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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

**NATIONAL OFFICE**

SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
(615) 244-2355  
Wilmer C. Fields, Director  
Dan Martin, News Editor  
Marv Knox, 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. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

May 7, 1986

86-67

Home Mission Board Accepts  
Resignation With 'Regrets'

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)--The executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board accepted "with regrets" the resignation of William G. Tanner as president effective June 15, and adopted a process for handling administrative decisions until a new president is elected.

Tanner, president of the HMB for almost 10 years, was elected May 6 as executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, effective July 1.

While the board is without a president, each of the board's vice presidents will continue to operate according to the interim administrative process adopted by the board.

HMB Executive Vice President Bob Banks will "fulfill the function and responsibilities of the president in his absence," as provided by his position description and board action.

Travis Wiginton, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Norman, Okla., and chairman of the 84-member board, told board members the agency's bylaws spell out the process for selection of a new president.

The bylaws state the officers of the board shall appoint a seven-member search committee to recommend a new president. Wiginton said the officers would appoint the committee after the Southern Baptist Convention which meets in Atlanta, and after Tanner's resignation is effective.

In his letter of resignation, Tanner called his 10 years as president of the national mission agency "the most challenging and exciting years of my life," but added he is convinced God is leading him to a new place of service in Oklahoma where he was born.

In remarks to board members, Tanner said several people had asked him why he would want to "step down" to a state convention position from a national agency. "I'm convinced that when you are doing what God is leading you to do, there is no such thing as stepping down--just stepping forward."

Tanner said he did not feel God was calling him away from the Home Mission Board; but rather it was a positive call to a new place of service.

In remarks to the board in response to Tanner's resignation, Wiginton called on all Southern Baptists everywhere to pray "that God will lead this board to a president who will carry on the great traditions that have gone before."

He urged the board and staff members present to pray for the selection of the search committee, and to back their prayers with specific suggestions to the officers. "As chairman of the board, I want to assure all board members and the staff that every suggestion will be taken seriously.

"We will make every attempt possible to appoint a committee that is fair and balanced, unbiased and free from any undue pressure to fulfill the overwhelming responsibility thrust upon them," Wiginton said.

Wiginton praised the staff of the Home Mission Board, describing them as both "competent and deeply committed." He urged board members to both support and pray for the staff who remain to carry out the work.

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Wiginton paid tribute to Tanner, describing him as a man of compassion, conviction and commitment. "Sometimes he has had to make hard, tough decisions, but he has always cared about people...because he is a man of compassion," Wiginton said.

Saying Tanner is a man of conviction who believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and in the Bible "totally and completely without reservation," Wiginton said Tanner is conservative in his theology but has never sought to force his beliefs on others.

Wiginton also described Tanner as a man of commitment who backs his beliefs with actions to implement and accomplish the goals of Bold Mission Thrust. Wiginton said he thought it was significant Tanner became president of the board in 1976, the year the SBC launched Bold Mission Thrust.

He has led the agency, Wiginton said, to become the largest Protestant missionary-sending organization in the world.

During the 10 years of his presidency, the Home Mission Board has appointed 5,480 new missionaries, provided opportunities for mission service for more than 320,000 volunteers, and endorsed on behalf of the denomination 3,664 Baptist chaplains, he said. Currently, there are 3,723 missionaries serving under the board, he added.

These missionaries, volunteers and chaplains personally have led 656,117 persons to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, Wiginton said. "Bill Tanner claims no personal credit for this, but he is our leader, giving guidance to this gigantic ministry for almost a decade."

In addition to the remarks by Wiginton, HMB executive committee members gave Tanner a standing ovation, and voted to present to him as "tangible recognition and gratitude" the car the agency is now providing for his use.

Although the resignation of the president and process for selecting a successor dominated the board's executive committee meeting, board members also elected a new staff member as director of records management services, approved a change in interest rates for church loans, and appointed 45 new missionaries for service in 18 states, Puerto Rico and Canada.

Board members voted to reduce the rate of interest on church loans from 12.75 percent to 11.5 percent, plus two points on the first \$200,000 and one point on amounts above \$200,000, and offered an opportunity for churches with existing church loans to refinance their mortgages at the lower rates.

Elected director of records management services was Hubert O. Gibson, a computer expert and manager of information services for USA Enterprises in Conyers, Ga. Gibson is a native of Dallas and graduate of Dallas Baptist University.

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Seminary Group Responds  
To SBC Peace Committee

Baptist Press  
5/7/86

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--A special committee formed by trustees of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to investigate concerns of the SBC Peace Committee has released its final report to that group, concluding "the faculty members cited in the concerns and the president have both taught and written" in accordance with the seminary's confessional statement.

"The Abstract of Principles and its historic emphasis on the authority of the Bible is the standard by which the teaching and writing of faculty members must be measured, in keeping with the seminary charter," explained Ben R. Murphy, chairman of the special committee and of the seminary board of trustees during the review process. The Abstract of Principles is the 1859 statement of faith signed by every faculty member at Southern Seminary since the school's founding.

The special committee noted some of the concerns filed with the Peace Committee "reflected legitimate differences of opinion" as well as "the genuine diversity that characterizes the Southern Baptist Convention" on a variety of theological issues.

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The report added other concerns were based on misunderstanding of terminology, statements taken out of context or mistakenly attributed to an author, or lack of clarity in writing or lecture.

"In most cases, the concerns expressed about the faculty and president arose from a partial view of their writings or could be traced to differences of interpretation of Scripture. In some cases, the professor was at fault in failing to express clearly what was intended, whether in spoken or written word," the report says.

The trustee-appointed Committee on Denominational Concerns held its final meeting April 29. The panel originally met with a subcommittee of the SBC Peace Committee on Jan. 9-10, at which time it received several "concerns" about specific seminary faculty members. These were considered by the 11-member trustee academic personnel committee, and that group's report was approved by the full board of trustees in its April 8 meeting. That full report was released to all Peace Committee members, along with the special committee's summary statement.

At its April 29 meeting, the special committee and the trustee officers also met with a Louisville trustee, John Michael, to consider criticisms he has leveled at the review process during the meeting of the full board of trustees. At the conclusion of the April 8 session, seminary president Roy L. Honeycutt asked the board officers and Michael to meet and assess the validity of Michael's concerns and determine if the president had discharged his duties properly.

After meeting with Michael, the committee and officers adopted a statement in which they "voted unanimously that we commend the president for the manner in which he has dealt with these matters and his fidelity to his duties of the office of president."

Following that session, Michael sent a letter to all seminary trustees in which he reported that the meeting "resulted in a feeling on my part that my concerns were fairly heard. Although some differences of opinion still remain, I am thankful for the opportunity to have had a dialogue on these matters."

The special trustee committee consisted of Murphy, a Dallas businessman; Perry F. Webb Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Baton Rouge, La., and current chairman of the seminary's board of trustees; Joseph E. Stopher, a Louisville attorney and long-time seminary trustee; and Honeycutt.

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29,000 SBC Churches Tell  
Good News: "God Loves You"

By Sherri Anthony Brown

Baptist Press  
5/7/86

ATLANTA (BP)—An estimated 80 percent of Southern Baptist churches participated in "Good News America, God Loves You" simultaneous revivals, which officially ended April 27, but final results will not be available for several months.

"All the reports we have received and the preliminary totals from state evangelism directors indicate about 29,000 of the 36,000 churches conducted revival meetings," said Richard Harris, director of mass evangelism at the Home Mission Board and chairman of its simultaneous revival committee.

Churches in all 50 states and almost 90 percent of the 1,200 Baptist associations were committed to conducting revivals, Harris reported. But it will be next year before totals will be received and tabulated.

Early reports indicate the "highest attendance and most enthusiasm about revivals in years," said Harris. "These are key indicators that true biblical revival has occurred."

Harris defined revival as an experience for Christians that results in evangelism. "Evangelism is winning the lost to Christ through the witness of revived Christians," he said.

Robert Hamblin, vice president for evangelism at the Home Mission Board, noted "We've experienced vast sociological changes in the last 30 years that make revival meetings more difficult. But the simultaneous revivals have demonstrated a need for fellowship and encouragement that we have been neglecting."

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"We need to be together, pray together and seek God's will together," he said.

Harris cited thorough preparation for the revival meetings as another key reason for their success.

William G. Tanner, president of the Home Mission Board, added, "As I have traveled across our land the past several weeks, every pastor I have talked with about the simultaneous revivals has said that this has been the best planned emphasis, with more positive results, we have had in years.

"If this is the ultimate result across America, this year will be one of the greatest years of evangelistic harvest we have had in decades," he said.

Charles Harvey, evangelism director for Louisiana Baptist Convention said, "We're in an age of 'instant' everything. And churches have convinced themselves that they can have instant revival. This (Good News America simultaneous revivals) has convinced pastors and churches of the need for preparation."

Last fall many churches began extensive Scripture distribution programs. To date 9.6 million Scripture selections have been sold, including seven million New Testaments. An additional 100,000 Gospel of John booklets in 10 languages have been sold.

A nation-wide media campaign also aided in the preparation of revivals. Jolly Communications, a public relations firm in Louisville, Ky., headed by Southern Baptist layman Alan Jolly, produced and distributed 21 television commercials, including one with sign language and a Spanish version. The commercials and the 14 radio spots they also produced were distributed to stations around the country as public service announcements.

CBS in New York agreed to air the television commercials free of charge. No network has ever before permitted Southern Baptists to run public announcements, said Jolly. The network has agreed to continue to air the commercials through the rest of the year, even though the revivals are officially ended, said Jolly.

The cooperative effort of Southern Baptists has created a spirit of unity in purpose, said Richard Harris. It has been a time, said Carlos McLeod, evangelism director for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, "when, under God, we joined hands and said 'We're going to do what God wants us to do.'"

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'Less Pronouncements, More Commitments,'  
Moore Tells Virginians

By Tom Miller

Baptist Press  
5/7/86

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—"We need less pronouncements about the Bible and more commitments to the Christ of the Bible," said Winfred Moore in Richmond, Va., during an early May six-stop preaching mission in Virginia.

Winding up the three-day mission that began in Southwest Virginia and reached to Tidewater, Moore, pastor of First church of Amarillo, Texas, said he recently penned a confession to his congregation.

"I told my people I had made a tragic mistake, not becoming involved (in Southern Baptist Convention affairs) much sooner. I thought staying at home, building the best mission-minded church I could was the way. We built a church mission-minded to the core."

"But you cannot do it that way," he continued. "You can't ask someone else to man the front line and get in the foxholes for you."

Thus Moore explained his entrance into convention politics which led to his defeat in a run for the presidency against incumbent Charles Stanley last year in Dallas. He was, however, elected first vice president to serve with Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta.

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Moore, two-term past president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, has been pastor of the 1,000-member Amarillo congregation for 27 years, has baptized more than 5,000 into its membership and led the church to contribute millions of dollars to world missions through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program.

Moore, if he becomes the 1986 moderate-conservative candidate for SBC president, would be on a ballot confrontation with Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn., and leader of the fundamental-conservative faction that has controlled convention operations since 1979.

In his Richmond sermon, Moore did not mention the election but he reportedly came close to an announcement of his candidacy at another of his Virginia stops. Someone in the congregation had asked, "May we expect that you or someone of your persuasion will be a candidate in Atlanta?" to which Moore replied, "You may count on it."

The Texan began his message in Richmond with some humorous reflections on "Who I am," because he said, "I've lately seen so many things about me that I never knew before." Moore said his aged mother recently telephoned him, weeping, to declare, "If I thought these things were true, I would come and whip you even now!"

"I believe this is the infallible Word of God; God-breathed," declared Moore holding aloft his Bible in Monument Heights Church where Pastor Eddie Freeman welcomed about 200 persons to the Friday night service.

"I find it strange we are having to argue about who believes the Bible the most," he said. "I accept every claim the Bible makes for itself. I do not accept every claim that others make about the Bible unless it is supported by the Bible, itself."

Taking Romans 14 as his text, Moore said that Paul was asking Christians to "stop abusing your rights" when he wrote about controversy over diet.

Observing that Paul was writing "about food and food only," Moore nevertheless said Christians could accept the Pauline admonition to mean, "Do not, for the sake of anything, tear down the work of the Kingdom of God."

"Paul told them to stop putting stumbling blocks in their brothers' ways," he said. "It is not enough to verbalize, 'I love you,'" Moore said. "For love to have validity, you must work it out in your everyday life.

"God is more interested in how we get along together than in our solving Ezekiel's wheel, or the prophecies of the book of Daniel or the mysteries of the Revelation," he said.

Paul was telling the Romans, said Moore, "I want to teach you how to live in peace," and interpreted Romans 14:3 to mean, "Don't look down upon and condemn each other. God has fully accepted your brothers. Don't question someone's salvation over the trivia of life."

"It is almost always the subordinate things that give us problems," said Moore. "God does not look at the digestive system to determine destiny.

"We've got to learn how to be affirming and accepting of one another in our diversity," said Moore.

"You don't do things in Virginia like we do in Texas," said Moore. "But you have been here a lot longer than we have been there. In many things we haven't caught up to you. But we don't all have to do things the same way."

"It doesn't bother me if I run into a seminary professor with whom I disagree," said Moore. He named Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professors Jack MacGorman and John Newport as "dear personal friends" with whom he sharply disagrees on interpretation of Scripture.

"Jack MacGorman has the worst interpretation of one of the 'tongues' passages I ever heard, and I won't ever understand John Newport's teaching on demons, but I love the fellow," he said.

"I don't even agree with some of the things I preached 10 years ago," he confessed, "But I still like this guy, and I'm going to stay with him."

"We (Texans) belong to the family of which you are a part," Moore reminded the Virginians. "God has given us, in the Cooperative Program, a plan of missions support that is better than any anyone else is using. I'm unwilling to see it go down the drain."

Calling the congregation to a commitment of participation, Moore said, "Be sure, when the convention meets in Atlanta, that you have a full slate of messengers. However you vote, be there. With a denomination like ours, that's the only way."

"And don't worry," concluded Moore, "And don't lose your sense of humor, and don't lose faith." Moore was introduced by Sherrill G. Stevens, pastor of Montrose church, Richmond, and president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Stevens represented an informal group of pastors, churches and laymen who extended the invitation and paid the expenses for the series of services.

The sponsors arranged for Moore to speak in Abingdon, Blacksburg, Lynchburg, Norfolk, Warsaw and Richmond.

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(Tom Miller is associate editor of the Religious Herald, newsjournal of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.)

Crowder Suit  
To Be Appealed

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press  
5/7/86

ATLANTA (BP)—An appeal will be filed to a federal court decision granting the Southern Baptist Convention a summary judgement in a dispute over conduct of business at the 1985 annual meeting of the SBC.

On May 5, Judge Robert H. Hall of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia granted the judgement to the SBC and its Executive Committee in a suit which had been filed by Robert S. Crowder and others, protesting events which occurred at the Dallas meeting of the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

In his decision, Hall ruled the dispute "is one involving questions of internal church affairs and governance over which this court has no jurisdiction.... It has long been a fundamental proposition of constitutional law that civil tribunals have no power to resolve disputes which are ecclesiastical in nature."

Hall cited the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and said it prevents the intrusion of secular courts into internal church matters.

Crowder, a retired Birmingham public relations executive, his wife, Julia, and Henry C. Cooper of Windsor, Mo., filed suit against the SBC and its Executive Committee Dec. 5, claiming their rights had been violated by events during the 1985 annual meeting.

The Crowders—later joined by H. Allen McCartney of Vero Beach, Fla. as a plaintiff—had asked the court to interpret the bylaws of the SBC, to enjoin the convention and its officers to follow that interpretation and to vacate the 1986 Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees and prevent the 54-members from serving.

Early in 1986, a parallel lawsuit was filed in Fulton County Superior Court in Atlanta by five laypersons from five states, seeking exactly the same relief. That case currently is awaiting action.

Attorneys for the Crowders and for the SBC told Baptist Press the state court is not bound by the decision handed down May 5 by Judge Hall, but both note they expect the state court suit to be dismissed because of what SBC attorneys called the "powerful precedent" of the U.S. District Court decision.

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Of the May 5, decision by Judge Hall, Crowder said, "It just floored us that kind of decision would be forthcoming."

Crowder said the four plaintiffs have conferred and "believe we should appeal" the case to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit in Atlanta.

"Mr. Emmett J. Bondurant, Miss Jane H. Vehko and Mr. John H. Floyd of the firm of Bondurant, Mixson and Elmore are filing the appeal in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals...today (May 7)," Crowder said in a prepared statement he read to Baptist Press.

In the statement, Crowder cited four reasons the plaintiffs are appealing the decision:

"One. The decision confuses Baptist congregational church government with hierarchical church government, for the cases relied on by the court deal mainly with hierarchical churches;

"Two. The decision may be interpreted by the officers of the Southern Baptist Convention and other religious groups and by other courts to permit any presiding officer to ignore or violate any church constitutional or bylaw provision with impunity and deny the rights of those who finally support the church organization in the expectation that the organization will observe its own policies and procedures;

"Three. The decision does not address the fact that not only is the SBC a corporation, but it sought and obtained corporate status from the Georgia legislature and as such is subject to civil law; and

"Four. The plaintiffs do not agree with the court's application of the precedents interpreting the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."

In his statement, Crowder added: "We do not expect this appeal to be resolved before the convention meets in Atlanta in June of 1986. We hope and pray that the convention leaders will not interpret the district court's decision as an encouragement to engage in arbitrary action, but rather will set before the world an example of Christian statesmanship and fairness in the conduct of the business of the convention."

Crowder was asked what relief will be sought in the appeal, since the case was on a "fast track" in the federal court because the solutions it sought concerned the 1986 annual meeting of the convention, scheduled June 10-12 in the Georgia World Congress Center.

"You will have to ask the lawyers about the specifics of that," he said.

Bondurant, Vehko and Floyd reportedly were taking a deposition in another case in Atlanta and did not return telephone calls regarding the appeal.

Crowder also declined to say how much the effort is costing, although some SBC officials have estimated the cost of the defense of the U.S. District Court suit alone will surpass \$100,000. "I'll leave that confidential with the attorneys," he said.

The dispute centers on events of Wednesday, June 12, 1985, and concern the report of the SBC Committee on Committees, and the election of its nominees to the 1986 SBC Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees.

The Committee on Committees nominated the Committee on Boards, and an effort was made to substitute a new slate of nominees by messenger James Slatton, pastor of River Road Baptist Church of Richmond, Va.

SBC President Charles F. Stanley ruled the effort out of order, but messengers, by ballot vote, overruled Stanley's interpretation of bylaws. Without resolving the matter, the Wednesday morning session adjourned.

When the evening session convened, Stanley, on the advice of Parliamentarian Wayne Allen of Memphis, Tenn., ruled any attempt to amend the report of the Committee on Committees was out of order. He then rapidly moved to a vote, failing to recognize numerous requests for "point of order."

When the ballot vote was taken, the slate of the Committee on Committees was elected.

Out of that sequence of events the Crowders and the seven other plaintiffs in the state and federal suits have claimed Stanley violated the bylaws, the procedures of Robert's Rules of Order and their rights.

Attorneys for the SBC and its Executive Committee did not respond to the merits of the case, but based the defense on First Amendment grounds, maintaining the court could not intrude into what were "internal church matters and governance."

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French-Speaking Haitians  
Seated As New Messengers

By James Watters

Baptist Press  
5/7/86

VICTORIA, B.C. (BP)—Six messengers from French-speaking churches in Quebec were seated at the second annual meeting of the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists April 29-May 1.

The six pastors, who crossed the continent from their homes and churches in and around Montreal, were recognized for having travelled the greatest distance to attend the meeting in far Western Canada.

The six also serve French-speaking Southern Baptist congregations, a rarity anywhere in the world.

The story of the French-speaking Southern Baptists in Canada started in 1969 when the Canadian government began a resettlement program for refugees from the political and economic maelstrom of Duvalier's Haiti. Through 1984, when the program stopped, more than 50,000 Haitians were relocated from their tropical homeland to a new life in the heart of French-speaking Canada.

Jean Baptiste Sauveur, the senior Baptist pastor in the group attending the sessions on Vancouver Island, had been attending a Bible training school in Haiti when his opportunity came for immigration to Canada. In 1969, soon after arriving in Montreal and getting a job, he again took up his studies for the ministry in a Canadian school of theology.

Sauveur's first Baptist congregation was gathered in 1979 from fellow Haitian refugees living in central Montreal. The young pastor continued his secular trade—as he continues to do—and preached to his fellow countrymen.

In 1976, Sauveur left the growing congregation and started a new flock in another section of Montreal. In 1981, he formed the third congregation—New Jerusalem Baptist Church—where he continues to serve.

"Christianity in our native land is very strong," he said. "More than 40 percent of the people of Haiti are active Christians who build their lives around daily church activities. But of the 50,000 Haitians living in Quebec, scarcely 5,000 have a church to attend, and many of these must attend only weekly services in borrowed school buildings."

Sauveur added: "We feel called to preach the Gospel of Jesus to our people in Canada and to build churches where happy Christian singing can be heard every day. We also want to share our faith with other French-speaking Canadian people."

Southern Baptists in Western Canada—where the majority of the 82 congregations of the new convention are located—became aware of their French-speaking counterparts only recently.

"While attending a meeting of Southern Baptist leadership in Toronto last winter, I was introduced to these fellow Baptists and had the opportunity to visit in their churches," said Allen Schmidt, the newly elected executive director of the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists. Previously, Schmidt was coordinator of the Canadian work through the Northwest Baptist Convention.

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Schmidt added: "It was remarkable to discover their commitment to the same evangelical goals held by Southern Baptists. We are delighted to welcome these churches into our Canadian Southern Baptist fellowship."

In addition to recognizing the six French-speaking pastors and seating them as messengers (voting members) of the convention, the other messengers also elected Sauveur to a vacant seat on the executive board of the new convention.

Sauveur was asked to give the benediction at the end of the convention, and prefaced his prayer by saying: "We have found Southern Baptists to be a good family and are proud now to be included. We ask you to pray for us as we preach the Gospel to Haitian people in Quebec. We will join in your work of sending missionaries from Canada to other nations in our world."

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(Watters is editor of the Northwest Baptist Witness, newsjournal of the Northwest Baptist Convention.)

Record Southern Baptist Meeting  
In Victoria, British Columbia

By James Watters

Baptist Press  
5/7/86

VICTORIA, B.C. (BP)--In its second annual meeting, the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists seated 130 messengers from local church congregations scattered across the nation, heard the final reading and adoption of its constitution and by-laws, elected Allen Schmidt executive director-treasurer, and adopted a record convention operations budget of \$1,150,000 (Canadian) for 1987.

Schmidt, who for five years has been coordinator of Canadian Southern Baptist work, was elected executive director-treasurer of the new convention. Schmidt, a native Canadian, is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. He was a pastor in California before returning to Southern Baptist churches in British Columbia.

Development of a national denominational structure to serve the mission needs of Canadian Southern Baptist churches has been highly accelerated since 1984, when approval was given by the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City for "rendering all possible assistance to Canadian churches related to Baptist state conventions...including the development of a Canadian Southern Baptist entity.

All Southern Baptist agencies, especially the Home Mission Board, the Foreign Mission Board, and the Baptist Sunday School Board, were given the opportunity by this 1984 action to work "as appropriate" with Canadian Southern Baptist churches.

Taken after lengthy consideration, this SBC action averted a move sought for many years by Canadian churches and their supporters in the Northwest Baptist Convention to have Canadian messengers seated at SBC annual meetings.

Southern Baptist congregations in western Canada have enjoyed the full support and fellowship of the Northwest Baptist Convention since 1953. Other congregations in eastern Canada have been related to the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio and the Baptist Convention of New England.

The first national meeting of the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists was a constitutional convention held May 7-9, 1985, in Kelowna, B.C. Initial approval was given at that meeting for the legal structures and program design of the new Southern Baptist entity in Canada.

Jack MacGorman, professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, gave a series of Bible studies from Romans centering on God's redemptive work. Telling of his own childhood in a Baptist parsonage in Nova Scotia in which he failed to discover the Christ of the Bible and of his late teen-age conversion experience in a New Brunswick hospital, MacGorman emphasized the importance of sharing the Good News with each generation of Canadians.

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Citing the theme under which the messengers gave deliberation to the issues determining their future, "Responsible Under God For A Nation," MacGorman encouraged his fellow Canadian Southern Baptists. "It is not preposterous for a small convention of 82 churches to reach out to the whole of Canada if we will be reminded from the Word that God goes before us in this great task. It is his eternal work to make himself known to all mankind."

Other actions by the April 29-May 1 convention include approval of :

--Procedures for the appointment of Canadian Southern Baptist foreign missionaries in cooperation with the Foreign Mission Board, SBC.

--A statement of faith and practice based on the Baptist Faith and Message for the new Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary set to open in September 1987.

--A request to the SBC Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, and Sunday School Board for the funding of professors for the new theological institution.

--Plans for establishing a Baptist Foundation to serve the needs of the churches of the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists.

--A special Canadian missions offering known as the Harvest Missions Offering to be received and coordinated each October with a special week of prayer for missions in Canada.

--Nov. 3-5, 1987, as the next meeting of the convention to be held in Calgary, Alberta.



**BAPTIST PRESS**

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NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION