



BAPTIST PRESS

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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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84-78

Pressler Nomination
Challenge Planned

By Dan Martin

C-N

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A challenge to the nomination of Paul Pressler, a Houston appeals court judge and leader of the inerrancy movement in the Southern Baptist Convention, is being planned for the annual meeting of the SBC June 12-14 in Kansas City, Mo.

Pressler, a member of First Baptist Church of Houston, was nominated to fill an unexpired three-year term on the SBC Executive Committee by the 1984 Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees. He must be elected at the annual meeting in order to serve.

In addition to the Pressler nomination, a challenge to at least one other action is scheduled, and challenges are rumored from Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina.

The Committee on Boards subcommittee, scheduled to meet prior to the Kansas City convention to fill any vacancies caused by death, relocation or other reason, will hear a protest from Richard Eskew, pastor of First Baptist Church of Yadkinville, N.C., who was eligible for a second term on the Home Mission Board but was not renominated.

Pressler, who emerged into the SBC spotlight in 1979 with charges the denomination was becoming increasingly liberal, was nominated to fill the unexpired term of C. Welton Gaddy, who moved from Texas to Georgia and became ineligible to serve on the Executive Committee.

C. Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, and president of the 2.2-million member Baptist General Convention of Texas, told Baptist Press he will nominate Bruce W. McIver, pastor of Wilshire Baptist Church of Dallas, as Gaddy's replacement.

In a letter to Charles Fuller, chairman of the Committee on Boards, Moore did not mention Pressler, but instead focused on McIver's qualifications. "In the spirit of Bylaw 16 (8) of the Southern Baptist Convention...and its provisions for amending the report of the Committee on Boards, I wish to inform you I will offer the nomination of Bruce W. McIver..." Moore wrote.

Bylaw 16(8) encourages persons desiring to challenge the report to to publicize the challenge in advance of the convention to allow the messengers to be informed.

The letter pointed out McIver is immediate past chairman of the Texas Baptist Executive Board, immediate past chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business, and is a past vice-president of the BGCT and chairman of the board of trustees of the SBC Annuity Board.

"Dr. McIver is a respected and proven leader. He knows Baptists and represents the broad mainstream of Texas Baptists," Moore wrote. "In these days when close scrutiny is required in the planning and administration of Southern Baptist mission dollars, Bruce McIver can lend proven experience and wisdom."

Moore concluded by noting the "proposed amendment will be offered out of a sincere love for our convention and a heartfelt desire to see it move forward in unity and harmony." He added the nomination is "not an 'anti' movement of any kind," but said he believes "we should elect people who are in the mainstream and not 'one-project people'."

Admitting he does not know Pressler, Moore said: "I really haven't talked to that many people about it. I have talked to some (people) since I decided something should be done to present someone who is in the mainstream."

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Pressler told Baptist Press "everyone is free to nominate whomever they wish...." He said "contest of the report...can be disruptive and disharmonious. I would have hoped Dr. Moore, whom I do not know, would have made an effort to get to know me before he took the step of proposing someone against me."

Pressler said: "I prayed about accepting the nomination for a long time and finally decided it would be best to work within the system on a diverse and diversified committee of 69 persons where I could consider the opinions of others and they could consider my opinions. Then we could make a realistic effort to harmonize differences."

"It is my desire to work within the system to harmonize with other Southern Baptists and to seek to promote the great evangelistic and missionary emphasis of Southern Baptists which has been motivated by an allegiance to and belief in the truth of God's word."

Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., said Moore's action "reflects the privilege of the convention. The Committee on Boards is responsible to offer nominations. It is the responsibility of the convention to elect the nominees."

Fuller said the report always is subject to nominations from the floor. "I personally feel that right ought to be there. It is allowed for and we should expect it could happen. I personally hope we will always have that right."

He added, however, he "hopes there will not be a lot of it."

Fuller said messengers "have the opportunity to approve or disapprove the selections of the committee," but should not question the "procedure or the legitimacy of committee actions."

When the seven-member subcommittee meets in Kansas City, Fuller said he will ask it to review the Eskew case. "In response to a number of letters, and in response to a personal appeal by Richard Eskew, I will present the matter to the subcommittee," Fuller said. "In order to maintain our integrity and in order to be totally fair, we need to hear the appeal."

Eskew served a three-year unexpired term and then a full four-year term on the HMB. Under convention guidelines, he is eligible for a second term. North Carolina representatives said they felt 11 years as a trustee was an "excessively long time," Fuller said.

Fuller added the Committee on Boards, which accepted the rationalization, was fully aware of the action. It also was aware, Fuller said, that another HMB trustee, Kenneth Fournet of Lafayette, La., under exactly the same circumstances, was renominated.

In the Eskew case, both the Biblical Recorder, the North Carolina state Baptist newspaper, and trustees of the Home Mission Board have asked that Eskew be returned as a trustee.

Fuller said he has asked Mrs. Ann Frazier of Roanoke Rapids, N.C., the North Carolina lay representative on the committee, to be present for the discussion. T.W. Wilson of Montreat, N.C., the clergy representative, is out of the country.

"The committee was not oblivious that one man was not renominated while another man with the exact set of circumstances was. While the action was not unanimous, the committee went along with Louisiana in one case and with North Carolina in the other," Fuller said.

Fuller said he does not know what action the subcommittee can take since its duties are limited to "filling vacancies. The circumstances are very plain: replacing persons who decline to serve, resign, move from the state, die or otherwise become ineligible to serve."

He said in the case of Eskew a "subcommittee report" could be offered, "although I don't know what purpose that might serve." He noted he does not believe the subcommittee has the privilege of substituting nominees, except in the specified conditions.

Other possibilities include floor action, in which Eskew could be reinstated, or Thomas S. Freeman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dunn, N.C., who replaced Eskew, declining the nomination, leaving the subcommittee free to act.

FMB-N

Alabama-Nigeria Partnership
Yields 13,000 New Christians

IBADAN, Nigeria (BP)—More than 13,000 people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ in 12 major Nigerian cities as a result of a partnership between Alabama and Nigerian Baptists.

Now the two Baptist groups are moving into follow-up activities designed to strengthen churches and bring new believers into the churches.

An Alabama team recently returned from leading stewardship clinics in four cities and four teams will travel to Nigeria in August to teach church outreach through Sunday school. Lay evangelism clinics are also planned.

From the beginning of the partnership, Nigerian Baptists said they wanted follow-up to be a vital part of the program, according to John Mills, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's director for West Africa. It is not unusual to see large numbers make professions of faith, he explained, but rarely do they become active church members.

More than 200 Alabama volunteers, most of whom have worked with evangelistic crusades, have gone to Nigeria since the partnership began in 1983. In return, about 20 Nigerians have traveled to Alabama to speak to churches and Baptist groups there.

Between November and March the two groups conducted services in at least 72 open-air locations and in hundreds of churches and schools in "a gigantic effort to move Nigeria closer to God," said Russell Locke, Southern Baptist missionary and crusade coordinator.

Locke reported the crusades yielded at least one new church in most major cities. In Jos, three new churches were started.

Exciting stories came from almost every city where crusades were held, said Locke. At Ihitte, near Owerri, a priest who commanded his members to boycott the crusade was defied by many who wanted to hear the gospel. A new Baptist church was started there.

At Emene, Enugu, a crowd of ruffians who disturbed the first service was subdued and six of the young men converted. In Kaduna and Abeokuta, approval for open-air evangelism was secured from the police only hours before crusades were to start.

When a heavy rainstorm at Oyo threatened to interrupt a service, the preacher covered his Bible and preached on. In Jos, two former Muslims who had never publicly professed their faith because of family opposition were among students who rededicated their lives to Christ.

Charles Carter, pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham, said a Sunday afternoon rally for all of Ogbomosho was the highlight of crusades for him. After the crowd stood in the heat for his sermon, 800 to 1,000 of them came forward to make decisions.

Carter, who has made other overseas missions trips, said differences between Nigeria and America struck him. He said the power of the gospel message was reaffirmed for him when he saw hundreds hear the gospel for the first time and respond immediately to its message. In the United States, he pointed out, few people make professions of faith the first time.

He also was intrigued with the Nigerian people's hunger for the gospel. When team members passed out gospel tracts, most people began reading immediately. They didn't see any tracts crumpled up and thrown down as they might have in the United States.

Ralph Langley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Huntsville, gave credit for the large numbers of decisions to "133 years of dedicated mission service" and a year of praying by Nigerian Baptists.

Missionary Dorothy Osborne heard some of those prayers. A few months ago, she took a GA leader to a meeting in a remote village. Because she couldn't understand the language used, her mind wandered until the women began praying. Repeatedly, she heard one word she could understand—Alabama.

"What a thrill to realize the people in this faraway place, where the Baptist church is only four years old, had the vision to pray for people in America, and especially for the volunteers from Alabama who have had such an impact on this country," she said.

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B55B-F

Senior Adult Ministry Plagued
By Lack Of Churches' Awareness

By Gail Rothwell

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Lack of awareness concerning senior adults—both their number and their problems—is an acute problem in Southern Baptist churches, according to a denominational senior adult specialist.

Horace Kerr, supervisor of the senior adult section in the Baptist Sunday School Board's family ministry department, noted while the number of persons 65 and older has increased dramatically during the last decade, the average church has not been aware of the growth and is missing a significant ministry opportunity.

According to a report prepared for the 1981 White House Conference on Aging, older persons in the United States represent nearly 25 percent of the membership of churches and synagogues.

According to the national statistics, the population segment 65 years and older experiences a net gain of 800 persons a day. By the year 2000, census figures predict Americans over 55 will comprise slightly more than 20 percent of the population.

Explaining the lack of awareness is a result of churches stereotyping senior adults, Kerr said, "Church leaders generally observe the small minority of senior adults who are homebound or institutionalized. The fact is 85 percent of all persons 65 or older are active and usually maintain their own household."

Kerr attributed the rapidly increasing senior adult population to medical advances such as coronary by-pass surgery, cancer research and pre- and post-natal care. "Better professional medical care has contributed to the rise in life expectancy," he said.

In 1978, the average male celebrating his 65th birthday could expect to live to be 81.3 years old, while the average female at 65 could expect to live to be 83.4.

Because the older segment of the population is increasing daily, Kerr believes the number of senior adult church members equals or exceeds the number of youth in a local church.

"This is staggering information to a church who is busy ministering to tomorrow's church when today's church is available for ministry to them," according to Kerr. He said senior adults not only provide a new area of ministry for a church, but also contribute to the ministry of the total church.

Relating to the needs of senior adults, Kerr said churches should give priority to helping older members feel good about themselves. "Senior adults generally feel they have completed their major life roles and are no longer useful," Kerr said. "Churches can help them feel good about who they are and contributions they can make."

He cautioned against beginning a senior adult ministry without finding out the needs and interests of senior adults. "We have to be concerned with the welfare of the total person, including health, finances, housing, food, shelter and other basic needs," he said.

According to Kerr, the first goal of a church should be to incorporate senior adults into the church family. He suggested consideration be given to older members when planning church activities, consciously including senior adults in family emphases and planning more structured opportunities for fellowship between different age groups.

Planning intergenerational activities is valuable not only to the senior adults but to the total church family.

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Kerr explained in single parent homes the presence of a grandparent figure could help establish a sense of family. "Where better than the church to begin to form this relationship," he said.

Increasing the church's awareness about senior adults should begin with the leaders. Resource helps are available from the family ministry department for senior adults and the senior adult leaders.

Mature Living, a magazine for senior adults produced by the family ministry department, has grown from a circulation of 62,000 a month since April 1977, to its present monthly circulation of nearly 300,000.

Although Kerr noted one out of every six Southern Baptist churches sponsors some type of weekday activity for senior adults, he said every church should provide a ministry to senior members.

He suggested small churches join with neighboring churches or coordinate a senior adult ministry on an associational level. "The contributions senior adults make cannot be overlooked. Their ministry is limited only by the creativity of the church," Kerr emphasized.

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(This is the final article in a three-part series on the family.)

Missionary Kid Saves
Neighbor From Intruder

By Evelyn Knapp

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ARUSHA, Tanzania (BP)—Derek Akin, 13-year-old son of Southern Baptist missionaries, possibly saved the life of a neighbor as an intruder tried to break into her home in Arusha, Tanzania.

Derek and his sister, Chaundel, 15, heard a loud banging and a woman shouting for help in the house next door about 9:30 p.m. Their parents, missionaries Cordell and Marty Akin of Nashville, Tenn., and Long Beach, Calif., were not at home.

Derek and Chaundel waited for awhile but the sounds next door kept getting worse. Finally, Derek got his B-B gun, a gift from his parents, cautiously slipped outside and went next door.

A man with an ax was battering in the door. Through a window, Derek saw the woman had been injured before she locked herself in the house. Derek took careful aim and fired, hitting the man, who appeared drunk, in the hand. He was so startled he dropped the ax and fled.

"He's got courage and compassion," said his mother of her son's willingness to take a risk to help someone else.

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Annuity Board Names Blosskas
To Vice-Presidency

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DALLAS (BP)—John D. Blosskas will rejoin the Annuity Board staff as vice-president and associate director of endowment.

On June 1, Blosskas will reunite with the board where he will work with D. William Dotson Jr., in securing endowment funds to supplement the incomes of retired Southern Baptist ministers, missionaries, their spouses or widows.

Blosskas spent 23 years in the board's public relations department before accepting a position as a marketing vice-president of a Dallas-based corporation three years ago. However, he has remained a member of the board's endowment committee for several years.

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