

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Draper Disavows Any Support
For Parallel State Conventions

By Craig Bird

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--An effort to form an "association of conservative churches" in Virginia has not received encouragement from James T. Draper Jr.

Draper, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church in Euless, Texas, said a group which met in Lynchburg, Va., Sept. 26 had contacted him and requested he send a letter of congratulations or greetings when they met to discuss forming a new association.

At the meeting Arthur B. Ballard Jr., pastor of Old Forest Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg and host and spokesman for the group, read Draper's letter, which was described as "congratulating the group on their plan to form the new association."

The group set up a study committee to study a new association which could, among other things, "sponsor a conservative newspaper in Virginia" and use contributions for evangelization "rather than in associational administrative overhead."

"I was misinformed," Draper said. "They told me they had been in touch with Dr. (Robert) Baker (retired professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas) to be sure they were following proper procedures.

"My letter, which I tried to word very carefully, merely affirmed that they were following historic Baptist principles in the right of churches to form an association."

"I completely disavow any implication I was encouraging the establishment of parallel state conventions," he stressed.

Draper indicated some misunderstanding may have been over the word "association." He took the word to mean a local, geographically compact, organization of churches. However the Virginia convention is known as the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

Ballard agreed Draper's letter had a narrow scope. "He merely endorsed our freedom to form an association," Ballard told Baptist Press in a phone interview. He added he did not see the new organization as a parallel state convention and while it had some statewide programs in mind, "I don't know of any association that does not address statewide issues.

"Anytime you make a move that is new some people see it as a split," Ballard explained. "But all we are doing is moving within the framework of Baptist history and giving conservative preachers a new awareness of expression within Virginia Baptist circles.

"The historical significance of this is that no one has ever gotten an organization together for this purpose (to group conservatives for fellowship) within the guidelines of Baptist policy."

As of Sept. 30, Ballard said 11 churches had indicated they would join and four more would be deciding in the next week. The churches are scattered all across Virginia but Ballard said the aim was not another state convention but a "means of allowing us to work within the system--as you know many of us started on the outside."

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Approximately 175 people attended the three hour "freedom in autonomy" service. Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas and an associate pastor at First Baptist Church in Dallas, and Robert Witty, founder and chancellor of Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Fla., were the principal speakers.

Neither Criswell Institute or Luther Rice have organizational ties with the Southern Baptist Convention but both schools hire only Southern Baptist faculty members.

Among other things, Ballard said the new, non-geographical association could "expect to do" are: speak with a united conservative voice; address such moral issues as abortion, prayer in schools, pornography and "the direction of the hierarchy in the SBC," and hold revivals to "reach the lost in Virginia."

Ballard also stressed the group is, "not leaving the Southern Baptist Convention; not going independent. We can be dually aligned with the associations we are now in."

Last fall, Ballard led his church to align with the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists. At that time he said he could not support some of the teachings at the University of Richmond and the abortion policies of Virginia Baptist hospitals so Old Forest Road Church would give only nominally to the Baptist General Association of Virginia while sending the bulk of its Cooperative Programs gifts to the West Virginia convention.

In the Southern Baptist Convention a church may associate with a local Southern Baptist group, a state convention and the national convention--or any combination of the three. Churches are free to participate in any association or convention just as any association or convention is free to accept or reject any member.

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African Prince To Return
To Tribe That Abandoned Him

By Clay Renick

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RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)--As an infant, Prince Joshua Dara was abandoned to die by his family. Now he plans to return as their servant.

His father is king of the Iloria province in Nigeria, but when Dara and his sister were born the community worship of the goddess of the river demanded the abandonment of twins.

Baptist missionary T.B. Hall took the children in and raised them as his own. Dara learned to work hard and to study the scriptures Hall lived by. It wasn't until he was 15 Dara realized he was black and his "father" was not. The missionary never mentioned it.

Dara attended missionary and British primary schools and later enrolled in Cambridge University in London for paralegal studies. He transferred to California Baptist College, Riverside, because it was a Christian college.

He graduated last June with a degree in communications and is presently finishing a music degree at Cal Baptist while studying law at Western State University in Fullerton.

Dara memorized the Sermon on the Mount in seven African dialects and accepts an average of four speaking engagements a month. He also writes a weekly column on African internal affairs for the "Townsend Enterprise" newspaper of San Bernardino and directs the music program at the New Covenant Baptist Church of Cerritos.

The Nigerians thought they had lost a child to the goddess of the river or, at best, provided a slave to T.B. Hall. They never expected Dara to return.

"Some of them doubt if I'll return, as if I'm gone forever," Dara admitted, "but I certainly plan to return. I want to become a leader in the national government of Nigeria. We need Christian leaders to make a change. That continent is so rich and blessed. If we get enough people to manage the resources there'll be enough to go around."

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Stopgap Nonprofit
Postage Bill Okayed

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Congress has voted enough funding to preserve current nonprofit postal rates until it passes the regular appropriations bill for the Department of Treasury and Postal Service or until Nov. 10, whichever comes first.

The interim funding for the postal service was included in a stopgap funding measure Congress passed Sept. 30 to keep most government agencies running at the start of the new fiscal year. The stopgap measure was necessary because Congress had passed only four of the 13 regular appropriations bills for fiscal 1984.

It is uncertain at what level Congress will fund nonprofit postal subsidy for the remainder of the fiscal year. In previous action, the Senate Appropriations Committee agreed to a figure of \$802 million, enough to mean only a one step increase in nonprofit rates. The Senate panel estimated a one-step hike would boost most nonprofit rates 4 to 12 percent.

The House Appropriations Committee voted \$879 million for the subsidy, enough to preserve current rates through the fiscal year. However, that measure was defeated on the House floor, primarily because of a dispute over abortion funding language. A second appropriations measure is now pending before the House committee.

Regardless, Congress appears unlikely to slash the funding for the subsidy to the \$400 million level requested by the administration.

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ACTS Wins In First Round
Of FCC Low-Power Lottery

By Greg Warner

Baptist Press
10/3/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--The American Christian Television System (ACTS) came up a winner in the first government lottery to award low-power television channels Sept. 29 and was given permission to build a low-power station on channel 60 in Brownwood, Texas.

ACTS was randomly chosen over five other applicants for the Brownwood station in a lottery held at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in Washington. The lottery procedure was adopted by the FCC earlier this year to speed up licensing of channels for which two or more applicants filed. A total of 22 channels were awarded Sept. 29.

Brownwood was the only ACTS application involved in the first-day lottery, which applied only to a group of the oldest and most rural applications. Brownwood, a city of 19,000, has no other TV station.

FCC officials drew ACTS' winning number from a Plexiglas drum last used for the Selective Service lottery. Because the complicated lottery procedure gave an advantage to applications with minority representation and with few other broadcast stations, ACTS' chances were approximately one in four of winning over the five other competitors.

ACTS now has one year in which to build the Brownwood station. The FCC has scheduled another lottery for next month and an ACTS application for channel 20 in Anchorage, Alaska, will be among those decided. The FCC plans one lottery each month until the end of the year, when it may begin holding two per month.

ACTS has applied for 131 low-power TV stations in 35 states. The network will begin next May delivering family entertainment, inspirational and informational programs daily to cable television systems and TV stations nationwide. The Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission is developing the network and programming.

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Home Mission Board
Disciplines Lowder

By Craig Bird

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--Jim Lowder, the pastor of Delores Street Baptist Church in San Francisco, has been reprimanded by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Lowder, his wife, Rose Ann, and nine other members of Delores Street Baptist Church, were arrested June 20 during a nuclear protest outside the Livermore Research Laboratory.

Their protest gained national coverage when the 11 gave their individual names as "Southern Baptist Convention" after they were among more than 1,000 protesters who were arrested and charged with obstructing traffic.

The Lowders are jointly appointed by the Home Mission Board and the Southern Baptist General Convention of California.

The reprimand did not become public knowledge until a budget fight erupted in the September meeting of the California convention's executive committee. Herb Hollinger, editor of the California Southern Baptist, reported the meeting in the Sept. 22 issue.

Board member Richard Neely, pastor of Alameda Baptist Church, moved that the budget line item of \$12,276 for salary assistance for Delores Street church be deleted. Neely said he was upset Lowder was receiving help from the California convention.

Robert D. Hughes, executive director-treasurer of the California convention, said he was likewise "appalled by the use of the name Southern Baptist Convention," in the protest but noted most of the salary funding was from the HMB. He also assured the board he had held discussions with the HMB and "disciplinary action has been taken."

Ralph Longshore, director of the missions division of the California convention, added, "they have been reprimanded and if it (their actions) continues, he (Lowder) will be dismissed."

After being cautioned not to remove the line item because, if Lowder were replaced the funding would not be available for a new pastor either, the board voted overwhelmingly against the proposal to delete the funds.

Paul Adkins, director of the Christian social ministries department of the Home Mission Board, confirmed Oct. 3 the Lowders had been reprimanded but declined to comment since it was a personnel matter.

HMB administrators said in August they had received some negative response calling for the Lowders' resignation. The spokesmen also stressed the Lowders' actions in no way represented the position of the HMB on the nuclear issue since the board has taken no position.

Lowder told Baptist Press the letter from Adkins, "focused on our civil disobedience" but did not forbid his participation in any "legal form of peacemaking."

"I have complete freedom to continue our peacemaking activities, though there could be some problems (with the HMB) if they included civil disobedience again," he explained.

Lowder is planning to attend a peacemaking conference in Oakland the day prior to the meeting of the Southern Baptists General Convention of California, Nov. 14-17.

He is also holding a monthly worship service outside the gate of the Livermore laboratory and he was the only Southern Baptist pastor to sign a recent letter to Alan Cranston, urging the California senator to introduce legislation to delay or halt the deployment of missiles in Western Europe.

Lowder said he and his wife, "feel good about the response to our protest--even the negative reaction," because it has helped focus attention on the issues of nuclear war. Opinion over the nuclear protest is divided, even within his own church.

"We certainly don't have unanimity on this issue (peacemaking) at Delores Street," Lowder admitted. "After all, we are a Baptist church--we have people up and down th line in their feelings about this issue.

"But peacemaking is not the center of our church--it is just one aspect of a number of things we are involved in. Because of the publicity many people may feel it (peacemaking) is our only activity but we are trying to be the body of Christ in many ways."

Lowder said they have received many letters of support from around the world for their actions, including a letter from an editor in West Germany.

Lowder said the civil disobedience (sitting down on a county road leading to the Livermore plant, site of much of the United States' nuclear weapon research) was not taken without "thinking about it a long time," and with the realization it could jeopardize his continued employment with the HMB (which pays 43 percent of his salary). They spent 11 days in the Alameda County Jail in late August.

"We don't regret paying the price for what we did, because we did it out of deep Christian conviction," Lowder said.

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CORRECTION--In (BP) story "Association of Conservative Churches Creation Discussed" mailed Sept. 29, in ninth paragraph please change tranquil centralization to trend toward centralization, and in 11th paragraph please change spring of 1981 to fall of 1980.

Thanks,
Baptist Press
