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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 6, 1986

Federal Judge Rules  
For SBC In Lawsuit

By Dan Martin

86-66  
SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Historical Commission, SBC  
Nashville, Tennessee

ATLANTA (BP)—Saying the First Amendment of the United States Constitution prevents the intrusion of secular courts into the internal church matters, U.S. District Judge Robert Hall on May 5 decided a federal lawsuit in favor of the Southern Baptist Convention and its Executive Committee.

The suit was filed Dec. 5 in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia by Robert S. Crowder and his wife, Julia, of Birmingham, Ala., and Henry C. Cooper of Windsor, Mo., who asked the federal court to interpret SBC Bylaws, to enjoin the convention into compliance with the court's interpretation and to vacate the 1986 Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees.

In issuing his ruling, Hall wrote: "Defendants contend that this court lacks jurisdiction over this action because it involves the resolution of an ecclesiastical controversy in violation of the First Amendment's requirement of separation of church and state. This court agrees with defendants.

"It has long been a fundamental proposition of constitutional law that civil tribunals have no power to resolve disputes which are ecclesiastical in nature."

It is uncertain what effect Hall's ruling will have on a parallel suit filed in Fulton County Superior Court in Atlanta by five laypersons from five states, but attorneys for the SBC feel the federal court decision sets a "powerful precedent" which probably will result in a similar decision by the state court.

In his decision, Hall noted the Crowders and Cooper were "three of some 45,000 Baptist messengers who convened in Dallas..." June 11-13, 1985 for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention and traces the sources of the dispute which resulted in the filing of the federal lawsuit.

"Plaintiffs contend that certain bylaws were misinterpreted and that certain parliamentary errors occurred during the process of electing the 1985 Nominating Committee (Committee on Boards)," Hall wrote.

The dispute revolves around the report of the 1985 Committee on Committees, which had been appointed by SBC President Charles F. Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, and the subsequent election of its slate of nominations to the Committee on Boards.

When the report of the Committee on Committees was made Wednesday, June 12, 1985, nominating the Committee on Boards, messenger James Slatton, pastor of River Road Baptist Church in Richmond, Va., attempted to amend the report by proposing a new slate of nominees.

Hall noted Stanley ruled Slatton's motion out of order. The decision was appealed and messengers rejected Stanley's ruling. After the vote, the morning session concluded without resolution of the issue.

"When the evening session convened," Hall wrote, Stanley "ruled Dr. Slatton's motion out of order, this time on the ground that nominations from the floor...in any form...were prohibited by the bylaws." He added the Crowders and Cooper "contend that they attempted to appeal this ruling, but that they were not recognized by the chair. The slate of candidates nominated by the Committee on Committees was elected by a majority of the messengers...."

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Following the convention, the Crowders appealed to the September meeting of the SBC Executive Committee, which, rather than overruling the convention action, voted instead to affirm the election of the 1986 Committee on Boards.

The Crowders and Cooper--who were later joined by Allen McCartney of Vero Beach, Fla., as a plaintiff--filed the federal suit.

In his decision, Hall writes: "Plaintiffs characterize the dispute as a breach of contract, the contract being the SBC bylaws which defendants allegedly breached through an incorrect interpretation of Robert's Rules of Order.... The court views this characterization as an oversimplification of the dispute."

Hall continues: "What is actually at issue in this case is a question of church governance. Whether Reverend Dr. Stanley's rulings were correct or patently incorrect is irrelevant because a decision as to validity of his rulings would involve this court in the internal affairs of the Southern Baptist Convention, a position the court cannot assume.

"The fact that a civil court must not become involved in disputes of this type has been made abundantly clear by the Supreme Court."

Hall cited the U.S. Supreme Court 1871 ruling in *Watson v. Jones*:

"The right to organize voluntary religious associations to assist in the expression and dissemination of any religious doctrine, and to create tribunals for the decisions of controverted questions of faith within the association, and for the ecclesiastical government of all the individual members, congregations and officers within the general association is unquestioned.

"All that unite themselves to such a body do so with an implied consent to this government and are bound to submit to it."

That ruling adds, Hall wrote: "...'(T)he judicial eye cannot penetrate the veil of the church for the forbidden purpose of vindicating the alleged wrongs of excised members; when they became members they did so upon the condition of continuing or not as they and their churches might determine and they thereby submit to the ecclesiastical power and cannot now invoke the supervisory powers of the civil tribunals.'"

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Defendants, Plaintiffs  
React To Suit Decision

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The defendants were "elated" and "gratified" and the plaintiffs were "disappointed" by the decision of U.S. District Judge Robert Hall finding in favor of the Southern Baptist Convention in a federal lawsuit.

Hall, of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, May 5 issued a summary judgment in favor of the SBC and its Executive Committee in a dispute with a group of laypeople led by Robert S. Crowder of Birmingham, Ala. concerning the conduct of the business of the SBC during the 1985 annual meeting in Dallas.

Crowder, his wife, Julia, and Henry C. Cooper of Windsor, Mo., filed suit in the federal court Dec. 5. In early 1986, a parallel suit was filed in Fulton County Superior Court in Atlanta by five laypersons from five states. Both suits asked the courts for an interpretation of the bylaws of the SBC, an injunction to enforce compliance with the interpretation and vacating of the 1986 Committee on Boards.

The SBC based its defense on the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which attorneys said prevented the court from resolving the dispute. In his decision, Hall agreed with the argument of the SBC.

James P. Guenther, the SBC's attorney, told Baptist Press: "I am pleased that we were able to persuade the federal court to share our view of the First Amendment. But, I am even more pleased that the case is over and we can look back and say that in the fight we kept the faith."

"Our defense was the shield of the First Amendment. For that right, we can thank our Baptist forebears and those who have over the years nurtured this principle with sense and integrity," said Guenther, of the Nashville firm of Guenther and Jordan. He added the SBC response "did not address the merits because to have done so would have been to abandon the First Amendment insistence that a secular court is no place to argue about internal controversies in the (Southern Baptist) Convention."

The attorney, however, said the defense team "had geared up to be ready and had secured affidavits from several persons—including Winfred Moore—and we were prepared to file them if the case got into the merits."

Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, was the moderate candidate for president of the SBC, opposing current president Charles F. Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta.

Stanley told Baptist Press: "I conscientiously did what I sincerely thought was right. I am grateful the decision has been made. This is a significant decision for the continuing separation of church and state. It is not only a victory for Southern Baptists but for every church in every denomination in America."

Crowder declined to comment until he had seen the court papers. "I think I had better stay quiet until I have seen them," he said. Concerning the possibility of an appeal, Crowder said "there are nine plaintiffs in this thing, not just Bob Crowder. I will have to consult with them to see what they think."

Jane Vehko, an attorney with the Atlanta lawfirm of Bondurant, Mixson and Elmore, which represented the Crowders, said: "We are obviously disappointed and do not think the decision is a sound one. It is unsound because it places the SBC above the law with respect to certain matters, and I don't think that is necessitated by the First Amendment, as the judge found."

She noted the plaintiffs are considering an appeal. "I could certainly appeal the decision. I think it is wrong and that our position is supported by case law."

Harold C. Bennett, president of the SBC Executive Committee, noted he is "deeply gratified" by the decision which he noted is "based to the internal operation of the convention and not on the correctness or incorrectness of the parliamentary decisions. This is an important distinction, and therefore I think the convention continues under an absolute mandate to follow its own constitution and bylaws without exception."

Bennett also "strongly commended" defense attorneys Guenther and Griffin Bell of the Atlanta lawfirm of King and Spaulding.

James Slatton, pastor of River Road Baptist Church in Richmond, Va., was the messenger who introduced the alternate slate of nominees to the Committee on Boards which set off the parliamentary wrangling which ultimately resulted in the lawsuit. Slatton was not a party to the lawsuit.

Slatton, who has a doctorate in church-state separation doctrine from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, said: "It is important that Southern Baptists understand that the court has not exonerated Charles Stanley's rulings in Dallas. The judge has clearly refused to pronounce one way or another on Stanley's handling of the issues surrounding my motion.

"I remain convinced that it is well within the rules to offer a substitute slate for election to the Committee on Boards. I appealed from the chair to the convention, and by printed ballot the convention majority voted to overrule the chair. Wednesday night Stanley simply refused to be bound by the decision of the convention. He ignored all calls for points of order or discussion.

"That behavior constituted railroading and was patently out of order. What more evidence do people need to prove that the office of president must be depoliticized and that the body must hold to account the political machine which is responsible both for stacking committees and for misusing the position of the presiding officer."

Credentials, Tellers  
Committees Appointed

ATLANTA (BP)—The Credentials and Tellers Committees for the 1986 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention have been appointed by SBC President Charles F. Stanley of Atlanta.

Chairman of the 27-member Credentials Committee will be Charles Page, pastor of First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tenn.

Chairman of the 22-member Tellers Committee will be Jack Graham, pastor of First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach, Fla.

According to the SBC bylaws, the Credentials Committee is appointed by the president, in consultation with the vice presidents." The bylaws specify the committee will review and rule upon any question which may arise in registration concerning the credentials of messengers, and "any contention arising on the floor (of the convention) concerning seating of messengers."

The bylaws specify the Tellers Committee is appointed by the president "in consultation with the registration secretary" and has the responsibility of tabulating any vote, under supervision of the registration secretary.

First vice president of the convention is Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, and second vice president is Henry Huff, an attorney and member of Crescent Hill Baptist Church of Louisville, Ky. Registration secretary is Lee Porter of Nashville, Tenn.

Stanley also shifted John W. Bryan from the SBC Committee on Committees, representing West Virginia, to membership on the Credentials Committee.

Bryan, a pathologist and member of First Baptist Church of Bluefield, Va., currently is a trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board, as a representative from Virginia. The Virginia-West Virginia state line divides Bluefield, and Bryan's business address is in West Virginia.

Stanley named Robert Rice, pastor of Westmoreland Baptist Church in Huntington, W.Va., to replace Bryan on the 1986 Committee on Committees.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (Charles Page, Nashville, Tenn., chairman.)

Tommy Hinson, pastor of First church, West Memphis, Ark.; Jim Reeves, administrator and member of First church, Van Nuys, Calif.; E.J. Daniels, an evangelist and member of Downtown church, Orlando, Fla.; John Yarbrough, pastor of Tabernacle church, Cartersville, Ga.;

Dwight (Ike) Reighard, pastor of New Hope church, Fayetteville, Ga.; Raymond McCain, pastor of Machesney Park church, Rockford, Ill.; Rudy Yakym, a stockbroker and member of First Southern church of Mishawaka, South Bend, Ind.; Garland Morrison, pastor of Sunnycrest church, Marion, Ind.; Jerry Lowrie, pastor of Main Street church, Williamsburg, Ky.;

Lawrence Hall, a layman and member of Severns Valley church, Elizabethtown, Ky.; Gary Brink, pastor of Immanuel church, Romeo, Mich.; Bill Poe, pastor of Waldo Avenue church, Independence, Mo.; Robert Payne, pastor of Sycamore Hills church, Independence, Mo.; Gary Berry, pastor of First church, McComb, Miss.; Billy Cline, pastor of Merrimon Avenue church, Asheville, N.C.;

Rick Hudson, pastor of Hillcrest church, Carlsbad, N.M.; Ernie Perkins, director of missions, Capital association, Oklahoma City, and member of First Southern church, Del City, Okla.; Sam Pace, director of missions, Comanche-Cotton association, Lawton, Okla., and member of First church-East, Lawton, Okla.; Mike Downey, pastor of First church, Hennessey, Okla.;

Elton Johnson, pastor of Charleston church, Charleston, S.C.; Gene Russell, pastor of Calvary church, Desoto, Texas; Sam Jones, pastor of First church, Pittsburg, Texas; Lester Collins, pastor of Tallowood church, Houston, Texas; Don Bowen, pastor of Downtown church, Alexandria, Va.; Art Ballard, pastor of Old Forest Road church, Lynchburg, Va., and Bryan.

TELLERS COMMITTEE (Jack Graham, West Palm Beach, Fla., chairman)

Jack Millwood, pastor of First church, Chickasaw, Ala.; Joe Simmons, crusade director for Bailey Smith's Real Evangelism crusades and member of Sagemont church, Houston, Texas; Earl Potts, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Convention and member of Eastern Hills church, Montgomery; Doyle Carlton Jr., a businessman and member of First church, Wauchula, Fla.;

Paul Caudill, an accountant and member of First church, Lilburn, Ga.; Steve Turner, pastor of First church, Ellenwood, Ga.; Hoge Hockensmith, pastor of Broadway church, Lexington, Ky.; Jim Richards, pastor of Green Acres church, Bastrop, La.; Terry Hart, a layman and member of Faith church, Glen Burnie, Md.;

Paul Callahan, pastor of First church, Warrensburg, Mo.; Charles Sexton, pastor of First church, Princeton, Mo.; Kenneth Ridings, pastor of Grassy Branch church and professor at the Fruitland Bible Institute, Hendersonville, N.C.; Bob Bender, pastor of Windsor Park church, Austin, Texas; Jim Oliver, pastor of Central church, Darlington, S.C.;

Hal Lane, pastor of Eutawville church, Eutawville, S.C.; T.C. Pinckney, layman and member of Plymouth Haven church, Alexandria, Va.; Jim Wilson, pastor of Delaney Street church, Orlando, Fla.; Mrs. Carl (Myra) Bates, a homemaker and member of First church, Hendersonville, N.C.; John Lee Taylor, pastor of West Jackson church, Jackson, Tenn.; Ruth Gleaves, a homemaker and member of First church, Atlanta; and Joe Porter, retired director of missions for the Caldwell Ray association and member of First church, Richmond, Mo.

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Tanner Tabbed As Oklahoma  
Executive Director-Treasurer

By Norman Jameson

Baptist Press  
5/6/86

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)—William G. Tanner, president of the Home Mission Board since 1977 and former president of Oklahoma Baptist University, was elected executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma during a special called meeting of the board of directors May 5.

Tanner, 56, succeeds Joe L. Ingram who has been BGCO executive 15 years but is stepping aside June 30 to direct the Baptist Health Care Corporation.

Tanner is expected to begin duties in Oklahoma July 1. His election must be ratified by messengers at the state convention Nov. 10-12 in Bethany.

Questioned before the vote about his vision for Oklahoma, Tanner said he had learned much in the past 10 years of missions administration. "The day of playing games is over," he said. "If we don't get serious about leading people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, we're going to lose this country."

After considering some 30 men and interviewing a dozen, Tanner was recommended by the search committee because "he has the big picture like nobody else," said committee chairman, Warren Hultgren, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tulsa.

Hultgren said the committee took no preliminary ballot to narrow the field of twelve, but that Tanner was the unanimous choice on first ballot.

Hultgren said any of the dozen men the committee interviewed "could have done the job", but Tanner was the clear choice for several reasons: he has roots in Oklahoma having been born in Tulsa and served as OBU president; he is familiar with Oklahoma Baptists "and likes them;" he is an "excellent administrator;" and, significantly, he is not theologically polarized.

"He has refused as head of the Home Mission Board to align himself for or against any group, saying I will work with all of them if they will let me," Hultgren said.

Tanner answered the lingering question of his "stepping down" from a national agency to lead a state convention before it was raised publicly. "There is no stepping down in the Lord's work. I am stepping forward."

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Three general goals Tanner has for Oklahoma Baptists are to get people talking about Jesus, to continue organizing churches and to minister to needy people.

Oklahoma's current economic distress may be a blessing in disguise, Tanner said, because it will help people "rearrange their priorities."

Tanner spoke briefly and emotionally after the election, pausing several times as his voice appeared about to break. Remembering Oklahoma's beautiful sunsets shared with him by his father, he said, "It's great to be home."

At a press conference following his election, Tanner was thrust into Oklahoma Baptists' fight against a state sponsored lottery for which an election is scheduled in November. "It (the fight) will be going when I get here and I'm sure I'll jump right into the middle of the river," he said. "I'm Irish and I'm not afraid of a fight."

Although Baptists have taken a beating in two moral issues recently, liquor by the drink and pari-mutuel gambling, Tanner said, "We have no option than to be involved, whether we win or lose. It's a conviction, a commitment. The only thing worse than losing is not trying."

Tanner was born March 10, 1930 in Tulsa and graduated from Baylor University in 1951. He earned a doctor of education degree from the University of Houston and Ph.D from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He has been granted honorary degrees from California Baptist College, the University of Richmond and Campbell University.

He was pastor of churches in Wheelock, Cleburne and Houston, Texas, 1948-62; First Baptist Church, Gulfport, Miss., 1962-67; president of Mary Hardin-Baylor College (now University of Mary Hardin-Baylor) 1967-71; and Oklahoma Baptist University president, 1971-76.

He is married to the former Ellen Sampey Yates and they have four children: Bill Jr., Keith, Mark and Kimberly Anne.

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(Jameson is associate editor of the Baptist Messenger, newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.)

Commission Initiates Search  
For Executive Director-Elect

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press  
5/6/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Citing "personal health concerns," Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission Executive Director Foy Valentine has requested the process for finding his successor be set in motion.

In a letter to the commission's chairman, Charles R. Wade, Valentine asked that a search committee be activated to nominate an executive director-elect "as soon as in the providence of God the right person can be found."

While no date was set for the search committee's report, Valentine noted that when the commission meets in September he will be only 22 months from the age 65 retirement date designated in the agency's employment policies.

In response to Valentine's request, which was discussed at the regular meeting of the CLC executive committee on April 28, Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, has appointed six other commission members to be on a search committee with him.

Committee members are Mrs. Patricia Ayres, member of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas; Marvin Don Blanton, member of Oak Grove Baptist Church, Bel Air, Md.; David George, pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn.; Mrs. Virginia Hendricks, member of Glorieta Baptist Church, Glorieta, N. M.; Roy Rhodes, member of First Baptist Church, Tallahassee, Fla.; and George Strickland, member of Beaucoup Baptist Church, Pinckneyville, Ill. Wade, a commission member since 1980, will be chairman.

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"Foy Valentine has invested more than three decades of his life in the cause of applied Christianity among Southern Baptists," said Wade. "Personally, I wish that the Commission were not having to deal with this matter. But the executive committee concurred with Dr. Valentine's judgment, based on his first-hand knowledge of the demands of the job and the competent counsel of medical experts, that it is prudent for the search process for an executive director-elect to begin at this time."

The search committee, Wade added, "covets the prayerful support of all Southern Baptists as we seek God's will in this crucial process."

In his letter requesting the appointment of a search committee, Valentine explained that "the urgency of the matter is highlighted by some personal health concerns which have recently come into focus." Last June, he said, physicians diagnosed a heart condition consisting of a 90 percent blockage in one area and a 60 percent blockage in two other areas. While the heart specialist who performed an angiogram examination did not recommend open-heart surgery, he did prescribe a special health care program including medication and avoidance of heavy stress, Valentine said.

"I have done the recommended things except for the avoidance of heavy stress," he continued. "I have now concluded that in the position as executive director...it is not going to be humanly possible for me to avoid the heavy stress which is inescapably a part of this prophetic ministry."

Valentine, the dean of Southern Baptist Convention agency executives, has headed the Christian Life Commission since 1960. He came to the commission from the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission where he had been executive director for seven years.

Valentine pledged "to do everything in my power during the transition time while a new executive director is being found and oriented to help the agency and to continue to further the cause of Christian ethics among Southern Baptists."

Wade asked that suggestions to the search committee be communicated in writing and sent to Charles R. Wade, Chairman, CLC Search Committee, c/o First Baptist Church, 300 South Center Street, Arlington, TX 76010.

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Supreme Court Will Review  
Louisiana Creationism Law

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press  
5/6/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Supreme Court announced May 5 it will review a Louisiana law requiring "balanced treatment" in teaching "creation science" and evolution in the state's public schools.

Last year both a U.S. district court and the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed the law violates the Constitution's ban on an establishment of religion. But the appellate court split 8-7 in its ruling, a vote that might have encouraged the Supreme Court to take on the case.

The law, "The Balanced Treatment for Creation-Science and Evolution-Science Act," was enacted five years ago by the Louisiana legislature with the stated purpose of "protecting academic freedom." It defines creation-science as "scientific evidences for creation and inferences from those scientific evidences."

Louisiana Attorney General William J. Guste Jr. argued in a brief asking the high court to review the law that creation-science "can be taught in public schools without religious concepts" and therefore does not violate the establishment clause.

Guste noted numerous references in national documents and practices referring to God and his creative activity, including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the national anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance and the national motto, "In God We Trust." He pointed out that such references amount to a "historical test" to be applied in such cases and reminded the justices of their 6-3 decision three years ago using such a test in upholding Nebraska's practice of paying a chaplain who serves the state legislature.

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In addition, Guste maintained the Louisiana law differs markedly from an Arkansas creation-science statute struck down earlier. That law, he noted, would have forbidden the teaching of evolution in favor of teaching the account of creation contained in the book of Genesis.

Arguing against the high court's taking up the controversy, a battery of attorneys from Louisiana and New York City stated the purpose of the law was "to promote a religious belief," a key consideration in the lower courts' decisions to strike it down.

According to a three-part establishment clause test first set up by the high court in 1971, a law must have a secular purpose, must have the primary effect of neither advancing nor inhibiting religion, and must not foster excessive entanglement between church and state.

The challenged law, the attorneys argued, "mandates a massive invasion of the curricula of the Louisiana public schools." They noted further that during debate over passage of the law, "Virtually all of the materials and testimony offered in support...were explicitly religious, either in their support of creationism or their attack on evolution."

Among the parties who challenged the statute in the lower courts and on whose behalf the lawyers asked the high court to reject the case are the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Orleans Parish School Board, parents, teachers, other taxpayers, and leaders from the religious, scientific and educational communities.

The high court will hear oral arguments in the case next fall. A decision is expected no later than July 1987.

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Baylor's Benson Joins  
National WMU Staff

Baptist Press  
5/6/86

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Karen Benson, assistant public relations director at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, will become communications group manager at Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, June 2.

She succeeds Carol Kelly who is now an associate for the Tennessee WMU.

Benson, native of Texas, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wigger of Cypress and is married to Thomas Lee (Tommy) Benson. She is a graduate of Baylor and has been on staff in the office of public relations there since 1980, holding her present job since 1982.

In her new responsibilities at the national WMU headquarters, she will lead in planning, organizing, directing and coordinating information pertaining to the program and activities of WMU, SBC, through media available to Southern Baptists.

Prior to joining the Baylor staff, Benson worked for the Waco Tribune-Herald.

In denominational journalism, Benson has been honored by the Baptist Public Relations Association on several occasions for many top awards, and has twice been the recipient of the Arthur S. Davenport Award for significant achievement in public relations (one of five sweepstakes given by BPRA).

In 1986 BPRA Competition, Benson won first place for best news story.

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Former SBC Officer  
Clifton Allen, Dies

Baptist Press  
5/6/86

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)—Clifton J. Allen, 84, retired editorial secretary for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn., and a former recording secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention, died in Winston-Salem, N.C., May 5 of cancer.

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A native of South Carolina, Allen began work with the board in 1937 as associate editorial secretary and was elected editorial secretary in 1945. He was responsible for general editorial supervision of all books, tracts and periodicals until his retirement in December 1968.

He was recording secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1966 to 1977.

For more than 25 years, beginning in 1945, Allen broadcast the International Sunday School Lesson for Nashville's WSM radio, and in later years taught a version of the lessons for distribution by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission to more than 100 radio stations.

Allen was a member of the committee on the uniform series, International Sunday School Lessons, from 1942 until his retirement. He was secretary of the commission on Christian teaching and training for the Baptist World Alliance from 1957 to 1965, and, at the time of his retirement, was chairman of that commission.

Allen was the author of 22 volumes of Points of Emphasis, a commentary on the International Sunday School Lesson, and, following his retirement, was general editor of the Broadman Bible Commentary.

He received the E.Y. Mullins Denominational Service Award from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in 1970.

James L. Sullivan, retired president of the Sunday School Board and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, called Allen "a brilliant scholar, a superb writer and a denominational loyalist. He knew the Bible well, sought to be diligent in its teachings and demonstrated with his life what he wrote with his pen."

Allen was a graduate of Furman University in Greenville, S.C., and earned the Th.M. and Ph.D. degrees from Southern Seminary.

In his earlier years, Allen was pastor of First Baptist Church in Fairmont, N.C., and Western Avenue Baptist Church in Statesville, N.C.

Allen was married to the former Hattie Bell McCracken from 1930 until her death in 1981. They had three children, Rosalind Barker, Robert and Judson, the latter of whom died in 1985.

In 1982, he married Rosalind Street, widow of James Street, for many years pastor of First Baptist Church of Conway, Ark.

In addition to his wife and children, he is survived by seven grandchildren and a brother.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press

Parents Key To Prevention  
Of Drug Abuse Among Youth

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press  
5/6/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—If churches want to prevent abuse of alcohol and other drugs among young people, the place to start is with parents, Baptist youth ministers were told.

J. Emmett Henderson, executive director of the Georgia Council on Moral and Civic Concerns, told a conference on "Moral Problems and Youth" that "parents are the key" to preventing youth alcohol and drug abuse.

"The most important influence on a youth's decision to drink or not to drink is his or her parents," he said. "Parents should communicate the dangers of drinking and their own disapproval of drinking."

Henderson, who has led more than 200 prevention programs in Georgia churches, outlined the basics of drug prevention education during a seminar sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. The three-day meeting also included practical approaches to Christian sex education in the church.

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"The attitude of the parents toward drinking is the place to begin," said Henderson. "Parents have to be consistent. They can't tell their kids to resist peer pressures and then give in to their own peer pressures. Our kids are smarter than that."

Henderson cited studies indicating 84 percent of young people in grades 10 through 12 who choose not to drink are children of parents who do not drink.

Henderson noted peer pressure to drink is surfacing at increasingly younger ages. Thirty percent of nine-year-olds indicated in a recent survey that they feel pressure to drink, he reported.

While abuse of cocaine and other illegal drugs has reached alarming proportions, Henderson reminded the youth leaders alcohol remains "the most used and abused mind-altering drug in this nation." Alcohol-related auto accidents continue to be the No. 1 cause of death for persons under age 25. Suicides, many of them alcohol-related, are the third leading cause of death among teenagers.

Claiming "this society refuses to speak the truth about alcohol," Henderson deplored the pro-drinking messages which deluge children and youth, particularly through television advertising and programming. The victims of such messages, he said, are young people. "They simply believe what the public policy of this nation suggests: that they can drink without dangerous consequences."

He cited a national study in which only one-third of the high school seniors surveyed said they believe heavy drinking on a daily basis presents a serious threat to them.

"We've got to start back with square one in alcohol education in our churches," he said. "We've got to give our young people a different message."

Henderson urged churches to take several steps in alcohol and drug abuse education and prevention:

--Be involved in public policy decisions about legal drinking age, enforcement of drunk driving laws, media advertising of alcoholic beverages and other issues.

--Educate children and youth about the dangers of "gateway drugs" such as beer and cigarettes which often lead to use of illicit drugs.

--Focus on the benefits of a drug-free life. An approach which emphasizes "responsible drinking" is unsatisfactory, Henderson said, noting three out of every four young people who take their first drink continue to drink.

"We must never communicate to the kids in our churches that we assume they're going to drink," he said. "That's a pessimistic, fatalistic approach. Our goal should be an alcohol and drug-free life."

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