



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

November 13, 1984

84-164

Accused Salvadoran Pastor Now In Mexico Seeking Refuge

MEXICO CITY (BP)—A Baptist pastor deported from El Salvador for alleged ties to Marxist rebels is now staying at the Swedish embassy in Mexico City while he seeks refuge in a country willing to accept him.

Miguel Castro Garcia was arrested in San Salvador Oct. 28 and put on a plane two days later, reportedly headed for Sweden. The plane stopped in Mexico City and Castro was temporarily admitted to the Swedish embassy there. He has until Nov. 19 to gain sanctuary in Mexico or another country in the region, according to American Baptist officials. Otherwise he must continue on to Sweden.

He does not plan to move his family from El Salvador until he knows where he will be living, said Victor Mercado, Latin America director for American Baptist Board of International Ministries. Castro also has applied for admission to the United States and Canada.

Castro, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in San Salvador, was arrested by plainclothes policemen as he drove home from church services. He was later accused of "being an active member of a subversive organization," according to the U.S. State Department.

U.S. officials reportedly told an American group protesting the arrest Castro had admitted to Salvadoran police that "aides" in his church's work with refugees possibly had contacts with rebels. Castro has charged he was blindfolded by police and forced to sign a statement confessing rebel connections, according to American Baptist official Mercado.

But Mercado said police officials in San Salvador have told Baptist leaders there that they are now "studying the possibility of allowing (Castro) to come back to El Salvador.... They haven't found anything to accuse him and to charge him with yet."

Castro's church is affiliated with the Baptist Association of El Salvador, which relates closely to the American Baptist denomination in the United States. Association leaders have denounced Castro's arrest and deportation, as have leaders of American Baptists, the Baptist World Alliance, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and numerous religious and human rights groups in the United States and Europe.

--30--

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
LIBRARY
Historical Commission
Nashville, Tennessee

Cothen Challenges Trustees,
To Promote New Annuity Plan

Baptist Press
11/13/84

DALLAS (BP)—The greatest scandal currently facing the Southern Baptist Convention is the large number of poverty-stricken annuitants, a retired denominational executive told trustees of the SBC Annuity Board.

Grady C. Cothen, president emeritus of the Baptist Sunday School Board, said at the November meeting, thousands of retired Southern Baptists ministers, missionaries and their widows who are living on less than \$200 per month is a "national scandal" for modern-day Southern Baptists and is a result of "our ecclesiology and polity."

--more--

Cothen said although the autonomy of the local church has been the strength of the denomination, it has led to a strong "individualism" which has not always been responsibly exercised.

"All of the pastors' relationships are directed to the church thus isolating them from the Baptist community," he said, adding the church is responsible for "ordaining, employing, granting tenure and designing the benefit structure of its minister." Cothen noted this action tends to increase isolation and makes it more difficult to have a proper retirement.

"Many church laypeople don't see the need for providing their minister with an adequate retirement plan and the minister doesn't want to force the issue," he added.

Cothen praised the foresight of the board in developing a new pension plan for Southern Baptists serving the local church. He urged trustees and staff to "develop new and creative ideas" to get the laypeople and the ministers involved in the new Church Annuity Plan.

In reference to annuitants who are in need, Cothen said more Southern Baptists should be encouraged to become involved in the "Adopt An Annuitant" program offered through the Annuity Board. The program allows interested donors to contribute \$50 per month to an anonymous needy annuitant.

Action taken by the board included the addition of a Fixed Fund to the Voluntary Annuity Plan, and the approval of a lump-sum benefit payment to ministers or church staff members who have left denominational service.

The new Fixed Fund will replace the current Bond Fund and will be invested primarily in fixed income assets which may include arrangements with commercial insurance companies. Persons with investments in the Bond Fund will have the opportunity to transfer them to other funds within the plan.

Participants in the Church Annuity Plan who have less than \$3,500 in their retirement income account, and are no longer serving the denomination, may receive their benefits in a lump-sum.

--30--

West Virginia Baptists
Decry Gambling, Strife

Baptist Press
11/13/84

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. (BP)--West Virginia Southern Baptists heard strong evangelistic preaching, took action on a record budget and approved resolutions on gambling, denominational strife, separation of church and state, prayer for spiritual awakening, support of legal action against the U.S. ambassador to the Holy See and an end to the arms build up.

During their annual meeting Nov. 9-10, messengers went on record opposing all forms of gambling, legal or illegal, and urged that the West Virginia state legislature not establish a state-run lottery despite a Nov. 6 vote approving an amendment to the state constitution allowing them to do so.

Another resolution called on those creating a "factional spirit" in the SBC to refrain from name calling and judgement of motives and to "contend for the faith in the spirit of love and kindness."

Messengers affirmed their support of a traditional concept of separation of church and state and encouraged individuals to be involved in the political process but pointed out government bodies should not seek to influence the working or decisions of churches or related bodies.

The churches of West Virginia were urged through a resolution to continue to set aside the first Tuesday of every month during 1985 as a day of prayer for spiritual awakening.

--more--

The West Virginia convention went on record through a resolution supporting legal action challenging the constitutionality of the appointment of a U.S. ambassador to the Holy See. The resolution urges the Executive Committee of the SBC to join other groups in the challenge of the constitutionality of this appointment.

The final resolution called for an end to the current arms race between the U.S and the Soviets and called for prayer for peace.

Lester Hall, pastor of Memorial Baptist Church, Beckley, was elected president. Cledith Campbell Jr., pastor of Altizer Baptist Church, Huntington, was elected first vice-president. Jon Caudle, pastor of Highland Avenue Baptist Church, South Charleston, was named second vice-president and Robert Keown of St. Almonds, was elected recording secretary.

The messengers approved a record budget of \$1,367,788, of which \$545,431 will come from the 93 churches and 49 missions of the convention. The budget specifies 23.5 percent—the same as last year—will go to support worldwide causes of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The 1985 annual meeting will be Nov. 8-9 at Cross Lanes Baptist Church in Charleston.

—30—

New Convention Observes First Annual Meeting

Baptist Press
11/13/84

MADISON, Wis. (BP)—Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptists celebrated their first year as a convention during their first annual meeting at Midvale Baptist Church, the "mother church" of the SBC in the two-state area.

During the session in Midvale, which began in 1953 with 19 members, messengers were told the convention now has grown to 11,848 members in 80 churches and 36 missions across the two state area.

Messengers were told baptisms last year amounted to 819 and Sunday school enrollment has grown to 8,750 persons.

The 1984 meeting, which drew 191 messengers and visitors, elected Frank Hamby, pastor of Highland Crest Baptist Church, Green Bay, Wis., as new president, succeeding Gail Zimmerman, Kenosha, Wis., who has been elected director of evangelism/stewardship for the convention, whose offices are in Rochester, Minn.

John Langlois, a Milton, Wis., pastor, was elected first vice-president, and Bob Stockland, a Duluth, Minn., pastor, was elected second vice-president.

One of the highlights of the annual meeting was the presentation of a plaque to Stockland by Lloyd Elder, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn. Stockland originated "Teleguide," a program featuring telephone placement of BSSB Home Bible Study guides for church planting and cultivation of prospects.

A \$1,295,427 budget was adopted of which \$264,240 will be contributed by the 116 congregations of the convention. Of the local contributions, 25 percent—the same percentage as last year—is designated for the worldwide missions-evangelism-effort of the SBC.

The 1985 convention is set for Nov. 14-16 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Racine, Wis.

—30—

Home Mission Board Opens New Regional Loans Offices

ATLANTA (BP)—The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has opened regional church loans division offices in Baltimore and Los Angeles in an effort to cut travel costs and be more accessible to Southern Baptist churches.

—more—

The western regional office is directed by James Forrest, former director of missions for the Long Beach Harbor Baptist Association now assistant director of the Home Mission Board's division of church loans. He is representing the board in California, Nevada and Arizona.

The eastern regional office is directed by Roy Gresham, retired executive director of the Maryland Baptist Convention, who is the board's church loan division representative for churches in Virginia, West Virginia, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, New York and New England.

Robert Kilgore, director of the Home Mission Board division of church loans, said the new regional offices were opened in order to do a better job of serving the churches and division, and to be more readily available to the churches.

Church loans division regional representatives will consult with local churches on needs for loans and church bonds, provide financial counsel for building programs, loans processing, church site acquisitions, and maintaining of existing accounts, Kilgore said.

Although churches may continue to contact the national office in Atlanta, they are encouraged to write or call the regional representatives for any church loans or church bonds needs, Kilgore said.

Forrest, the western representative, may be contacted at 3401 Katella Ave., Suite 209; Los Alamitos, Calif. 90720; telephone (213) 594-8804.

Gresham may be contacted at the Lafayette Building, Suite 205; 40 W. Chesapeake, Townson, Md. 21204; telephone (301) 337-3568.

---30---

D.C. Acts On Nicaragua,
Women's Ordination

Baptist Press
11/13/84

WASHINGTON (BP)--Delegates to the District of Columbia Baptist Convention adopted resolutions on Nicaragua and the ordination of women and voted to hold a special session later this month to determine if its headquarters will remain in downtown Washington.

The statement on Nicaragua, presented as a resolution by June Totten, executive secretary of the Baptist World Alliance's women's department, called on the United States and the Soviet Union to refrain from further military intervention and to provide only economic assistance to the troubled Central American country.

Adoption of the resolution--by a margin of nearly 3-1--came after delegates heard a cable from leaders of the Nicaragua Baptist Convention asking for prayer "to save Nicaragua from a bloody invasion." The cable declared further, "Nicaragua is living a very tragic hour with the immediate threat of a military invasion from the United States under the pretext that Nicaragua has received MIG airplanes."

President Reagan and Secretary of State George P. Shultz have denied repeatedly in recent days that any invasion of Nicaragua is planned, while in Managua the government has denied the shipment of MIGs from the Soviet Union.

More heatedly debated by D.C. Baptists was a resolution on ordination and local church autonomy encouraging "all Baptist bodies to refrain from interference in this local church function" and "to refrain from making ordination a test of fellowship or a factor in seating of delegates or messengers to associational, state or national convention meetings."

The resolution was opposed by a group of delegates from Capitol Hill Metropolitan Baptist Church, who proposed as a substitute the Southern Baptist Convention resolution of last June opposing ordination of women.

After the substitute failed 113-17, the original statement was adopted on a standing vote with seven opposing.

---more---

Also adopted were resolutions calling for proponents and opponents of abortion to engage in dialogue, opposing President Reagan's sending of an ambassador to the Vatican, expressing opposition to the proposed interstate advertising of gambling and decrying family violence and child abuse.

Delegates also voted to convene a special session of the convention Nov. 27 to act on an offer by a potential buyer of the Baptist Building. The \$2.1 million offer for the property, located in the heart of downtown Washington six blocks from the White House, was made to the Baptist World Alliance, which along with the D.C. convention, is housed in the building.

Last July the BWA general board voted to sell its interest in the building and relocate in suburban Virginia.

Before announcement of the new offer was made to the D.C. convention delegates, the convention had accepted a recommendation from its executive board to remain in the present site "if feasible."

As co-owners of the property, the convention and the BWA must work out any sale cooperatively, according to a 1947 agreement governing disposal of the Sixteenth Street building.

In other business, delegates elected layman Norman Taylor new convention president. Taylor, an executive with the National Bureau of Standards, is a member of First Baptist Church, Silver Spring, Md.

A budget of \$676,395--\$199,005 of which will come from the Home Mission Board and Sunday School Board--was adopted. From its undesignated receipts, 23 percent will be sent on to SBC and American Baptist Churches, USA mission causes. (Some D.C. convention churches are dually affiliated with SBC and ABC/USA.)

Next year's meeting will be held Nov. 7-8 at Shiloh Baptist Church, Washington.

A pair of Southern Baptist denominational leaders challenged delegates to unite around missions and to change their lifestyle.

Elmer S. West, director of special ministries at the Foreign Mission Board, declared, "It is no secret that Southern Baptists are in an identity crisis," a reference to theological division that has plagued the 14.1 million-member denomination for the past five years. Yet the search for identity has been a constant struggle throughout their history for Southern Baptists, West said, pointing to the fact that the "gross sin" of slavery brought the convention into being.

Quoting Foreign Mission Board president R. Keith Parks, West said that what has united Southern Baptists throughout their history has been the "formative principle" and "unifying core" of missions. West also noted Parks' recent warning that in the current battle for control of SBC agencies and institutions, "It is one for all and all for one." West added, "We all rise or fall together."

E. Glenn Hinson, professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., criticized the view that "America is back again" or "standing tall" when Americans--who compose six percent of the world's population--consume 40 percent of the world's energy, eat nearly half the world's food and account for more than half the world's solid waste.

He called on Christians to adopt the apostle Paul's sense of "contentment" with what he possessed, a lifestyle Hinson described as a "philosophy of sufficiency." Like Paul, he added, American Christians should seek "freedom" and "detachment" from material things and discover "the One who is needful for life."

Such commitment will free Christians from "selective inattention to reality" and "selective attention to unreality," Hinson declared, and will encourage them to see to it that "a little (is) left over for others to survive."



BAPTIST PRESS

*460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219*

*ABO
AB
CD*

LYNN MAY HQ
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE NO
NASHVILLE TN 37234