



## - - 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. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

June 28, 1983

83-95

New Trustee Opposes BJCPA  
On School Prayer Amendment

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--In opposition to testimony presented by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a newly-elected Southern Baptist Convention representative to that agency has urged a Senate panel to pass President Reagan's proposed school prayer amendment.

In a letter to Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., North Carolina attorney Samuel T. Currin cited a 1982 SBC resolution supporting the Reagan prayer amendment as clear evidence "that Baptists favor a restoration of voluntary prayer to the public schools."

Thurmond's committee is considering two proposed constitutional amendments approved early in June by the Subcommittee on the Constitution. The Reagan proposal, S.J. Res 73, would allow state-written oral prayer in public schools. A substitute supported by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, and other members of the subcommittee would permit "individual or group silent prayer and meditation" and provide "equal access to the use of public schools by all voluntary student groups."

Thurmond entered the Currin letter and a copy of the 1982 SBC resolution into the record after hearing testimony from BJCPA General Counsel John W. Baker urging the panel to reject both proposals.

Currin's letter quoted the 1982 resolution's erroneous declaration the Reagan amendment "does not constitute a call for government-written or government-mandated prayer." A print d White House explanation of the amendment's impact said the proposal would empower state and local officials to compose prayers to be used in public schools.

"If groups of people are to be permitted to pray, someone must have the power to determine the content of such prayers," the White House document stated.

In his testimony, Baker referred to the recent 1983 SBC resolution adopted in Pittsburgh which urged Baptists to "express their confidence in the United States Constitution, and particularly in the First Amendment, as adequate and sufficient guarantees to protect these freedoms (free exercise and no establishment of religion)."

Told by Baker the 1983 resolution rejected the previous year's position, Thurmond said, "I wonder just why they sent this letter then."

"B cause that's an old resolution which agreed with Mr. Currin's position," Baker responded. "It's not the position which the Southern Baptist Convention took just two weeks ago."

Baker further reminded Thurmond, himself a Southern Baptist, "each Southern Baptist Convention meeting speaks for itself and (the 1982 resolution) was the expression of opinion of those people there at that time."

Earlier Baker told the committee the BJCPA opposes "any attempt to amend the First Amendment" and warned "amending th Constitution should be the last resort rather than a first resort."

"Neither the judicial nor the legislative processes have run their full course on the issues of a period of silence or equal access," Baker said.

-more-

"If the judicial processes as well as the ordinary legislative processes are allowed to run their course, the need which some Senators see for a constitutional amendment may well be removed," he added.

Baker's assessment of the Hatch substitute was underscored by an administration witness who urged the panel to stay with the Reagan amendment.

Deputy Attorney General Edward Schmults said the silent prayer and equal access issues of the Hatch amendment have not yet been finally decided by the Supreme Court and a constitutional amendment to deal with them "seems to be premature."

Schmults suggested legislation might accomplish the same goal as the Hatch substitute, a view also pushed by Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., who asked the committee to consider his equal access legislation rather than either of the constitutional amendments.

Hatfield, also a Southern Baptist, has introduced legislation (S. 815) to provide equal access for high school students to meet voluntarily for religious purposes.

Further action on the proposals is yet to be scheduled but a committee spokesman said it will "most probably" occur after the July 4 recess.

-30-

Non-Baptist Elected  
Wake Forest President

Baptist Press  
6/28/83

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)--Thomas K. Hearn Jr., senior vice president for nonmedical programs at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, has been elected the first non-Baptist president of Wake Forest University in the school's 149-year history.

Hearn, who will assume office Oct. 1, received unanimous approval by the university's presidential search committee and the board of trustees at a called session meeting.

Hearn, a Presbyterian with a Southern Baptist background, will succeed Wake Forest's James Ralph Scales as president of the Baptist institution.

During a press conference held shortly after Hearn's election, C.C. Hope Jr., chairman of the search committee and the Wake Forest board of trustees, said Hearn "has made comments about his belief that Wake Forest should remain true to its heritage as a Baptist institution and that he has the background, training and beliefs that will help him in building upon that relationship."

Hearn, a graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., also is a summa cum laude graduate of Birmingham-Southern College and holds the doctor of philosophy degree from Vanderbilt University. He has done additional advanced study at Glasgow, Scotland University.

Hearn was professor of philosophy at the College of William and Mary before joining the University of Alabama staff in 1974 as professor and chairman of the philosophy department. In 1976 he was named dean of the university's School of Humanities. Two years later he became vice president for nonmedical programs at the Birmingham, Ala., university.

Hearn, 46, said at his first press conference he comes to Wake Forest University with no mandate from the trustees. He emphasized he will discuss the university's direction with faculty, administration, trustees and students before setting the school's future direction.

Hope pointed out Hearn had studied the "2000 year report" prepared by a special university committee and understands the needs, hopes and directions of the 149-year old Baptist institution. Hearn's wife, Barbara, is a graduate of Birmingham-Southern College and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is an artist, organist, pianist and composer. The Hearn family has three children, all in college: Tom, 22, is a graduate student at the University of Alabama; Lindsey, 20, attends the University of Texas, and William, 19, is a sophomore at the University of Alabama.

-30-

Baptists Honor Rice;  
Dedicate Homesite

By Michael Tutterow

NORTHBOROUGH, Mass. (BP)--"More than anyone else, Luther Rice planted the seeds from which sprang the modern mission thrust of Baptists in America," said Lynn E. May Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission.

May and dozens of Baptist denominational leaders and laypeople honored Baptist missions pioneer Luther Rice and dedicated his homesite as The Center for Missions and Education, a facility for training Baptists for missions work, during ceremonies June 17-18.

M. Wendell Belew, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's Missions Ministries Division, said the center represents a new approach in missions training in new work areas. Laypeople and clergy will be able to reside at the center for short-term study periods, gleaning missions strategy from Rice's own writings and through seminary extension classes.

May said Baptists are indebted to Rice for his "dream of a denomination focused on missions, rooted in education and bonded by communication," and added Rice's 23-year ministry among Baptists in America sparked the transformation of scattered churches into a national denomination.

Rice consulted with Baptist leaders from Boston to Charleston, urging support and cooperation in foreign missions endeavors begun by fellow Baptists Adoniram and Ann Judson, then serving in Burma. In May 1814, the General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions (later shortened to the Triennial Convention) was formed, providing a structure for individuals, churches, associations, missionary societies and other Baptist groups to coordinate efforts to proclaim the gospel throughout the world. The national denomination later divided in 1845 to form the American Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Rice helped Baptists organize their missions efforts, said Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union, SBC. His organizational structure linked home and foreign missions work, she said, adding Rice realized Baptists "could make possible a mightier work in the foreign field if the home land were evangelized."

He was committed to education and helped found Columbian College, now The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., as a training school for missionaries and pastors.

"Rice knew that theological and classical learning must undergird the enterprise which was the passion of his life: the evangelism of the world," said Robert Jones, university marshal at George Washington University.

Believing a communications network was vital to keeping Baptists' missions support alive, Rice established a religious weekly, the Star, which later became the Christian Index, newsjournal for the Georgia Baptist Convention. He also founded an earlier national journal to arouse missionary support, The Latter Day Luminary, and served as its editor.

The new center, according to James Currin, area director of missions for the Baptist General Association of New England, will help Baptists in responding to God's call to be on mission. Three buildings on the grounds will house a seminary extension center and provide theological training for pastors and laypeople in the Northeast.

The center also is home to a missions library and a visitor and witnessing center. Cal Guy, retired Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor, will direct the center.

Rice died at the age of 53 while soliciting missions support in Southern states. "Rice literally burned himself out for Christ," said William G. Tanner, president of the Home Mission Board. "He has left us an incredible heritage."

Rice also left Baptists an unfinished dream, said John Douham, associate executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts. "Rice was an artist, a dreamer who saw what was not and said why not," he explained. Baptists of the 1980s must strive to complete Rice's "unfinished dream" to bring about "a common thrust of Baptists in our country."

The center, he added, could improve understanding between the two Baptist bodies while training pastors and laypeople for reaching out in the Northeast and beyond.

-30-

Education Commission  
Holds Annual Meeting

By Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist Press  
6/28/83

DALLAS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Education Commission, in its annual meeting, approved the sponsorship of a national conference in 1986, adopted a record budget, announced the first recipient of the Charles D Johnson award and reelected officers for 1983-84.

The national conference, similar to the one on "Christian Higher Education in Christian Missions" in 1979, again will emphasize the role in Baptist colleges in Bold Mission Thrust. The proposed theme for the 1986 conference is "Equipping for Leadership."

Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission, said the theme is appropriate because, "our Baptist colleges and schools are in the business of producing leaders, not only in our churches and the denomination, but also in business education and other vocations."

Commission members agreed to sponsor the conference in conjunction with the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

A record budget of \$458,500 was approved by the commission for 1983-84. The budget reflects a 12 percent increase in Cooperative Program receipts, as approved by the Southern Baptist Convention in Pittsburgh, as well as projected income from other sources.

H.I. Hester was named posthumous recipient of the Charles D Johnson award, established by the Education Commission to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to Southern Baptist educational life.

Hester, who died in January, was instrumental in the founding of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools in 1948 and was its only secretary-treasurer until his death.

Before his death, Hester and his wife, Carolyne, endowed several scholarships to Southern Baptist schools as well as the H.I. Hester Lectureship for the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges.

Reelected as officers of the Education Commission for 1983-84 are: J. Ralph Noonkester, president of William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Miss., chairman; Thomas S. Field, president of Missouri Heart Institute, Columbia, Mo., vice chairman; Tom J. Madden, executive secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Brentwood, Tenn., secretary.

In other commission action, Scott Bennett, instructor of organ at Union University, Jackson, Tenn., was named the first Hester scholar. Funds for the scholarship program were made available from Hester's estate.

-30-

Former Virginia President  
Joins Midwestern Faculty

Baptist Press  
6/28/83

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--M. Vernon Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church of Alexandria, Va., and immediate past president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, has been elected to the faculty of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Davis, who will be associate professor of theology will join the faculty July 15.

-more-

For 12 years Davis has been pastor of the church in the heart of metropolitan Washington. Davis, 48, native of Houston, is a graduate of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and holds M.Div. and Th.D. degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

Davis also has been a member of the Midwestern board of trustees since 1979.

Before going to Alexandria, Davis was pastor of the Grace Temple Baptist Church in Denton, Texas, from 1968 to 1971, and was associate pastor of the South Main Baptist Church, Houston, from 1965 to 1967. He also was Baptist Student Union director at Rice University, Baylor College of Medicine, and Schools of the Texas Medical Center from 1962 to 1965. At the University of Texas at Austin, Davis was associate director of the Baptist Student Union. There he was also a Bible teacher in the John C. Townes Chair of Bible.

Davis' wife, Bennie Ruth, is director of the ministry to the deaf at First Baptist Church, Alexandria. The daughter of deaf parents, she has been an interpreter for the deaf since her teenage years.

The Davises have two children: Donna Carol, 24, and David Boyd, 18.

-30-

Nicaraguan Baptists Ask End  
To Aid for Guerrilla Forces

Baptist Press  
6/28/83

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (BP)--Nicaraguan Baptists want their U.S. counterparts to pressure the Reagan administration to stop aiding guerrillas fighting the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

The Baptist Convention of Nicaragua's Executive Committee, in a letter addressed to Southern Baptists, American Baptists and the Baptist World Alliance, asked them to "redouble...efforts" to stop U.S. support for the guerrillas.

The guerrilla fighting in northern Nicaragua, said the letter, is causing "pain and grief suffered by members of our Baptist churches and by Nicaraguans in general" because of alleged civilian kidnappings, torture, forced evacuations and destruction of livestock and property. Three Baptist congregations in the area have disbanded.

Don Kammerdiener, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board director for Middle America and the Caribbean, said he shares "the deep pain and suffering which has characterized the people of Nicaragua for so many years. Southern Baptists have responded to those needs by sending relief funds and personal representatives to live and minister among the Nicaraguan people as long as the Nicaraguan convention felt it useful for us to do so."

Two Southern Baptist missionary couples left Nicaragua in 1982 on the advice of Baptist leaders there. The Foreign Mission Board sent \$10,000 in hunger relief funds last year for Nicaraguans who lost crops and homes because of the fighting.

Southern Baptists were relative newcomers to Baptist work in Nicaragua, which was started by American Baptists in 1917. At the request of the Baptist convention, the Foreign Mission Board assigned its first missionary couple there in 1976 to assist in the literature ministry. Later a music missionary couple was assigned.

-30-