



## 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  
Craig Bird, 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** (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
**WASHINGTON** Stan L. Hasty, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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### Missionary Says Christian Record Mixes Success, Failure

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--The church has done rather well spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But in four specific areas--human survival, human rights, world poverty, and stewardship of the environment--the emphasis has been weak according to E. Luther Copeland.

Copeland, a retired Southern Baptist missionary and former Chancellor of Seinan Gakuin, a Baptist School in Fukuoka, Japan, said Christianity is found throughout the world, sometimes in unexpected places. He related how U.S. servicemen were often surprised during World War II when they found Christianity thriving on small Pacific islands where they had expected to find savages.

Copeland challenged his audience at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's Missionary Day, to "confess the sacredness of this world in which we live."

He noted in two-thirds of the 223 nations in the world Christianity is the religion of the majority. The Christian population has increased three times since 1900 and evangelization today is occurring at 2 1/2 times the rate of that year.

Copeland said the geographic center of Christianity is rapidly moving south and noted phenomenal growth in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Predictions have been made that 60 percent of the world's Christians will live in third world countries by the year 2000. Countries like Brazil are beginning to send their own missionaries to foreign countries and now account for 20 percent of all Protestant and 8 1/2 percent of all Catholic cross-cultural missionaries.

On the other hand, Copeland said, "We still have 1.3 billion people entirely out of reach of cross-cultural missionaries. There are three billion people who are not Christian."

Turning from the Christian success in numbers, Copeland expressed concern that not enough has been done to provide "the abundant life in a world of hunger and human misery." He asked, "How well have we preached the gospel to the poor?"

Calling human survival the most important issue of our time, Copeland said, "We are under the constant threat of nuclear destruction. I confess I often see my fellow Christians more concerned with strife than with peace. Where are the peacemakers?"

Referring to material supplied by Amnesty International, Copeland said the second greatest issue today was human rights. He said millions in the world live under "new and terrible means of oppression."

He asked where the church today stood on the issue of poverty. "Read the Bible from beginning to end and we find that God is always on the side of the poor," he said. Noting the Scriptures do not use words like "winos," "drug addicts," and "panhandlers," Copeland said, "I become anxious when I see missionaries going into foreign societies from a society which is angry with the poor."

The fourth concern is stewardship of the environment. "We are his priests in his creation. We are bound together not only with our fellow human beings but with the whole lot of the common order," Copeland explained. "We ought to remember it doesn't just exist for our sake. After all, it existed for millions of years before man arrived."

Missions Day Camp Set  
For SBC in Pittsburgh

PITTSBURGH, Pa. (BP)--The Brotherhood Commission will sponsor a mission day camp for children in grades one through six during all daytime sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Pittsburgh.

Boys and girls who have completed the first grade may participate in the camp. Activities include mission emphases by home and foreign missionaries, games, sports, crafts and nature study.

Cost of the camp is \$7 per day per child or \$20 for three days. For two children in the same family the three day cost is \$40 and for three children in the same family the three day cost is \$55. Prices include lunch Tuesday and Thursday and refreshments each day.

Karl Bozeman, Crusader Royal Ambassador services director, will coordinate the camp. He said a group of specially trained counsellors from Royal Ambassador camps in Texas will serve as day camp staff. The day camp will help at Camp Guyasuta about 10 miles from the convention center. Transportation will be provided.

Messengers wishing to enroll their children in the day camp should visit the missions day camp booth in the lobby of the convention center.

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World Mission Conferences  
Planned For All Associations

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The challenge of bringing World Missions Conferences to every association in the Southern Baptist Convention within a five-year period has been adopted by WMC state directors.

Meeting in bi-annual session at the Baptist Brotherhood Commission, the directors embraced the venture as an effective means of educating churches with the world missions program of the denomination. The emphasis has been targeted for 1985 through 1990.

By-products of the conferences are personal encounters with missionaries, expanded local missions involvement and increased mission study groups through Brotherhood and Woman's Missionary Union in the local church, explained Jimmie Gresham, director of World Missions Conferences at the Brotherhood Commission. The Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board and the Brotherhood Commission are co-sponsors of the missions conferences.

Every available Baptist Student Union will be encouraged to take an active role in helping plan and promote conferences on the associational level, Gresham added.

The state directors also commissioned a writer to produce a mission study book for youth and adults. The convocation will launch the five-year emphasis when it is introduced in January, 1985 and will cover missions work on local, association, state, home and foreign levels.

Tommy Knotts, director of missions for the Aiken (S.C.) Baptist Association, was keynote speaker for the two-day meeting. He detailed the important role directors must play if they are to have a successful missions conference with total church participation.

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Messengers To 1983 SBC  
To Face Number Of Issues

By Dan Martin

PITTSBURGH, Pa. (BP)--Messengers to the 1983 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention will face a number of issues June 14-16 at the Pittsburgh Civic Arena.

Theology, politics, money, personalities, institutions, philosophy and geographical scope are among the issues the estimated 15,000 messengers will face at the annual meeting of the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

Even with the volatile issues, the debates are expected to be cooler and the divisions shallower than in the past two conventions. But while denominational heat may be turned to simmer, other factors may bring tempers to a boil.

The key irritant may be the host city itself. Lodging, transportation and food service problems may cause messengers to arrive frustrated, antagonistic and hostile.

The number of hotel rooms available in the city is far below the minimum required for a convention the size of the SBC. Many messengers may arrive in Pittsburgh angry, for several reasons: they did not get the hotel they wanted, they got one far away--some are as much as 40 miles from the city center--or they didn't get anything at all.

A study of past conventions when housing, transportation or eating facilities were problems indicates messengers generally strike out at "the authorities," turn down recommendations or blast personalities, institutions or policies.

Another potential sore spot is registration procedures. After allegations of voter irregularities in the 1979 annual meeting, registration procedures were tightened up. As issues have become more volatile, tempers have tended to flare when persons without proper credentials were not allowed to register as messengers.

According to Lee Porter, registration secretary, only three forms of credentials will be acceptable: the messenger card, properly filled out, a telegram from the church, or a letter featuring the church letterhead and the signature of the clerk or moderator.

Current President James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, does not appear likely to have the anger and frustration directed at him; at least, not his nomination for a second one-year term. He is expected to win re-election without opposition.

Messengers also will elect first and second vice presidents. Rumors persist the current first vice president, John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church of Shreveport, La., will be nominated for a second term, a departure from tradition. Such a re-election is not unprecedented, however.

Also mentioned as a possible first vice presidential candidate is M. Vernon Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church of Alexandria, Va., and immediate past president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. He has been strongly aligned with the moderate faction in the SBC.

Gene Garrison, second vice president and pastor of Oklahoma City First Baptist Church, is not expected to allow his name to be placed in nomination for a second term. Currently, Garrison and the church are embroiled in a controversy over ordination of women as deacons. Even though the church has no women deacons, it recently changed its bylaws to allow such an action, which caused howls of outrage from some Oklahoma City fundamentalists.

Names mentioned for second vice president include Tal Bonham, executive secretary of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, and Dorothy Sample of Flint, Mich., current national president of the Woman's Missionary Union.

This year the Cooperative Program Operating Budget may face at least two line item challenges. One may be to "defund" the Public Affairs Committee, the SBC organization which relates to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The BJCPA strongly opposes President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment on school prayer, pointing out the committee is not opposed to voluntary school prayer, but to state mandated and written prayers.

The convention in 1982 went on record supporting the Reagan proposal. At least one church--First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas--has asked that the BJCPA be defunded, which also has been suggested by Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority organization.

Another budget item which may be challenged is Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's allocation. The challenge may come from David Miller, director of missions for the Little Red River Baptist Association in Heber Springs, Ark., who has been very critical of the seminary for its handling of the Dale Moody issue on apostasy or falling from grace.

Moody, 67, a veteran theology professor, recently was given a paid year's leave of absence but will not return to the classroom at Southern. The action followed a resolution adopted by the Arkansas Baptist Convention in its 1982 meeting calling on Southern to fire Moody. The trustees' action apparently pleased neither Moody's friends nor his detractors.

Otherwise, the \$125 million budget--the largest in SBC history--is expected to be adopted.

Another of the 17 proposals likely to draw spirited debate is a recommendation the convention hold its 1989 annual meeting in Las Vegas. The recommendation did not receive a unanimous recommendation from the Executive Committee and has since drawn spirited discussion in the letters to the editor columns.

The report of the Committee on Boards, chaired this year by Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, may or may not draw fire. In the past two conventions, the report has been opposed in floor fights. Although moderates see the report as "very slanted toward the inerrancy viewpoint" indications are there will be no organized opposition.

Another issue is funding of a building to house the SBC Executive Committee and six other entities. Messengers will not vote on whether to build the building, but only on whether to fund the estimated \$8 million cost through the 1984-88 capital needs budget.

Messengers will be asked to approve a far-reaching Cooperative Program Study Committee report, which proposes a 15-year plan to increase giving to SBC churches to \$20 billion a year by AD 2000. The report originally contained a controversial proposal to allow churches to exclude some SBC causes from their contributions and still have the gifts counted as Cooperative Program donations. That, however, was deleted from the report.

Recommendations to change four bylaws will be proposed. Modifications include requiring the release of the names of those appointed to the Committee on Committees and those nominated by the Committee on Boards at least 45 days in advance of the convention. Also revised is the registration bylaw, which specifies acceptable credentials as the messenger card, a letter from the church or a telegram. The fourth change relates to SBC representation on the Baptist World Alliance General Council.

Another recommendation revises the guidelines for the convention site. It sets minimum guidelines at 6,500 hotel rooms, with a minimum of 3,000 within two miles of the convention center; seating capacity for 16,000 messengers and at least 50,000 square feet of exhibit space. The recommendation also eliminates block room reservations.

Messengers likely will hear a motion for the seating of messengers from Canadian churches. Presently, messengers from churches in western Canada, affiliated with the Northwest Baptist Convention, are denied seats by the Constitution. Any motion to amend the Constitution likely would be referred to the Executive Committee for study and report at the 1984 meeting in Kansas City. Affirmative action would require action at two consecutive conventions.

As in past years, resolutions also are likely to draw spirited debate. Possible topics include nuclear freeze, world hunger, abortion, tuition tax credits, the Constitutional Amendment on school prayer, equal access to public facilities for religious gatherings, Israel, the denominational press. Last year, a record 46 proposed resolutions were submitted, of which 21 were adopted and one referred to the appropriate denominational agency.

Sermon Preparation Presents  
Weekly Dilemma for Preachers

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--It's Sunday again and the study time just hasn't been there. One more sermon will come from the bookshelf instead of personal study of the Bible and the people.

It wasn't supposed to be that way.

Most Southern Baptist preachers face an honest dilemma of how to balance counseling, visitation and administrative responsibilities with sermon preparation. "Any preacher who preaches three times a week year after year, has to develop ways to streamline sermon preparation," according to Lavonn Brown, pastor of First Baptist Church, Norman, Okla.

However, "there are no real shortcuts to sermon preparation which exclude constant and careful Bible study," Brown continued. "If God called a man to be a preacher, then he called him to be a preparer of sermons. A man can be stimulated and encouraged by another's ideas, but if he stops short and doesn't personalize the idea, then it's not a legitimate course."

The dilemma comes into play when the pastor has to drop preparation for the upcoming sermon to counsel with a church member. Preparation and counseling are legitimate and valid parts of ministry, but, if the pastor takes an hour to counsel and then has to face his congregation on Sunday unprepared, he is penalizing the hundreds.

According to Brown, it doesn't have to be either/or between preparation and counseling, because there is an "embarrassment of riches" for pastors who will take the time to plan legitimate places where a pastor can find ideas for sermons with a minimum amount of searching, such as the Christian calendar, lectionary, and denominational materials. Contact with church members and community members should also guide pastors in selecting topics for sermons.

Another option for pastors is conferences about preaching. Brown first presented an address about shortcuts in preaching at a Consultation of Preaching at Stone Mountain, Ga. In the spring of 1983.

When preachers become trapped into relying on material from others week after week, Brown said there is additional stress on the minister because of concern about integrity. If a lay person discovered the preacher's source of sermons, it could lead to a spirit of distrust in relation to his preaching ministry which could spill into other areas.

"Every preacher should set aside time on his calendar to study his preaching ministry, past and future," Brown said. "Keep a calendar two months ahead showing every Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday evening when you will preach. Use that calendar to write in ideas from books and personal contacts."

He said a preacher who is planning won't be as likely to pull down a book of sermons at the last minute because he should have an abundance of ideas which he has accumulated through a continuing study of the Bible and his people.

"The preacher who says he doesn't have time to study, attend conferences on preaching or ever leave the church field, is adhering to a false economy of time," Brown said. "That time will be made up through the application of ideas discovered in study and planning."

On the other hand, "If the only kind of preaching a pastor is doing is relying on the work of others, he is definitely curtailing his own creativity and imagination," he said. "He is offering messages to his people which cost him nothing. The Bible is the authority, while another man's interpretation of a text may not be," Brown said. "If you are using another preacher's idea, should you accept his interpretation of the text?"

"The preacher who allows himself to be poured into the congregation's mold with no time for sermon preparation needs to go to the congregation with new priorities established which will allow more time for sermon preparation and planning of preaching."