a 14 percent increase last year. There were 856 baptisms.

Messengers adopted a 1983 budget of \$1,072,000, up more than 10 percent from 1982. Twenty-five percent of the \$176,000 contributions anticipated from fellowship churches will be forwarded for SEC causes, the same percentage as last year.

Tom Biles, pastor of Northwest Baptist Church, Milwaukee, was re-elected president. James Stephens, pastor, Roseville Baptist Church, Roseville, Minn., was named first vice president and Frank Hamby, pastor, Highland Crest Baptist Church, Green Bay, Wis., was elected second vice president.

Resolutions endorsed the "substance and thrust of the 'Double-in-a-Decade'" and expressed appreciation for volunteers serving in various capacities within the fellowship area. One resolution recognized "spirit and sacrifice and continued faithfulness of bivocational pastors and families" and encouraged recognition of them as the "real heroes of the faith" in pioneer missions. Currently 38 Minnesota-Wisconsin pastors are serving bivocationally.

The 1983 meeting, during which a regional convention will be organized, is set for Nov. 11-12 at Southtown Baptist Church, Bloomington, Minn.

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Penn-South Jersey
Encourages CP Gain

Baptist Press
11/8/82

MECHANICSBURG, Pa. (BP)—Messengers to the annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey adopted a resolution calling for the churches and chapels of the convention to increase gifts to worldwide mission endeavors.

The resolution, presented during the meeting of the convention Nov. 4-5 at the Country and Town Baptist Church in Mechanicsburg, called on congregations to establish a goal of increasing gifts through the Cooperative Program by at least one percent.

The 218 messengers adopted a \$1,572,632 budget, an increase of \$150,000 over the 1982 budget. Of the budget, the congregations of the convention will contribute \$434,500. The budget recommends that 26.5 per cent of the contributions will be sent to support the worldwide missions, evangelism and educational enterprises of the Southern Baptist Convention, the same percentage as last year.

Messengers also re-elected Marshall Crawley, pastor of Delran Baptist Chapel in Delran, N.J., as president.

Howard Girard, a Mission Service Corps volunteer serving as liaison for the Pennsylvania-South Jersey-Florida Partnership reported that 53 churches are linked with Florida churches.

During the convention, messengers were told of plans to engage in a saturation evangelism effort in Western Pennsylvania prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Pittsburgh in June 1983.

The 1983 annual meeting of the Pennsylvania-South Jersey convention will be Nov. 3-5 at Paoli Baptist Church in Paoli, Pa.

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Northern Plains Convention
Plans Toward New Units

MANDAN, N.D. (BP)—Messengers to the Northern Plains Baptist Convention planned toward new units—both new congregations and new state conventions—as they met at Baptist Temple in Mandan, Oct. 27-28.

The convention—currently composed of four states—will divide into two conventions next year when the Wyoming Baptist Convention is constituted. Also, messengers officially recognized the Montana Baptist Fellowship and encouraged the formation of a Dakota Baptist Fellowship, encompassing North and South Dakota.

The Wyoming fellowship, made up of 54 churches and 14 church-type missions, will organize as a convention during the Northern Plains annual meeting, Oct. 19-20, 1983.

The Montana Fellowship, composed of 58 congregations, has been meeting several years but was not officially recognized until this year. Larry Gandy, pastor of Rimrock Baptist Church in Billings, is president of the fellowship.

During the 1982 convention representatives of Dakotas churches initiated a Dakota fellowship, naming a committee to be made up of the moderators of the four associations in South Dakota and the moderator and vice moderator of the two North Dakota associations.

Informally, the Montana and Dakota fellowships will form into state conventions when both reach sufficient numerical and financial strength to support separate units. Until then the three states will continue to work together as the Northern Plains convention.

With the planned division into separate conventions, one convention observer commented: "We will probably be the only Southern Baptist state convention to dissolve."

The convention also continued to emphasize new units in Focus 84, a plan to start 84 church-type missions by 1984. At the meeting, 26 new units which have been formed since Jan. 1, 1982, were recognized, including one which was formed on New Year's Day.

With the organizing of Wyoming into a state convention, adjustments were made in the state convention budget, including ratification of a decision not to replace John Thomason, who has been director of the division of teaching and training. Thomason has been named area director for the Wyoming fellowship.

When Wyoming organizes, additional budgetary adjustments will have to be made since Wyoming churches contribute 52 per cent of the Cooperative Program budget income for the Northern Plains convention.

The new budget adopted reflects economic uncertainties in the nation, calling for expenditures of \$1,290,082, of which \$510,575, will come from the 203 congregations of the convention. The expected revenue is \$18,000 below 1982, because many of the churches are in the energy corridor, which is impacted by the economic downturn.

Of the budget, 17 percent will be sent to support worldwide missions causes through the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program, the same percentage as last year. The dollar amount, however, will be less, because of the lower estimated revenue.

Messengers adopted a resolution which took cognizance of the formation of the fellowships, but urged that the "major emphasis in all areas be the winning of the lost to Christ and starting new work."

Roger Hill, pastor of First Baptist Church of Three Forks, Mont., was re-elected president. Ernest Hinze, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Casper, Wyo., was named first vice president, and Al Small, a layman from Sioux City, S.D., second vice president.

The 1983 meeting will be at First Southern Baptist Church in Casper, Wyo., Oct. 19-20, and is planned as a celebration of "our last big meeting together."

Chicken Contest Helps
Churches Feather S.S. Nests

By Orville Scott

KELLER, Texas (BP)—To push the Texas Baptist Sunday School high attendance campaign, two churches near Dallas had a "chicken" contest.

First Baptist Church, Keller, challenged First Baptist Church, Grapevine, to have at least 65 percent of Sunday School enrollment present on Great Day in the Morning Oct. 31.

The losing pastor would dress like a chicken and push the winner down the main street of his hometown in a wheelbarrow. Enthusiasm kept building as the time drew nearer.

"Neither church was going to chicken out," said Thomas E. Merritt, pastor of Keller. Each church also presented a dozen eggs to the rival pastor "to go with the chicken suit he would wear."

In what some may call an amazing coincidence, but what Pastor George Clerihew of Grapevine called "God taking care of his preachers," the churches tied, each having 72 percent of Sunday School enrollment present.

A member of First Baptist Church, Grapevine, observed, "We had people standing in the halls because there was not room to get them all into the classrooms." Two members of the Keller church responded similarly, "Our building was 'busting,' but it proved we can provide space for them. God will make the way."

The Grapevine church had 782 people in Sunday School contrasted to a previous high attendance of 555. The Keller church had 665 people compared to a previous high of 465. The church also celebrated a record budget offering of \$9,200.

The pastors saw only one recourse to the tie. Both dressed in white chicken suits—complete with beaks and red cockscombs—and took turns pushing each other in the wheelbarrow to the cheers of a large crowd on Keller's main street Sunday afternoon.

Merritt and Clerihew both said they would not mind dressing in chicken outfits anytime they can get people to church on such a scale.

Terry Wilson, Grapevine's minister of education said, "We both came up with a golden egg."

Merritt said, "I think both churches will experience higher attendance from here on."

Excitement of the church members was expressed by teen-ager Carolyn Fadely of Grapevine who said, "I think through God all things are possible, even goals you thought you couldn't reach."

Churches statewide shattered the high attendance day goal with 695,953 people in Sunday School. The 1982 goal was 656,565 and the previous all-time attendance mark for the special day was 656,178.