



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Executive Committee Divided
On Conference Sponsorship

By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Joint sponsorship of a 1984 conference on governmental intervention in religious affairs drew sharp debate before members of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee voted 32-22 in favor of participation.

The invitation to participate was issued by Dean M. Kelly, director for religious and civil liberty of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

According to Executive Committee officials, the National Council will be the convenor of the conference, but is not the primary sponsor. Others involved are the National Association of Evangelicals, the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A., the U.S.A Catholic Conference and the Synagogue Council of America.

Although the SBC jointly participated in a similar conference on government intervention in religious affairs with the NCC in 1981, much of the debate centered on the involvement of the NCC, a group Southern Baptists have declined to join.

Ed Drake, an attorney from Dallas, opposed the joint sponsorship, commenting: "I would not like to see Southern Baptists associated with the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches or the American Civil Liberties Union in any way, shape or form--now or in the future."

He added the two groups have been forums for "anti-American sentiments...and you can bet your bottom dollar that if the National Council of Churches sponsors this conference the statements coming out of it will be anti-American."

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee, told Drake the SBC "is not related to the National Council...or the World Council...in any way, but we have joined with a number of religious groups in projects of this type."

Alan Sears, a newly elected lay member from Louisville, Ky., also objected to participation in the meeting. "Some of these groups we propose to join together with are people I believe we should be witnessing to...reaching out to and not participating with."

Speaking in favor of participation was Frank Ingraham, a Nashville attorney who said he had participated in the 1981 conference. In matters of religious liberty, Ingraham noted the SBC's "long association with our friends the Jews...the Catholics and...the NCC." He said participation in the conference "does not mean we join with them in other things they work at, nor agree with them in polity."

He added the groups are in "league under the Constitution of the United States, fighting a government that says they can define what the churches does in its mission outside the walls of the church.

Welton Gaddy, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, also supported the conference, and noted the only money coming from Southern Baptists to support the conference will be from "individuals and not from denominational coffers," and added: "If we were voting for a financial subsidy or a structural relationship with them then there would be a unanimous vote against."

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Southern Baptists "do not have a corner on good," Gaddy said. "We have cooperated with other religious groups on such issues as the changes in the Social Security and retirement programs for pastors and income tax on the salaries of foreign missionaries.

"We need all the help we can get in seeing that the wall of separation between church and state is maintained. You don't have to be anti-American to do that but you do have to be pro-church," he said.

During the debate, a member asked if the SBC Public Affairs Committee had studied the matter. Bennett, a member of the group by virtue of his post, said: "This has not been a part of the Public Affairs Committee's agenda.

"That committee (PAC) is structured on the SBC level in order that the SBC may be an active part of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The (PAC) assignment is the joint relationship with the Baptist Joint Committee and (is) not a separate program entity. We (the SBC) have never adopted a program statement for the Public Affairs Committee, but the convention has adopted a program statement for the Baptist Joint Committee."

In another action, committee members declined to recommend a change of the denomination's name. In the discussion, O. Alvin West of Washington, D.C., suggested any action be postponed until a report of a special committee appointed during the Pittsburgh convention to study the question of admitting Canadian churches as messengers. However, the committee adopted the recommendation to decline by a large majority.

Also, the Executive Committee considered a motion referred to it during the 1983 SBC requesting the committee and the Christian Life Commission "study ways in which the SBC may take a more visible and positive stance against abortion..." Committee members adopted a recommendation "reaffirming the frequently expressed commitment of the SBC to the sacredness of human life, including fetal life...."

Another action approved increasing the honorarium of the SBC recording secretary, assistant to the recording secretary--Mr. and Mrs. Martin Bradley--and the registration secretary--Lee Porter--from \$800 to \$1,100 per year.

Members also were told:

--A 21-member Canada study committee has been appointed and will hold its first meeting Oct. 17-18 in Nashville.

--Heard a report from the Bylaws Workgroup that studies are continuing on possible revision of Article VI of the SBC Constitution on the boards, institutions and commissions of the SBC, Bylaw 21 on the Committee on Committees, and Bylaw 21 on the Resolutions Committee.

The Executive Committee approved a recommendation declining to propose a revision of Bylaw 16 on election of board members, trustees, commissioners or members of standing committee. A motion suggesting requiring that anyone nominated to serve as a trustee be a member of a SBC church for at least five years. Another suggestion questioned the ability of the committee on boards to name the chairman of the standing committees. The Executive Committee approved a statement that the Bylaws Workgroup "is reasonably satisfied with the present practice...."

--Studies are continuing on site selection guidelines for host cities for the SBC, and that several cities are being considered for hosts for SBC annual meetings in 1991 and beyond. The committee approved a statement that "appropriate preparations are being made for disabled persons" to attend the annual meetings, and reported it feels provision of free child care during the annual meetings would result in excessive costs and would be inappropriate.

--A study on the operation of Baptist Press, the SBC's news service, is continuing.

The committee adopted resolutions of appreciation for four denominational leaders who are retiring. They are George E. Bagley, executive secretary-treasurer of the Alabama Baptist State Convention; Edgar R. Cooper, editor-manager of the Florida Baptist Witness; Vern A. Miller, editor of the Nevada Baptist, and Grady C. Cothen, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Baptists From 34 States
Help Dedicate Building Site

By Craig Bird

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A solid copper "time capsule", more than 300 people from all across the United States and the mayor of Nashville took part in the site dedication for the new Southern Baptist Convention Building.

The ceremony launching the \$8 million structure, which will house seven national SBC agencies, was held during the annual Fall meeting of the SBC Executive Committee which meant executive secretaries and editors from 34 state Baptist conventions were on hand along with numerous agency employees.

The copper box, which will be watertight when sealed, was the focal point of the evening as representatives of the seven agencies placed historically significant items in the box. The time capsule will be placed in the cornerstone of the building.

Included was a piece of granite from the old Memphis civic auditorium where the Southern Baptist Convention was meeting in 1925 when the Cooperative Program (the SBC's unified giving program) was adopted and named, the names of all registered messengers who attended the 1983 SBC meeting in Pittsburgh, names and pictures of trustees and employees of the agencies and copies of literature of the agencies. A video tape of the dedication will also be included.

Nashville Mayor Richard Fulton welcomed the building as an addition to the city's major rehabilitation of its downtown area. The SBC building, and the adjacent Baptist Sunday School Board, will anchor one end of a landscaped, four-lane street while a new convention center/hotel complex will anchor the other.

Those placing items in the time capsule were: Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee; A.R. Fagan, executive director-treasurer of the Stewardship Commission; Roy L. Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., representing the Seminary External Education Division of the six SBC seminaries; Hollis E. Johnson III, executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Foundation; Lynn E. May Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Historical Commission; Foy Valentine, executive director, Christian Life Commission, and Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission.

James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas and president of the Southern Baptist Convention gave the prayer of dedication.

Later in the Executive Committee meeting Rodney Landes, chairman of the SBC Building Construction Committee reported the committee had contracted with Rentenbach Engineering Company of Knoxville, Tenn., and its wholly owned subsidiary, Engineers-Constructors Inc. to act as general contractor/construction manager for the project.

Groundwork will begin the first week of October with completion estimated for January 1985. Landes said negotiations are underway to sell the present SBC building for approximately \$2 million. He also noted changes had been made in the plans of the building to bring construction costs into line with the appropriations authorized by the SBC in Pittsburgh last June. The convention approved \$4.5 million in capital needs funds in the 1984-85 budget and another \$3.5 million in 1985-86.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Baptist Press

'Brother King' Leaves
His Mark On Sandy Hook

By Norman Jameson

Baptist Press
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SANDY HOOK, Ky. (BP)--Only dark, dank mineral water spit and sputtered from spigots in Sandy Hook, Ky., when Davis King arrived 27 years ago.

King had come to be pastor of the First (and only) Baptist church. He saw immediately the people needed another water source. So King had himself deputized to secure liens on land and obtain consumer contracts. Then he could get an FHA loan for a water system.

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King, "a farmer boy" who answered the call to preach at age 30, has loved Sandy Hook as only a mother can. It is the only town in a county of 6,600 people and it's 48 miles to the nearest interstate highway. Jobs are 50 miles north in Ashland, Ky., and 60 miles east to Huntington, W. Va.

"I love these people so much," King admits. "There is no industry here, no interstate, no railroad. People drive 50 to 75 miles to work--those that stay here are really fine people."

In 1961, six years after he had arrived, urban job promises sucked 24 First Baptist young people into the vacuum of the city. Membership even now runs only 40 active members.

That was the year King found a more attractive pastorate in Somerset, Ky., at the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church. He led Pleasant Hill to double its missionary gifts in one year and helped strengthen it until six years later he could say the church "was in good enough shape to carry on without a preacher and I'd come back where I'm needed."

Sandy Hook had missed him.

Things had not changed a lot in King's six-year absence. City and county government squabbles over money responsibility still left the city with only two paved streets, no medical services, a leaky water system, poor sewerage and inadequate fire and police equipment.

People lived with it because they were used to no better. This was Appalachia, where coal is despotic and whimsical king. Conditions have always been tough.

Then in 1979 the mayor died and King was asked to fill his unexpired term. "I saw the opportunity to get the city and county government working together," King says. "That was the greatest accomplishment of all. I accomplished a lot by channeling the money right. I worked closely with the county judge. We got a grant from the county for a health system and a grant for a water system.

"The city had no equipment so we used county equipment to blacktop the streets. The city just provided the blacktop, otherwise we would have spent most of our money on the contractor.

When his temporary term ended, the people asked him to run on his own and reelected him by a 5-1 margin. "When I got everything done I needed, I just resigned," says King, 64.

"When I got ready to resign, I told the judge, David Blair, 'you can carry it through, what I started' and he did. Now we have a fine building for our emergency services."

That building is necessary to house the two fire trucks and police car King secured in his 2 1/2 year tenure as mayor. He also had a sewer system constructed.

"I carried my pastoral ministry over into it by being here so long," he says. "It's the first time the city council ever opened with prayer. I prayed with the police. I led the city deputy clerk to Christ. With everybody who came to see me with their problems, instead of confronting them, I'd just pray with them."

This is not to say all King's actions were popular. He instituted a city auto sticker and city property taxes that some residents and church members alike were reluctant to pay. How did he handle it when a church member refused to pay his taxes? "As tactfully as I could."

When county officials destroyed \$1.5 to \$2 million worth of marijuana plants in his area while he was mayor, King says "to keep yourself from getting shot during all that is pretty rough."

"A preacher should lead out in these things," says King, even if the right thing is not always popular. "A woman burned to death in her house. We had no fire truck or anything and the woman burned to ashes. That still didn't arouse them much."

King did not let the mayoral demands detract from his pastoral ministry. "I leaned over a little bit to be a better preacher at church" and not let the ministry suffer, he says. The retired teachers association and senior citizens groups still meet in the church.

First Baptist rebuilt after their building burned down, on land donated by a non-member because of his impressions of King.

King maintains such community involvement is "the thing to do because people look to a man as a community leader and as a spiritual leader too."

"I'd advise anybody if they felt led of the Lord to go right on and see what they can accomplish." But he warns, "They better have their feet on the ground so they can be Brother King when they go in and Brother King when they come out and not leave a political image."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist Newspapers by Baptist Press.

Virginia Editor Emeritus
Reuben Alley Dies

Baptist Press
9/22/83

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Reuben E. Alley, 87, editor of the Virginia Religious Herald 1937-1970, died Sept. 19. He suffered a stroke in late August.

Alley became editor of the Religious Herald after the Baptist General Association of Virginia declined to purchase the paper from its private owners. Allen resigned his pastorate when his offer was accepted and led the paper to convention agency status in 1950.

He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Richmond in 1922 and a master's degree (in 1926) and a doctor of philosophy degree (in 1930) from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. His 33-year tenure as editor of the Religious Herald is the longest of any of the seven editors that paper has had. It is the oldest religious magazine in continuous publication (since 1828) in the United States.

Before becoming editor Allen was pastor of churches in Virginia and Kentucky. After retirement he wrote three books, including a history of Baptists in Virginia. He was born July 9, 1896.

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Missouri Man Elected
Texas Convention Treasurer

Baptist Press
9/22/83

DALLAS (BP)--Roger W. Hall, vice president for estate planning at Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Mo., has been elected treasurer of the 2.2 million-member Baptist General Convention of Texas.

He succeeds Jay L. Skaggs, who retires in December after 12 years in the position.

Hall received his bachelor's degree in accounting from Southwest Missouri State University in 1966 and holds a master of divinity degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

Hall also has been vice president for financial affairs at Midwestern Seminary, director of business services for the Missouri Baptist Convention, and assistant professor business and accounting at Southwest Baptist College.

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CORRECTION--In 14th paragraph of (BP) story "Cecil Ray Elected, Giving Group Named" mailed 9/21/83, dollar amount should be \$20 billion not \$20 million.

Thanks,
Baptist Press
