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December 16, 1982

82-182

Tellers Committee
Named For 1983 SBC

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) -- The Tellers Committee for the 1983 Southern Baptist Convention in Pittsburgh has been announced by SBC President James T. Draper Jr. and Registration Secretary Lee Porter of Nashville.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, previously had announced that James H. Landes, retiring executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, would be chairman of the tellers, who are charged with tabulation of all votes taken during the convention.

Bylaw 10, Section 4 of the SBC Constitution requires that the "president, in consultation with the registration secretary, shall appoint the tellers."

Named to the committee are three state executive directors, George E. Bagley of Alabama, Ellis Bush of Pennsylvania-South Jersey, and Roy Owen of the Northern Plains.

Also to serve on the tellers body are Frank R. Campbell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Statesville, N.C., and president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina; James F. Yates, pastor of First Baptist Church of Yazoo City, Miss., and president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention; R. Kirby Godsey, president of Mercer University in Macon, Ga.;

Duke K. McCall, chancellor of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; Dorothy E. Sample, president of the Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the SBC, of Flint, Mich.; James L. Sullivan, retired president of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, and former president of the SBC; Mrs. Clayton Teague, president of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention WMU; and John J. Hurt, editor emeritus of the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of Texas Baptists, in Dallas.

Draper called the Tellers Committee an "extremely important committee. Even in the midst of questions about the casting of ballots, no one has ever doubted the integrity of the tabulation of the ballots. It is important that we maintain the highest degree of integrity."

He said he had consulted with Porter about the persons to serve on the Tellers Committee, and informed the two vice presidents--John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church of Shreveport, La., first vice president, and Gene Garrison, pastor of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City--about the appointments.

Garrison said he "feels very good" about the appointments to the Tellers Committee. "They all seem to be solid in denominational support," he said.

Draper told Baptist Press he probably will not be able to announce the other key committees--resolutions, credentials and committee on committees--by Jan. 1 as he earlier had promised. He said, however, that he plans to meet with Garrison and Sullivan soon and hopes to be able to make the appointments early in January.

"When I said I would do it by Jan. 1, I didn't realize I would be out of the office so much. The trip to the Middle East also slowed me down, but hopefully I will be able to make the appointments by the first week in January," he said.

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Graham Calls For 'Man Of God'
To Minister To Aching World

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham spoke frankly about the brevity of life and urged fellow Southern Baptists to redouble efforts to "redeem the time" during the first Congress on Evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In two keynote addresses, Graham repeatedly noted the "urgency of the hour" and called for a recommitment to the gospel in an age marked by the threat of nuclear holocaust.

Graham, a member of First Baptist Church, Dallas, addressed 200 Southern Baptist vocational evangelists, who were joined by hundreds of seminary students, faculty and staff members. It was the 64-year-old evangelist's first appearance before a Southern Baptist audience since the Southern Baptist Convention last June.

In his second address, Graham spoke of "total revolution, worldwide." He said the revolution's many facets--technological, political, social and religious--affect the lives of people everywhere.

In such context, "the most important work in the world is...doing what God has called (you) to do and doing it faithfully," he said.

Graham described the "man of God" who is needed to minister in such a world. Such a person "will have an experience with God in Christ," he claimed. He cited examples of religious leaders who were uncertain of their salvation until they had vivid experiences. Afterwards, their ministries multiplied.

"Make sure you know Christ as savior," he warned.

Graham added the "man of God" will be one who has "heeded a call of God to ministry." Such a person, he said, will lead a "holy, disciplined life," avoiding potential pitfalls such as pride, money and immorality.

He said this person also will be characterized by a "compassionate and sensitive social conscience." In his earlier sermon, Graham lamented the world-wide buildup of nuclear armaments. "Is World War III in the making?" he asked. "I have to say yes, unless we pray and do something about it.

"If ever there was a time for the gospel, it is now. Man has to change, and only the gospel can do that."

In both messages, Graham emphasized the need for strong, consistent devotional life. "If I didn't have a systematic devotional life, I couldn't go on," he admitted.

He specifically counseled seminary students to "get all the studying you can," noting "if I had it to do over again, I would study more and speak less."

"But," he added, "also study the Word of God for your own soul. Those who know the scriptures are the ones with power today."

Graham visited the Louisville seminary as the Lizette Kimbrough McCall lecturer, named for the mother of chancellor Duke K. McCall.

Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt announced the congress, sponsored by the McCall Foundation for World Evangelism, will be an annual event at the seminary. Next year it will focus on pastoral evangelism, with segments for both pastors and vocational evangelists. In 1984 the meeting will explore lay evangelism.

Alcohol Problems Call
For Christian Action

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Christians must wake up to the devastation alcohol and its related problems are causing in the lives of people in America today, a former professional baseball pitcher and a Southern Baptist layman are convinced.

Don Newcombe, who pitched the Los Angeles Dodgers to five world championships in the 1950s and Tommy Payne of Greenville, N.C., recently spoke to a group of Sunday School Board editors and consultants about the need to get the attention of Southern Baptist church leaders and members. Newcombe and Payne are consultants for the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse.

"We've done a lousy job in the churches of dealing with alcohol," said Payne. "People are reluctant to go to their pastors or Sunday School teachers with a problem about alcohol. And yet this problem is eroding the family structure and the church."

Newcombe, whose baseball career was cut short by alcoholism, noted an estimated 17 million Americans today are alcoholics. Statistics indicate each alcoholic directly relates to at least four other persons. "This means more than 70 million Americans are affected or infected with alcoholism," he said.

In response, Harry Piland, director of the board's Sunday School department, said, "With so many issues clamoring for attention, alcoholism sometimes gets pushed to the background. It is time that we gave it priority attention."

Bob Dean, curriculum specialist in the board's office of church programs and services, noted, "The producers of beverage alcohol have been all too successful in convincing consumers that their products are an essential part of the good life. Many Southern Baptist churches want to counter this deception with the truth. Sunday School Board materials will provide help for churches in achieving this goal."

Newcombe, who said that he drank to everybody's health until he ruined his own, began to try to solve his problems in 1966 after his wife Billie threatened to take their three children and file for divorce. "I got down on my knees and I swore to God I would never drink again," he recalled.

After enduring withdrawal from alcohol Newcombe began picking up the pieces of his life--rebuilding family and social relationships, starting a business and becoming a Christian.

"I'm proud to stand before anybody and tell them I'm an alcoholic because I'm a recovered alcoholic," said Newcombe, who has not had a drink in 16 years.

"I have my sanity back, my physical condition back and I have God in my life. I feel good and I feel clean," said Newcombe, who has spoken about the problems of alcohol in 47 states.

He was also instrumental in helping St. Louis Cardinal catcher Darrell Porter overcome his battle with alcoholism. Porter was named Most Valuable Player in the 1982 World Series.

Newcombe, also director of community relations for the Dodgers, said, "Speaking has been a gratifying experience and part of my therapy to show me I can live my life without alcohol."

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Baptist Support Urged
For Sentencing Reform Act

By Duann Kier

Baptist Press
12/16/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A Christian citizenship specialist is calling on Southern Baptists to support criminal justice legislation two U.S. senators plan to introduce during this session or the next session of Congress.

Larry Braidfoot, general counsel and director of research for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, has written Sens. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., and William Armstrong, R-Colo., in support of their efforts.

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"The Sentencing Improvement Act which you have indicated you will introduce is a major step in the direction of correcting the many flaws of our system of criminal justice," he told the senators. "I applaud your courage and your statesmanship in perceiving the seriousness of this threat and the importance of dealing with this grave issue."

Braidfoot said the Christian Life Commission is calling on Southern Baptists to support The Sentencing Improvement Act because it is designed to improve federal criminal sentencing by imprisoning dangerous and violent offenders and diverting nonviolent offenders to restitution or community service programs.

The Commission joins former White House counsel Chuck Colson and Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., who have both voiced strong support for such reform.

"Incarceration is appropriate punishment for violent, habitual or professional offenders," Braidfoot told the senators, "but other forms of punishment are more appropriate for nonviolent offenders." Braidfoot stated that automatically imprisoning nonviolent offenders is of little benefit to the victim, society or the rehabilitation of the criminal.

"Victims of crime receive no restitution for their sufferings but rather pay taxes for the upkeep of those who have done them wrong," he said. "Nonviolent offenders are incarcerated with murderers and rapists and leave prison in much worse shape than when they entered."

Braidfoot pointed out America imprisons more individuals than any other nation except the Soviet Union and South Africa, resulting in dangerously overcrowded conditions.

The Sentencing Improvement would call for restitution and community service programs based on the victim's loss, the relative seriousness of the offense and the offender's criminal history, employment obligations and ability to pay.

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HMB Retirees Honored
For Role In Home Missions

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
12/16/82

ATLANTA (BP)--More than 100 Southern Baptist Home Mission Board employees and friends paid tribute to two retiring board staffers at a dinner honoring them for their contribution to home missions.

Pitts Hughes and Bill Wilson were recognized for their work with the HMB's special mission ministries department. Each received rocking chairs with engraved plaques expressing appreciation for their work.

William G. Tanner, HMB president, said Hughes was "a Christian lady in every respect who can laugh at herself, weep with others and love God." Tanner described Wilson as "a man never afraid to dream or try a dream" and added that Wilson "didn't just build churches but helped build people."

A native of Greer, S.C., Hughes has been a field consultant for the special mission ministries department since 1972, working primarily with US-2 missionaries and college students. Before coming to the board she was assistant dean of students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. She also served as associate director of student work for Tennessee Baptists and has been a campus minister in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

A native of Decatur, Ga., Wilson, a former landscape contractor and nurseryman in Decatur, has served as consultant for Christian Service Corps since 1973. In addition to enlisting Baptist volunteers for mission projects, Wilson has participated in volunteer mission trips, working in language missions in California and church extension in Wyoming.

M. Wendell Belew, director of th HMB's missions ministries division, added that Wilson saved Southern Baptists "millions of dollars" while enabling "thousands of persons" to worship in facilities constructed by volunteer work teams Wilson enlisted.

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Both Hughes and Wilson intend to assist Walker Knight in the development work for establishing a new national publication aimed at Southern Baptist leaders. Knight, 23-year director of the HMB editorial department and editor of MissionsUSA magazine, recently announced his own retirement to begin the new publication and serve as its editor.

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Baptists Fail In Urban
Ministry, Missionaries Told

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
12/16/82

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Massive migration to the world's cities provides a key which Southern Baptists and other Christians have feared to use to unlock opportunities for world evangelization, a missionary urban strategist declared in Nairobi.

"The multiplied number of problems of living and working in the city have bewildered and beaten the Christian worker so he or she prefers to 'go where the people are' in the countryside," Jimmy Maroney told Southern Baptist church developers from across Eastern Africa.

But statistics show the city is where the people are and where they are going, declared Maroney, veteran Southern Baptist missionary to Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya. Effective Jan 1, Maroney will assume new duties in Richmond, Va., as associate director for Eastern and Southern Africa. "If we fail to win the cities to Christ we have failed indeed," he said. "As the cities go, our world goes--intellectually, politically, economically, morally and religiously."

Maroney challenged the church developers to overcome rural bias and help reverse the trend which has seen Christians--"and Baptists in particular"--fail to dent the metropolitan environment significantly. "The reluctance of many missionaries to live and work in the big cities has contributed to cities' religious bankruptcy," he emphasized.

Maroney explained city problems and evils are as old as the ancient city of Nineveh where God sent the prophet Jonah to preach repentance and salvation.

But, said Maroney, God had to force Jonah, "a small-town prophet from a third class nation," to obey his call to go to the city. Similarly, he charged, many Christians are faithful to God--as long as they can stay in the country. When he asks them to go to the city they fail to respond.

"In a real sense Jonah represents all reluctant pastors and missionaries who have stayed in the 'comfortable' places to minister," said Maroney.

What happens to the masses in the cities will determine the religious face of the world, he believes. And he thinks Southern Baptists must particularly address themselves to cities in developing Third World countries. One billion people will move into the crime, pollution, congestion and poverty of Third World cities in the decade of the 1980s alone, he said, quoting World Bank statistics.

By the end of the century the Third World will contain 45 cities of five million or more population as compared to 16 in 1980, he added.

Amidst those staggering totals church growth has limped along at best. In the United States alone, he said, one church existed for every 2,575 city dwellers in 1970. The ratio will reach one for every 3,876 by 1985 and one for every 4,165 by 1990.

In Nairobi, where the church developers met, one church exists for every 9,000 people.

"One must not forget that practically all social revolutions have occurred in the large cities of the world," he said. "The church must articulate biblical answers to burning social issues. The church must give a theological basis for a just and righteous society."

"The cities are the centers of government, the generators of progress, the creators of new lifestyles and the communications centers of the world," Maroney said. "Failure to win large cities means failure in disciplining entire countries."

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