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May 9, 1986

86-69

Huff Says Committee
'Not Representative'

By Dan Martin

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Charles Stanley's appointment of a 54-member Committee on Committees to serve during the 1986 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention is "not representative of Southern Baptists," says SBC Second Vice President Henry Huff.

Huff, a Louisville, Ky., attorney and member of Crescent Hill Baptist Church, made his comments a week after SBC President Stanley named two persons from each of the 27 qualifying states to serve on the Committee on Committees for the 1986 annual meeting, scheduled June 10-12 in the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

Under the SBC Constitution and bylaws, the convention president appoints the Committee on Committees "in consultation with" the two vice presidents. This year the vice presidents are Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, first vice president, and Huff, second vice president.

The primary work of the committee, which serves only during the three-day session of the SBC, is to nominate the 54-member Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees, which, in turn, nominates persons to serve on the boards of the national agencies of the convention. The Committee on Committees is appointed by the SBC president and does not require election by messengers at the annual meeting, while the other committees do require ratification.

Huff released a statement to Baptist Press concerning the Committee on Committees May 7, which he said is "concurred with" by Moore.

Moore said: "Mr. Huff read the statement to me. I am aware of it and I agree with the content of it."

Huff said he and Moore submitted 198 names to Stanley for consideration in the appointment of the committee. "Only two (on the final list) were names which had been submitted by either one of us," he said.

The Louisville attorney said he and Moore "submitted 195 unduplicated names to the president...for consideration. Dr. Stanley had received some 300 other names."

"The list submitted by the vice presidents consisted of the names of ministers and layperson from all participating states without regard to their views, but with regard to the evangelistic effort, which includes baptisms as shown by their church letters, their Sunday school, training union (church training), Woman's Missionary Union and Cooperative Program support," Huff said.

He added: "The individuals recommended by the vice presidents were from both small churches and large churches and represented, we felt, the basis on which the SBC functions, namely, great churches on mission together. Some of the names nominated were not objected to by the vice presidents, but I feel the names originally submitted were far more representative of Southern Baptists than those actually nominated."

Huff said he believes the list is "not representative of Southern Baptists. I am not speaking of votes or views. Our list was made up of people from the great churches that support the Cooperative Program. To have only two people from that list is not representative of Southern Baptists."

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

The vice president noted he and Moore had spent one day at Stanley's home in Atlanta, going over a computer printout listing 500 names of persons who had been suggested for appointment to the important committee.

"It would appear from the results of the meeting of the officers on April 11 that it was mostly conversation and not conferring that occupied several hours," Huff said.

"I had assumed that when we were invited to confer that our list would be taken seriously, and that unless there were objections stated, they would be carefully considered. There were no objections stated, but obviously our suggestions were given very limited consideration.

"To have this many names rejected does not seem to be in keeping with the often expressed idea of reconciliation and peacemaking," he said.

Huff added: "We had prayed, worked and hoped for better. I do not feel the list as announced is truly representative of the greatness of Southern Baptist life."

When called for confirmation, Moore commented: "It was obvious we were there to give him (Stanley) names; not to object to names."

Huff said the meeting with Stanley was "very gracious. I enjoyed the hours we spent together. He was very courteous, very open. He certainly made no commitments to any individual at all, and we left there not knowing who would be appointed."

Neither Huff nor Moore was aware of the list of appointments until they appeared in Baptist Press, they said.

Huff said the vice presidents were given opportunity to object to names on the 500-name master list. "A great number of those we objected to were not appointed, but there are several named who we did have objections to," he said.

Huff added Stanley "obviously didn't know a great many of the people on the master list. In only a few instances did he say he knew this or that person, but most of the time he indicated he did not know the people (on the list)."

The vice president added he and Moore had provided names, church membership and information concerning baptism levels and Cooperative Program percentages, but a large number of names included no other information other than the name.

"It was very hard to determine who someone was with the information provided. When you just have the name John Jones from Alabama, and nothing else, it is very hard to know who you are taking about," he said.

Other than making his reaction public, Huff said there is "no way" to express disappointment with the appointments of the Committee on Committees.

"There may be some challenges when they make their report (nominating members to serve on the Committee on Boards), but we will just have to wait and see what they do," Huff said.

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Senate Committee Passes
Tax Reform Proposal

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
5/9/86

WASHINGTON (BP)--A tax reform plan approved by the Senate Finance Committee would allow church pension groups--including the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board--to retain their tax-exempt status but would prohibit persons not itemizing on federal income tax forms from claiming deductions for charitable contributions.

The committee's proposal, which has yet to be written into a bill and introduced before the full Senate, would retain current law that allows federal tax exemption for non-profit organizations offering "commercial-type insurance."

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A tax reform bill approved by the House of Representatives late last year would repeal that exemption. Although the House measure would exempt property or casualty insurance provided by churches or conventions or associations of churches from the definition of "commercial-type insurance," it specifies "annuity contracts shall be treated as providing insurance." That language would strip the Annuity Board and other similar church pension and welfare groups of their federal tax exemption.

If the full Senate approves the Finance Committee's tax reform proposal, it then will go to a conference committee to be reconciled with the House version. If a compromise can be hammered out, the conference report would have to be approved by both houses before being sent to President Reagan for his approval.

While maintaining the tax-exempt status of those pension groups, the Senate plan would end the eligibility of non-itemizing taxpayers to claim deductions for charitable contributions. The proposal would allow a current provision for such deductions to expire as scheduled at the end of 1986.

The House tax reform bill includes a permanent provision for non-itemizers to deduct annually all charitable contributions in excess of \$100.

"Care must be taken in communicating with Congress," said James M. Dunn, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs executive director. "The Senate committee is to be commended for removing the direct tax on the church pension boards. The provision to tax the churches must be removed from the House version when and if a conference committee meets.

"On the other hand, a cruel contradiction exists in the proposed removal of charitable deductions for non-itemizers. Surely many Baptists will express these concerns to their members of Congress."

Another provision of the Senate proposal would—as would the House version—reinstate clergy housing benefits. Under current tax law, only ministers who occupied their residence or had a contract to purchase one by Jan. 1, 1983, are eligible to declare mortgage interest and property tax deductions in addition to tax-exempt housing allowances. That eligibility is scheduled to extend only through tax year 1986.

Both tax reform versions would make revocation of current law retroactive, meaning ministers unable to claim mortgage interest and property tax deductions for tax years 1983 and 1984 would be eligible to file amended returns to seek refunds.

Other provisions of the Senate committee's proposal that would affect churches and church employees—especially those participating in 401(k) or 403(b) annuity plans—include:

--Denying a participant in a pension plan—such as offered by the Annuity Board—from also investing in Individual Retirement Accounts.

--Reducing contribution limits for amounts that can be contributed to denominational retirement plans.

--Imposing penalties on distributions—or funds withdrawn—from retirement plans before age 59 1/2, other than for death, disability or "life-based" annuity payments.

--Imposing new minimum distribution rules and a 50 percent tax on those retirement funds not withdrawn at the time of eligibility.

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Historical Agency
Plans For Future

Baptist Press
5/9/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptist's Historical Commission planned for the future while it recognized the past during its annual meeting April 28-30. Commission members approved record budgets, expressed commitment to provide a full-time staff for the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives and honored its executive director for 30 years of service.

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Thirty commission members approved a 1986-87 budget of \$547,650, an increase of \$53,700 above the current budget. Seventy-nine percent of the budget will come from Southern Baptist Cooperative Program receipts, with the remainder coming from the sale of microfilm and publications, reserves and other sources.

Commission members adopted a proposed 1987-88 budget of \$585,090, including a Cooperative Program allocation request of \$501,220. The increase is needed to enlarge staff support, especially bringing the current part-time librarian and archivist up to full-time status, said Executive Director Lynn E. May Jr.

The commission approved a recommendation to make a concerted effort to obtain by Oct. 1, 1987, full-time funding for the librarian and archivist positions to help the agency fulfill its 1981 Southern Baptist Convention directive to serve as "the central depository and archives of the denomination."

A long-range plan progress report, including the development of a new biographical pamphlet series to be released Jan. 1, 1987, was adopted.

The Southern Baptist Foundation, which manages the commission's investments, was affirmed by the commissioners for the moral and spiritual principals which guide its work, especially in evaluating investments in companies with ties in South Africa.

Commissioners also affirmed the denominational planning process, developed through the SBC Inter-Agency Council, for planning the convention's sesquicentennial anniversary in 1995 and pledged their support for and involvement in the process.

Appreciation was extended to the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and 10 other agencies for depositing or making arrangements to deposit their archives with the commission's Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

The commission honored May for 30 years of service to the agency, 15 years as research director and 15 years in his present position.

Commissioners also conferred two awards. Albert McClellan, retired associate executive secretary and director of program planning for the SBC Executive Committee, received the Norman W. Cox Award, an annual publications prize. The Distinguished Service Award for outstanding contributions to Baptist history went to Robert G. Gardner, professor of religion at Shorter College in Rome, Ga.

Marion Lark, pastor of First Baptist Church of Henderson, N.C., was re-elected chairman. Other officers include Richard T. McCartney, editor of the Baptist Messenger in Oklahoma City, vice chairman; Waldo P. Harris, director of missions, Georgia Baptist Association in Washington, Ga., recording secretary; and Lynn E. May Jr., executive director of the Historical Commission, treasurer.

The 1987 meeting of the Historical Commission will be held April 20-22 in Birmingham, Ala.

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Missionaries, Seminary
Approved By Canadians

By James Watters

Baptist Press
5/9/86

VICTORIA, B.C. (BP)—In what leaders called the "most far-reaching decision in the recent history of missions," the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists gave final approval to channels through which Canadians called to foreign missions can be appointed to overseas service.

The recommendation, made possible by cooperation between the Canadian churches and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, was proposed by James G. Yoder, pastor of Gladstone Baptist Chapel in Vancouver, B.C., and a leader in Southern Baptist development work in Canada since 1949.

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"These procedures far exceed in potential any hopes we had until just recent months," said Yoder as he described the negotiations which have produced the plan. The proposal calls for the Canadian executive board to do the initial screening of missions candidates, as well as the formal commissioning of those recommended by the Foreign Mission Board office of human resources after the usual personnel procedures have been completed.

Canadian missionaries appointed for service in fields where a Foreign Mission Board mission exists will be assigned to that mission. In other situations, Canadian work will be fully administered by the Canadian executive board "while seeking to maintain mutual and responsible cooperative spirit with the appropriate FMB area director."

Salary, cost-of-living allowance, furlough transportation while in Canada and retirement of Canadian career and associate missionaries will be paid by the Canadian convention on a scale comparable to Foreign Mission Board scales. Other costs, such as on-the-field expense directly related to assignments, will be covered by the board.

In responding to the report given by Yoder, Don Kammerdiener, Foreign Mission Board area director responsible for relations in Canada, explained the board's basic motivation in encouraging this plan of cooperation: "There are some countries in the world where missionaries from the U.S.A. are not permitted but where missionaries from Canada will be welcomed. We wish to enter into an agreement with the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists that will allow us to join with you in 'Hands Around the World' to carry the gospel to all of God's creation."

With a spirit of history in the making, the new convention also adopted a statement of faith and practice for its graduate school of theology and formally approved Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary as the name of the new school to be opened for classwork in September, 1987.

Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary is to be located on a 149-acre tract west of Calgary, Alberta, purchased late last year with funds contributed by Southern Baptists through the Foreign Mission Board. Development funds for the new campus are expected to be contributed by Southern Baptists in both Canada and the United States.

The seminary statement of faith and practice is based on the Baptist Faith and Message, which also was approved as the doctrinal foundation of the new convention's constitution. Messengers affirmed the Baptist Faith and Message as "a summary of our doctrinal beliefs based on our faith in the absolute authority of the Bible."

All faculty and teaching staff of the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary will be asked to sign an agreement to teach "in accordance with and not contrary to the principles set forth in this doctrinal statement."

Messengers also adopted a plan to approach the Foreign Mission Board to provide two professors for the seminary faculty, and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Sunday School Board for one professor anticipated for the opening faculty in the fall of 1987.

James Teel, Foreign Mission Board representative in Canada, was elected president pro temp to serve until a president is elected.



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