



BAPTIST PRESS

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

August 11, 1986

86-114

HMB Search Committee Members
Explain Reasons For Resigning

By Dan Martin and Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)—Members of a search committee to nominate a new president for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board almost unanimously say the reason they resigned was because of a "lack of trust" by the board of directors.

During their Aug. 6 meeting, HMB directors, meeting in a closed-door session, voted 40-36 to ask for the resignations of seven members of the search committee named to find a successor to William G. Tanner, who has become executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. The motion also called for appointment of a new committee "that will give fair representation and proper balance to all members of the board."

Since the search committee was appointed in June, reports circulated fundamental-conservative directors claimed the committee was made up of "moderate-conservatives" and did not represent their theological views.

During the closed-door August meeting, six of the seven members resigned. The one member who declined to resign, M.A. Winchester of Whitley City, Ky., said he refused because he is trustworthy, whether the board recognizes it or not.

Winchester, a medical doctor, said moderate-conservatives on the HMB and in the convention "are trustworthy servants of Jesus Christ." He added: "I would not allow them to force me off the committee, because my record speaks for itself, and I will prove to them by my actions that I have been trustworthy and will continue to be trustworthy."

Another member of the committee, Lawanna McIver of Dallas, left the meeting in tears, but later prepared a statement which said she was speaking out because she felt she has a responsibility to the Home Mission Board and to the entire Southern Baptist Convention. "There is nothing to fear in telling the truth, and our SBC constituency is wise enough to discern that in time," she said.

"There were some things done (at the meeting) that were not only unethical, but were downright unChristian," she added in a telephone interview.

McIver said that on the Monday night before the board meeting, about 40 members of the board—all in the fundamental-conservative camp—caucused in what they called a "birthday party" and appointed a three-person ad hoc committee to negotiate with search committee chairman Eugene Cotey of Murfreesboro, Tenn.

McIver said the ad hoc committee requested that two or three fundamental-conservative leaders be "co-opted" to attend all meetings of the search committee, but not to vote.

"We were given the ultimatum that if we would not agree (with this request), they would table every item of business in the entire board meeting (including the appointment of missionaries)," said McIver.

McIver said the search committee, during a breakfast meeting Wednesday, agreed to accept the request "in an attempt to be conciliatory," and that Cotey was to make a motion to that effect as the first item of agenda. But Cotey, she said, was never allowed to do so.

—more—

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

In a telephone interview, John Click of Topeka, Kan., who said he was one of the three "ad hoc" committee members asked to negotiate with Cotey, said he could not imagine how Cotey could have interpreted what was said as "an ultimatum. I can say categorically that there was no idea of an ultimatum in our minds," said Click.

Click said conservatives on the board had been asking for the addition of representatives of their point of view on the search committee but Cotey and chairman Travis Wiginton of Norman, Okla., had refused, saying the bylaws limit the committee to seven persons.

Click added Cotey again refused on the Monday night before the board meeting, so the board members attending the caucus decided to present a motion asking the committee to resign.

When the search committee met for breakfast on Wednesday and agreed to the co-opting suggestion, "it was too late," said Click. "It had gone too far then. But if they had been willing to do it on Monday night, it might have made a definite difference."

Both Click and Johnny Jackson of Little Rock, who made the motion requesting the committee resignations, said there was never anything said in the board's executive session implying the search committee did not have integrity.

McIver said in her prepared statement the committee members who resigned unanimously felt it would be impossible to serve "with the existing attitude and no more trust in the committee than the motion for resignation evidenced."

Citing as evidence of lack of trust, McIver quoted one board member as saying that even if the (search) committee had nominated Paige Patterson as president of the Home Mission Board, the committee's nomination would have been rejected. Patterson, of Dallas, is president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies and a leader of the fundamental-conservative movement.

"I want to believe that the request for resignation was not personalized toward any individual of the committee," she said. "However, I feel that it held the unmistakable inference that our Christian integrity was called into question. Nevertheless, our individual pain pales in the light of the grief for the Home Mission Board expressed by the committee."

McIver said the action by the directors "has done great injury to the HMB, its missionary personnel and staff. We will feel the repercussions from the way this action was taken for years to come. At a time when reconciliation, unity and peace are being prayed for and being sought by Southern Baptists, it appears that the schism in the HMB has widened.

Contacted during a camping trip in Florida, Cotey said McIver's account of the events is "basically true." Cotey said an ultimatum was implied by the ad hoc conservatives, although none of them used the word.

He added he was told some of the members of the group were so angry at the search committee "they wanted to table any business that came before the board."

Cotey, pastor of First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, Tenn., said he did not have the power or authority to add any "co-opted" members to the committee on Monday night. He felt that was a decision only the committee could make, and it was impossible to meet with the committee until Wednesday morning. But the ad hoc group wanted an answer immediately, and Cotey said he did not have the authority to agree to their demands.

Asked why he resigned from the committee, Cotey said: "Because I was asked to. There was no way I could continue under the circumstances."

Other search committee members were contacted by Baptist Press.

"I resigned because I felt I did not have the trust of the board members," said Don Aderhold, pastor of Columbia Drive Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga. "There was no way the committee could function and do its work without the trust of the board."

Lula Walker, another committee member from Beaverton, Ore., said she felt her integrity was being questioned, and that more than 50 percent of the board members did not trust her, including those who did not know her personally.

"I really agonized over the decision to resign, and almost did not resign," she said. "I think the thing I felt the strongest about was the refusal of the board to listen to the report of the search committee. They knew they had the votes, and the refusal to listen must have been out of fear that if we were heard, some people might have been swayed and they would lose control," she said.

Frank Wells, pastor of Briarcliff Baptist Church in Atlanta, called the action of the board "a dark day in the history of Southern Baptists." Wells, who opposed going into executive session, observed that when Baptists are not willing to do their business in the open, they violate the Baptist tradition of "telling the truth and trusting the people."

"When we don't trust trustworthy people, we may be saying more about ourselves than we realize," said Wells. "What took place was a ruthless expression of power."

Troy Morrison, director of church-minister relations for the Alabama Baptist Convention, said he resigned as a member of the committee because he felt it was in the best interests of the board when it became apparent the committee could not work effectively.

"I'm not angry at anyone or offended," said Morrison. "I wish things could have been handled differently and better, but they weren't, and I'm not going to fuss about that."

Morrison added that a new committee will be appointed by the officers in keeping with the bylaws, "and the work of the Lord will go on. God is not finished with us yet, and I believe Southern Baptists will work through all our differences and God will somehow lead us out to victory."

—30—

House-Approved Appropriation
Would Not Raise Postal Rates

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
8/11/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—Recent action by the U.S. House of Representatives would maintain current postal rates for non-profit publications, including Baptist state newspapers and some church newsletters, through September 1987.

The House-approved appropriation bill contains \$650 million in federal subsidy to provide reduced mailing rates for non-profit mailers. Although almost \$26 million less than in fiscal year 1986, that appropriation would allow the Postal Service to maintain current rates until Oct. 1, 1987, according to a report by the House Committee on Appropriations.

The House now must wait for the Senate to pass its own version of the Treasury, Postal Service and General Government Appropriation bill.

In addition, the report says the Reagan Administration has proposed stopping reimbursement to the Postal Service for losses in revenue associated with carrying certain categories of mail at free and reduced rates beginning in 1987.

Currently, Congress approves an annual revenue foregone appropriation to subsidize those losses. The amount of revenue foregone is the difference in revenue between what the Postal Service would have received at full unreduced rates and what it actually receives at the reduced rates.

Earlier in the year, the U.S. Postal Rate Commission recommended the elimination of Congress' revenue foregone appropriation. The commission recommended instead the creation of separate subclasses for mail currently qualifying for reduced rates.

The administration, according to the committee's report, has said it will propose legislation to enable the Postal Service to continue reduced rates for most existing subsidized mailers. Such legislation, however, has yet to be sent to Congress.

—30—

Housing Forms Mailed
For St. Louis Meeting

ST. LOUIS (BP)—Housing request forms for the 1987 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention are being mailed to state convention offices and should be available shortly after Labor Day, according to Tim A. Hedquist, convention manager.

The forms, similar to ones used to reserve rooms in the convention city for the past seven years, also will be printed in the September issue of The Baptist Program.

"There has been a difference of opinion in our convention between those individuals and groups who felt that they should be free to secure their own housing without having to go through the Housing Bureau and those individuals who felt the need for a bureau so that they could be assured that all of the rooms would not be taken by travel agents or special interest groups," Hedquist said.

"Over the years a compromise has emerged in the housing policy. Under that policy, about 4,000 rooms are held by the convention to be used by the city-run housing bureau. Those rooms are for individuals and may only be secured by the use of official forms, available either from the state convention offices or in The Baptist Program," he added.

Hedquist added St. Louis has about 15,000 hotel rooms, somewhat less than the 23,000 available in Dallas and Atlanta. Of the 11,000 not in the convention block, Hedquist estimated about half already have been reserved by individuals, travel agents or special interest groups.

Hedquist explained the housing request forms must be mailed to the St. Louis Convention and Visitors Commission (CVC), 10 S. Broadway, Suite 300, St. Louis, MO 63102, on Oct. 1. Forms postmarked earlier than Oct. 1 will be considered last, Hedquist said.

"The forms will be opened Oct. 15 by CVC employees. This gives time for all of the forms to arrive from across the country. Only the date will be considered, so it is of no advantage to have the envelope postmarked at 12:01 a.m.," Hedquist said. "The forms are opened by city employees who know nothing about us, so no favoritism can be shown."

The forms will be handled individually, even if multiple forms are included in the same envelope. The individual forms will be put in random order and drawn. The rooms will be assigned in the order of the draw, and the forms have spaces for first through fifth choices, the convention manager said.

He added "history has shown that the 12 hotels in the convention block will be filled by individuals mailing the requests either Oct. 1 or Oct. 2."

"It is important to remember that the 12 hotels will not take care of all of those who attend the convention, or even possibly even all of those who fill in and mail the form on either Oct. 1 or 2. The 4,000 rooms in the convention block is an attempt to strike a balance between those who want a bureau and those who do not," he said.

Hedquist said there has been "no problem" in housing for the past several years, since the compromise was established. "Of course, when someone requests a room across the street from the Convention Center and gets put five miles out, that is a problem for that person, but there has been no widespread cheating."

He added shuttle service probably will be limited to the 12 hotels in the convention block, and said messengers to the annual meeting will not find sophisticated mass transit such as was available in Atlanta. "Out of the downtown area a car is needed for transportation," he said.

He warned parking probably will be a problem, as messengers compete for spaces with St. Louis workers. There is very limited space available at the Convention Center, and parking will be several blocks from the meeting site.

The hotels available through the convention block (single rates listed first, followed by rates for doubles):

Adams Mark, convention hotel, \$88, \$98; Best Western-St. Louisian, \$46, \$54; The Chase, \$70 for either single or double; Clarion, WMU headquarters and meeting place, \$75, \$85; Days Inn at the Arch, \$52, \$62; Embassy Suites, \$90, \$96; Forest Park, \$75 for either single or double; Marriott Pavilion, \$89 and \$90; Mayfair, \$59 for either single or double; Radisson, \$63, \$68; Red Bird Inn, \$50, \$55; Sheraton St. Louis, \$77, \$91.

A list of other hotels in St. Louis is available through Hedquist's office, 901 Commerce, #750, Nashville, TN 37203.

—30—

No Foreign Money, Government
Tells Missionaries In India

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
8/11/86

NEW DELHI, India (BP)—A government freeze on donations from Southern Baptists to mission work in India has forced missionaries to sell a mission car and consider selling other property to fund ongoing evangelism programs.

In late June, the Indian government notified missionaries, officially organized into the Indian Baptist Mission, to accept no further funding from outside the country, unless it was approved first by the central government. Caught by the ruling was about \$70,000 which the Foreign Mission Board finance office had forwarded to the mission treasury just after the notification was sent.

If foreign funds are not approved, the mission could be forced to sell other vehicles and land plots or buildings. Missionary salaries are not affected.

"This places our mission and our hospital under incredible financial pressure," said missionary Rebekah Naylor, administrator at the Baptist hospital in the southern city of Bangalore. "We are already restricting expenditures. Plans for further cuts are underway." More than 200 churches have been started in the area from contacts made at the hospital.

During a hastily called meeting with government officials in New Delhi, missionaries immediately turned in a request to receive enough money from the Foreign Mission Board to run their programs for the next three months. But the government has up to 120 days (four months) to approve or deny the request. That means the mission, which normally uses about \$50,000 a month from the Foreign Mission Board, could be without allocations for some time.

If four months pass without any action by the government, the request automatically is granted, as specified in the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act of 1976. But the director of the office that enforces the act told missionaries he would take action on their request within 45 days, according to missionary Jerry Rankin, who met with him in New Delhi.

The government's foreign contributions office has been instructed to investigate every organization receiving more than \$250,000 a year in foreign contributions, Rankin said. Officials have asked the mission to supply detailed accounts of how much money has been spent where and for what purpose since the act was first administered in 1976.

Early this year the mission began reporting its allocations and expenses monthly for the first time. Before that, the mission had understood it was required only to file yearly income tax forms showing its financial status.

The audit, as the government is calling it, further complicates affairs of the mission, which has been facing increasingly complex struggles to secure visas for missionary personnel.

The mission is unclear whether the audit is a step against Christian missionary influence in this Hindu nation, or a way to police foreign funds in an attempt to cut off supply lines for civil disruption. In parts of India religious and cultural disagreements have erupted into open fighting.

As the audit progresses, missionaries are studying ways to cut expenses by consolidating offices and eliminating projects that are not self-supporting. They also are identifying property they could sell. When they met July 16 to discuss contingency plans, they decided that starting churches will continue to be their primary objective.

—30—

