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**Housing Problems Arise
For SBC In Pittsburgh**

PITTSBURGH (BP)--Housing may be a problem for the 1983 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, according to convention arrangements officials.

Part of the problem, according to Tim Hedquist, convention arrangements manager for the SBC Executive Committee, is that there simply are not enough hotel rooms to go around.

Bob Imperata, director of convention sales and services for the Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau, Inc., agreed: "The SBC is bigger than what we are accustomed to; we don't try to deal with conventions of this size on a regular basis."

Pittsburgh, which was selected as the site for the 1983 meeting at the 1976 meeting, does not meet current guidelines for host cities, which call for a city to have an arena capable of seating 16,000 persons, adequate exhibit space and 6,500 hotel rooms within walking distance. The size of the hall and the number of rooms are needed because the convention will have an estimated 15,000 messengers.

Hedquist said when the convention arrangements subcommittee of the SBC Executive Committee visited Pittsburgh in 1978, the city-operated bureau committed 6,129 rooms, "the most ever committed by a bureau to the SBC."

By the time the housing bureau began accepting applications for reservations for the SBC, however, the number of available rooms had dwindled by nearly 2,000. "Two of the hotels simply didn't exist anymore," Hedquist said.

"The bureau opened with 4,130 rooms. They simply could not deliver what they had promised," he said.

Imperata said there have been problems "which could have happened in any place. One property turned into a retirement home, another was torn down, a third filed for bankruptcy and closed. We have had those problems and have tried to regroup."

Then another factor intruded: the U.S. Open golf tournament at Oakmont Country Club.

"It brings a tremendous influx of people," Imperata said. "We have no control over that ... absolutely nothing to do with the U.S. Open. The only thing they--the people who schedule golf tournaments--were concerned about was whether there was a quality golf course available. Then, they let the other things fall as they may."

The U.S. Open intensified the crunch for rooms. Hedquist said four hotels notified the housing bureau they would not honor the commitments. "At the first of the year, two already assigned hotels--Viking Motor Hotel, 50 rooms, and Ramada Inn North, 50 rooms--said they would not honor the reservations.

Within the last few weeks, two more hotels--Holiday Inn Parkway and Holiday Inn Monroeville--have made adjustments. Holiday Inn Parkway cancelled the reservations, while Holiday Inn Monroeville reassigned their 75 rooms to another hotel "40 miles out of town."

According to housing bureau sources, the Parkway hotel gave 100 rooms to an ABC Sports television crew.

A fifth hotel, Howard Johnson's Monroeville, cancelled reservations for Marian and Marse Grant's Convention Plane, citing reservations for the golf tournament as the reason.

Marian Grant, from Raleigh, said the hotel set aside 150 rooms in January of 1982 for the service. "We went back in July of 1982, and made all arrangements. They called us immediately after we had been there and said they had made a mistake; that all the rooms were tied up by an athletic group," she said.

Grant, the wife of the retired editor of the North Carolina state Baptist newspaper, the Biblical Recorder, said she has been offering the Convention Plane service since 1956. "We have been able to get 168 rooms in various places because the people wrote in individually. We will be taking 336 people this year," she said, adding the number participating is down from 510 in New Orleans in 1982 and 821 in Los Angeles in 1981.

"We really can't blame Pittsburgh," she said. "They just don't have enough rooms. But, then when the convention voted to go there, we couldn't see we would have this much competition for rooms...that there would be the kind of convention issues we are having."

Imperata said "the other hotels in Pittsburgh are trying to pick up the slack. Several people have acted like mavericks. You hate to see everybody get a black eye because several acted (badly). The others have chipped in and are helping make things go."

A few additional rooms have been "picked up" at other hotels in the Pittsburgh area, Hedquist said, making about 5,100 hotel rooms available. "We anticipate we will have requests for some 5,500, so we will be about 400 short," he added.

Imperata added some 1,100 requests were turned back in October because the housing bureau did not have space to accommodate them. Many of those have gone directly to hotels not involved in the housing bureau or through travel agencies to get accommodations.

Hedquist said that "every year" there are problems with hotel rooms, as some hotels cancel or other slip-ups occur. This year, however, he said, "the Convention Bureau does not seem to be able to hold the hotels in line...are unable to help us with these hotels which will not honor the reservations."

He also commented that Pittsburgh has about 8,000 total hotel rooms, significantly fewer than other cities where the convention meets. St. Louis and Kansas City, for instance, have about 14,000 rooms. "There simply is no slack. If a mistake happens, there is nowhere to turn.

Hedquist said some 300 people "have not received confirmation from the hotels," a fact Imperata said was being corrected. He said the majority of those should be receiving notification soon.

Imperata added that if people have questions, they should write to the bureau: SBC Housing Bureau, Room 514, No. 4, Gateway Center, Pittsburgh, PA. 15222.

The convention center official asked people not to telephone either the SBC offices in Nashville or the convention bureau. "That just slows down everything," he said, adding most of those still waiting on confirmations "have been much more patient than I would have been."

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Don Hepburn Elected
To Fill Florida PR Post

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TAMPA, Fla. (BP)--Donald S. Hepburn, director of communications for the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, has been elected director of the newly created office of public relations for the Florida Baptist Convention.

Hepburn, 34, is expected to establish and develop a program of public relations and communications for the 129-year old state convention which has staff offices in Jacksonville. He is expected to begin in early May.

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Also, Ty Wood, an audio-visual producer and writer from Ridgecrest, Calif., was elected media associate to develop media related ministries and services.

Hepburn will be responsible to Executive Director Dan Stringer and will be a member of the convention's administrative staff. He will establish a news and information service to assist Florida's secular media and Baptist Press, as well as provide assistance to convention program leaders in promotion planning and execution.

Hepburn goes to the Florida post after five years in a similar position with the California convention. In 1978 he went to California to initiate and develop the convention's program of public relations and communications.

He was director of communications for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, 1972-1978.

He is a native of St. Petersburg, Florida and a graduate of Carson Newman College and Southwestern Seminary. He is a candidate for the master of science degree in human relations and organizational development from the University of San Francisco in June.

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Texas Baptists Undertake
Senegal Missions Partnership

By Terry Barone

Baptist Press
3/18/83

DALLAS (BP)--Texas Baptists' executive board has approved a partnership missions project with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to Senegal, on the west coast of Africa.

The project will begin late this year or early in 1984. Senegal has 8.75 million people, 85 percent of whom are Muslims. Only about 100 in the entire country claim to be evangelical Christians and most of those are not native Senegalese.

Ed Schmeltekopf, associate executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, said the partnership missions project would involve a community center approach because "of the impossibility of getting Muslims to attend church services."

It could be a pilot project because of the possible cooperation with other missionary-sending groups such as Baptists in Brazil and Nigeria, Schmeltekopf said.

Southern Baptists now have four missionary couples in Senegal and soon will have five.

John Mills, area director of West Africa for the FMB, said Christians and Southern Baptists have almost written off Islam because of the difficulty to reach Muslims and the need of a different method of working. "Inviting Muslims to attend Christian services is not enough," he said. "They simply will not respond."

"Through the community center approach it has been possible to get Senegalese to attend where it is totally impossible to get them into church services."

Mills said those who have been part of the community center programs have done nothing openly, but a few are saying privately that "Jesus is Lord."

"Through the community centers those involved in the partnership project include literacy work, English classes, training for jobs, public health teams and well drilling.

"Through these types of activities," Schmeltekopf said, "Southern Baptists would have the opportunity to witness one-on-one with the people of Senegal."

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Committee On Boards
To Report Before SBC

By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE, Tenn.(BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention Committee On Boards, after a two-day executive session, announced it will release its report "at least 30 days" before the 1983 annual meeting in Pittsburgh, June 14-16.

Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, and chairman of the committee, told Baptist Press: "I would like to have it out by the first week in May."

The committee, made up of 52 persons, nominates persons to serve as trustees, directors or committee members of the 20 organizations supported through the Southern Baptist Convention.

The committee has been the focus of controversy in the denomination for the past several years, and has been featured in floor fights during the past two annual meetings. Much of the attention has been because of publicly stated aims of one faction in the denomination to gain control of the boards of the various agencies, filling them with persons of a particular theological viewpoint.

The release of the names in advance of the annual meeting became an issue in 1982 when then president Bailey E. Smith of Del City, Okla., declined to reveal his appointments prior to the New Orleans meeting. Daniel Vestal of Midland, Texas, chairman of the committee on boards, followed suit, also declining to make the appointments public prior to the first day of the convention.

In making his announcement, Stanley responded to a request by current president James T. Draper Jr. of Euless, Texas, to make the report available in advance.

Stanley, who by action of the committee was the official spokesman, told Baptist Press the committee on boards met in "executive session" partly because it was the center of so much attention.

"We knew there were so many questions about this committee and so many people looking at us, we felt it best that we have no observers...that we keep our discussion confidential," he said. "Because of the tremendous attention we were receiving, it was the general consensus that this was the way we should work."

Although Stanley had told Baptist Press prior to the meeting he preferred to have no observers, it was Bob Tenery, pastor of Burkemont Baptist Church of Morganton, N.C., who officially requested the "executive session" for the committee.

Tenery, who also is a trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board, said his request was based partly on the need for confidentiality because of the discussion of "personnel matters," but also because of biased news reporting. Tenery publishes a 4,000 circulation newspaper, Baptist United News, which he says was started because Baptists were not getting the conservative viewpoint in the state Baptist newspapers.

Stanley told Baptist Press the decision to go into executive session was "100 percent...unanimous."

Following the session, Stanley also said the "vast majority" of persons eligible for reappointment to second terms were reappointed. The "bumping" of persons who were eligible for second terms was the cause of a floor fight at the 1981 annual meeting in Los Angeles. Five persons eligible for reappointment were dropped, reportedly on theological grounds, and replaced. The committee report was successfully challenged.

Stanley said he does not expect any challenges to this year's report. "If we are challenged, we have very, very firm footing.

"We did not come in there with the attitude of seeing who we could eliminate. We asked the question: 'What is best for the convention?' We do not want turmoil and conflict; we want to see harmony as best we can, while at the same time respecting people's convictions."

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He admitted the list contains some names "we probably would not all agree with," but said the committee "did not go through and eliminate any group of people because we did not agree with them theologically."

Stanley said the committee "came prepared" and did its work in a "Christlike manner. I didn't see selfishness, arrogance. It was a beautiful demonstration of what I would like to see happen among Baptists. There was a genuine loving concern for the total picture."

He noted it is the "privilege" of anyone to challenge the report, but said he has several suggestions for those who wish to challenge it. "People who have objections should contact the chairman. I think it is the gentlemanly and Christian thing to do. I believe the objection should be made privately to the chairman before going to the convention and questioning somebody's character or ministry."

Stanley said while he is "not a compromiser," he believes things should be settled quietly, if possible. "If we can settle things that way, we should; if not, well, so b it."

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Baptist Fitness Expert
Calls Inactivity Sinful

Baptist Press
3/18/83

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Baptists have lambasted cigarette smoking and alcohol use for years but they should also include inactivity when they talk about sin, a physical fitness expert has charged.

Kenneth Cooper, director of the Aerobics Activities Center, Dallas, Texas, and a member of First Baptist Church there, addressed church recreation ministers attending a workshop on "physical fitness and the Christian" at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The seminar was sponsored by the church recreation department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Cooper said, as a group, pastors are probably the most poorly conditioned group he sees at his clinic. "Christians are bought with a price in both body and spirit," he pointed out. "To ignore fitness is a sin."

He predicted preventative medicine will become a more important field of study than corrective medicine because people can prevent most major causes of death today by keeping fit.

"Exercise is the main reason the rate of cardiac deaths was reduced in the 1970s," said Cooper. "You don't have to run a marathon to be fit. If you run more than three miles, five times a week, you are running for something more than fitness."

He said he tries to give people guidelines by which they can exercise throughout their lives because fitness must be maintained and cannot be stored.

Guidelines include proper weight control through nutrition, proper exercise, elimination of tobacco, drugs and alcohol and regular wellness medical examinations.

Cooper characterizes his work as a form of missions, "I can go on television, speaking to 100,000 people about aerobics and mention that I am a Christian and reach many people."

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