



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 24, 1984

84-31

Executive Committee

Bylaw Revisions, Site
Rotation System Okayed

By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Proposed revisions in three bylaws to the Southern Baptist Convention Constitution were approved and guidelines for selecting meeting sites for the annual meeting were reviewed during the February meeting of the SBC Executive Committee.

The committee also acted on a resolution on Baptist Press referred to it in the 1983 annual meeting and proposed meeting sites for the 1991, 1992, 1995 and 1996 annual meetings.

The committee heard a report from its bylaws workgroup on an ongoing study of Article VI of the Constitution, primarily dealing with the number of trustees of each of the 20 organizations supported by the national Cooperative Program.

The action asks "each agency of the convention to study the possible need to increase or decrease the number of persons serving as trustees, since each agency has unique needs, and to report to the Executive Committee by Feb. 1, 1985."

In the bylaws revisions, the committee adopted recommendations proposed by the 1983 annual meetings on the committee on boards, committee on committees and resolutions committee.

During the 1983 annual meeting messengers approved recommendations for residency requirements of persons serving on the committee on committees and committee on boards. Further revisions were approved in the February Executive Committee meeting and will be submitted to the 1984 annual meeting.

In the revision adopted in 1983, persons serving on the two committees were "required to have resided within the state from which they are elected at least one year prior to election."

Frank Ingraham, a Nashville attorney and chairman of the bylaws workgroup, said the wording eliminated some persons because it emphasized the "habitat" of the person.

Alvin O. West, a committee member from the District of Columbia, said the original wording would exclude him from service on the Executive Committee.

"I have been a member of First Baptist Church of the District of Columbia since 1941, and have served as president of the District of Columbia Convention. I live just across the Potomac River in Arlington, Va. I don't want to be excluded from the Executive Committee for what is left of my term of service because of the wording of the bylaw," he said.

In both of the bylaws, the committee members approved wording which says those serving either on the committee on boards or committee on committees "shall have been resident members for at least one year of a Southern Baptist church either geographically within the state or affiliated with the convention of the state from which they are elected."

The committee on committees bylaw (21) also includes the provision that the names of those appointed by the convention president "shall be released...to Baptist Press no later than 45 days prior to the annual meeting of the convention."

The wording brings into accord with the reporting provisions for the committee on boards report, adopted at the 1983 convention.

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The revisions on the resolutions committee bylaw (22) follow recommendations made by James T. Draper Jr., convention president, and used during the 1983 meeting.

Ingraham said the revisions "incorporate many of the things Jimmy Draper" suggested. Revisions of the bylaws concerning the resolutions process were suggested during the 1982 annual meeting, and also were considered, Ingraham added.

The revision also includes a provision that the names of those selected to serve be released through Baptist Press no later than 45 days prior to the convention.

The recommended bylaw sets out a process for introducing resolutions almost identical to that followed in Pittsburgh. "Proposed resolutions, including those previously sent to the committee, shall be submitted to the convention by a registered messenger not later than the beginning of the evening session of the first day of the convention.

"Titles of proposed resolutions and the names of the makers shall be read into the convention record by an officer of the convention and referred to the committee..." it reads.

The bylaws work group reported it carefully studied two resolutions presented at the New Orleans convention, and declined to include them. One would have given resolutions the same weight as a motion, and the other requiring a three-fourths majority vote for adoption.

The committee heard a report from the convention arrangements workgroup which suggests a rotation of annual meeting sites between Texas (San Antonio, Dallas and Houston), Georgia (Atlanta) and Louisiana (New Orleans) "on a four to seven year rotation basis."

Tim Hedquist, convention manager for the Executive Committee, explained the five cities "are major high attendance areas for the convention," and explained the informal rotation system "would give direction for convention site selection without tying our hands."

Tommy King, from Columbia, Miss., opposed the informal rotation system, noting "if we put such a motion in effect, the perception of the pioneer mission areas of the West and North will be that we are retreating to a regionalistic approach."

Dorothy Sample, president of the Woman's Missionary Union-SBC, and a member of the committee, supported the rotation, saying "we pretty much are doing it anyway. With just 14 cities which will meet our needs, it is getting increasingly hard to get in."

After adopting the suggestion of a rotation system, the committee voted to recommend Atlanta as the convention site in both 1991 and 1995, Indianapolis in 1992 and New Orleans in 1996.

John McCall, who voted against the proposals, said in the "next 11 years we are locked into only a few cities. That imposes a character on our convention that is not reflective of its nature. Someday I hope we will open up the guidelines and go to other cities."

Under guidelines adopted in 1983, the convention city must provide 6,500 hotel and motel rooms, 3,000 of which must be within two miles of the convention center, a hall capable of seating 16,000 persons and 50,000 square feet of exhibit space.

In other matters, the committee:

--Received as "helpful advice" a resolution offered on the operation of Baptist Press, the denominational news service, which called for identification of reporters and use of reporters not employed by agencies to cover controversies;

--Approved a three percent structure salary increase for Executive Committee employees, effective Oct. 1, but not to be implemented prior to Jan. 1, 1985, or when funds are available;

--Withdrew an action abolishing the Bold Mission Thrust steering committee after William G. Tanner, president of the Home Mission Board, and R. Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board, objected on the basis they had not been previously informed of the action.

Tellers Committee
For 1984 SBC Named

KANSAS CITY (BP)--The Tellers Committee for the 1984 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention has been announced by James T. Draper Jr., SBC president, and Lee Porter, registration secretary.

In announcing the committee, Draper told Baptist Press he feels the committee, which has responsibility for counting all ballots cast during the three-day meeting, is of "unquestioned integrity and represents a cross section of the convention."

Porter said the "committee is expecting a large number of ballot votes in Kansas City," pointing to the election of a new president and other officers, as well as other issues.

The committee will feature two state convention presidents, a state convention executive director and two persons who were first and second vice presidents when the convention last met in Kansas City in 1977.

Chairman is Norman Wiggins, president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and president of Campbell University.

Also on the committee is W. Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, and president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and Robert D. Hughes, executive director of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California.

Also included is Dotson Nelson Jr., pastor emeritus of Mountainbrook Baptist Church of Birmingham, Ala., who was first vice president in 1977, and Mrs. Carl Bates of Horse Shoe, N.C., who was second vice president.

Also selected were: Leon Cook, a layman from Enid, Okla.; Ted Cotton, pastor of First Baptist Church of Longview, Wash.; Robert E. Cuttino, pastor of First Baptist Church of Lancaster, S.C.; Cornelius B. Davis, pastor of Southside Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla.; Billy Hargrove, stewardship director of the Missouri Baptist Convention; Marjorie McCullough, a layperson from Brentwood, Tenn., and Ted Sisk, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church of Lexington, Ky.

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Women In Ministry
Called Critical Issue

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
2/24/84

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (BP)--"It is likely that the single most important issue among Southern Baptists today is women in ministry," Sara Ann Hobbs told members of the Southern Baptist Press Association during their annual meeting in Orlando.

"It is such a tragedy that any issue takes the place of the central issue of serving Jesus Christ," Hobbs said. However, she emphasized, if the issue--whether women will be allowed to fill positions to which they believe God called them--short-circuits a person's ability to serve God, then the issue must be discussed and resolved.

Hobbs, director of the missions division of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, is the only woman holding a division-level position among the 37 state conventions. The 26-year employee of the North Carolina convention spent 19 1/2 years as a staff member and then director of Woman's Missionary Union and 2 1/2 years on the state foundation staff before assuming her present position four years ago.

Hobbs charged Southern Baptist churches are "more culturally patterned than scripturally influenced in their organization. Churches today are more like corporate structures than the New Testament concept of shared ministry. We have adapted for effectiveness in organization the model of the industrial society."

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Hobbs said she believes there is scriptural evidence women were deacons and leaders in New Testament churches. She also cited early British Baptist churches and Separate Baptist churches in the South where women served as deacons and held other ministry roles.

"This destroys the myth this issue is a recent phenomenon and an outgrowth of the feminist movement," said Hobbs.

She believes some churches are facing the issue of women in ministry while others are ignoring it. "In some Southern Baptist churches laywomen are both decisionmakers and workers," she noted. "In others they are only workers."

She said the options for women as professional ministers is the most critical concern. Approximately 24 percent of the 42,000 persons enrolled in U.S. Protestant seminaries in 1981 were women. Today, more women are preparing for ministry by enrolling in seminaries than ever before while the percentage of women filling professional Southern Baptist ministry positions has declined in the last 30 years.

In North Carolina, she said the percentage of women employed as directors of missions in 1950 was 15 percent and had declined to five percent by 1980. A total of 68 percent of the state's ministers of youth and ministers of music were women in 1950 compared to only 16 percent in 1980.

She said campus ministers represented the only exception to the steady decline. In 1950, 63 percent of North Carolina campus ministers were women; the figure plummeted to four percent by 1963 but had climbed back to seven percent in 1981.

Hobbs called pastoral ministry among women a recent phenomenon among Southern Baptists. However, she noted, "Many denominations more conservative in lifestyle and practice have been the most open to women pastors." She listed the Church of God, Church of Nazarene, the Pentecostal Church of God of America and the Salvation Army, among others.

Also, she added, "Change is faster among denominations with the appointment system than those with the congregational call system."

Hobbs predicted trends in society such as the increasing number of working women and women who own businesses will impact churches.

"Will the church say to the female corporate executive she will never be a leader in her church?" asked Hobbs.

On a personal level, Hobbs expressed gratitude to the eight department directors in her division "who have helped me in claiming leadership. I am so grateful for their security in accepting a woman as leader."

Also, she said she is indebted to a "state which follows its leadership. I have seen no evidence any have avoided serving on the state missions committee because it was predominantly led by a woman."

Hobbs called her "pioneer" position both exhilarating and lonely. "I have an awareness I must work harder in this job to succeed. If a man in this job fails, it is his personal failure. If I fail, I fail for all women."

Hobbs said she determined early not to fight inconsequential battles, but stand for important principles. For example, she has never objected when a speaker addressed a group in which she was present as "gentlemen" or "men."

"Language is not the critical issue for me," she explained. "The opportunity of serving God is the critical issue. However, I do not recommend a woman to a job unless the pay would be equal to a man's."

For the future, Hobbs believes "women are going to respond to God's call in all areas of ministry. Whether they will serve with Southern Baptists is not known."

However, she does not see a mass exodus by women from the denomination. "I see a much higher level of loyalty among Southern Baptist women," she noted. "Women need to exercise creativity to find places to begin serving, such as bivocational or voluntary positions."

She urged state paper editors to "print articles which explode the myths and tell their (women ministers) stories. When they succeed, tell it. When their churches grow, tell it."

Hobbs said she recently filled out a survey that requested her name, place of work, and position on the first three lines. Line four asked for a prediction of her next position. "It may be as missionary associate, volunteer, deacon chairman, church WMU director or retiree," said Hobbs. "Whatever God writes on line four--if he writes it--then it will be good."

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

Baptist College Executive
Fired After Conduct Charges

Baptist Press
2/24/84

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--The vice president for business affairs at Baptist College at Charleston, S.C., was fired Feb. 13 for "conduct unbecoming a member of the college family."

Oliver Barnes, 61, was accused of sexual harassment in about a dozen complaints filed by female college employees and students, college trustee chairman, Douglas N. Baker of Greenville, S.C., told the South Carolina Baptist Courier.

Several women students, faculty and staff members complained Barnes touched them in a way they considered offensive and made statements they considered demeaning, Fincher told the Charlotte (N.C.) Observer. "It wasn't representative of an attempt to assault anybody," Fincher said. "It was just over-affection or overfamiliarity."

Barnes told the Charlotte newspaper his attorney had advised him not to comment.

Baker, pastor of First Baptist Church in Berea, S.C., said Barnes was fired by acting president John A. Fincher on authority given him by the trustees' nine-member executive committee. Baker said Barnes was given an opportunity to resign but chose not to on the advice of his attorney. The termination was effective immediately.

As vice president, Barnes was primarily responsible for financial management and supervised as many as 100 employees either directly or indirectly, Fincher said.

Fincher said Barnes' job performance did not figure in the action. "I've got no complaints. He was a most valuable person in that regard," the interim president said.

Baker told the Courier the trustees became aware of the complaints against Barnes in late January and appointed a committee to investigate the allegations. The complaints had been notarized and sealed before being opened by the committee, according to Fincher.

The executive committee met Feb. 11 to hear the report and decided to give Barnes the choice of resigning or being fired, Baker said. Barnes had been at the college for approximately 10 years and was named vice president for business affairs in 1980.

It was the second administrative shake-up at the South Carolina Southern Baptist school in three months. Last November, after an on-going dispute over the colleges financial policies, trustees asked the president to resign and fired three other top administrators.

John A. Hamrick, president of the college for 19 years resigned after refusing to fire E. Harold Keown, vice president for development; Charles L. Price, vice president for student affairs, and E. Harold Keown Jr., assistant vice president for student affairs. The trustees then dismissed the three administrators.

At that time Fincher, retired president of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., and former academic dean of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala. (two other Southern Baptist colleges), was named acting president.

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