



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackelford, 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, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550
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

November 15, 1988

88-183

Stanley proposes alternative
to Operation Rescue protests

ATLANTA (BP)--Charles Stanley, who opposed the anti-abortion protests of Operation Rescue in Atlanta this summer, has endorsed a different plan to close down the city's abortion clinics.

Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has endorsed the American Rights Coalition, according to a report in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. The American Rights Coalition, based in Chattanooga, Tenn., seeks to close abortion clinics through malpractice suits.

More than 1,000 evangelical Christians, including members of Stanley's church, were jailed for participation in Operation Rescue, an interdenominational effort to block entrances to Atlanta's abortion clinics.

During the heat of the protests, Stanley opposed the group's tactics as unbiblical but stated his continued opposition to abortion. Operation Rescue unnecessarily broke the law to accomplish its goal of closing abortion clinics, Stanley said.

According to the Journal-Constitution, Stanley hosted a meeting of 125 Atlanta-area pastors, anti-abortion activists and business leaders to raise funds for the American Rights Coalition. Neither Stanley nor his spokesman, Senior Associate Pastor Fred Powell, were available for comment to Baptist Press.

Powell told the Journal-Constitution about \$137,000 raised by the group will be used to purchase space on 60 billboards throughout 10 metropolitan Atlanta counties in November. Through this publicity, the group hopes to find women who have been medically injured by the city's abortion clinics.

If successful malpractice lawsuits are brought, insurance carriers may discontinue the clinics' coverage or raise premiums and force them out of business, American Rights Coalition President Charles Wysong said.

The billboards will carry the message, "Having problems from an abortion?" and list the toll-free number for the American Rights Coalition, which will refer women to counselors and lawyers who will take the cases on a contingency basis, Wysong said.

"We want to minister to and show mercy to someone society wants to forget," Wysong said. "It's a legitimate pursuit of justice, and then we'll bring (these women) to faith in Christ as well."

--30--

Court rejects abortion case
testing paternal veto right

By Stan Hastey

Baptist Press
11/15/88

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected an Indiana man's appeal to uphold his right as a father to veto his estranged wife's decision to have an abortion.

Erin Conn, 23, had sought a court injunction forbidding his 19-year-old wife, Jennifer Conn, from aborting her pregnancy. Although a state trial court granted the request, a state court of appeals reversed, citing the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade, the landmark ruling upholding a woman's right to privacy in deciding to have an abortion.

--more--

The state appeals panel also cited a 1976 high court ruling that struck down a Missouri law requiring a husband's consent for an abortion. On further appeal, the Indiana Supreme Court agreed with the appeals panel, adopting the latter's decision as its own. Erin Conn then appealed to the nation's high court.

Although the justices gave no reason for their Nov. 14 action rejecting the appeal -- its usual course in such announcements -- the 1976 ruling appeared to control the Indiana case.

In his formal petition for review, Erin Conn said he wanted his wife to carry her pregnancy to term so he could rear the child. His attorney, James Bopp Jr. of Terre Haute, Ind., said his client sought the injunction "because of the grave loss he would suffer if the abortion occurred -- the loss of a potential opportunity to raise, nurture and enjoy the companionship of the child -- comparable to the cutting off of his own arms and legs."

Jennifer Conn, who had said she would abort the child unless her husband agreed to put up the newborn for adoption by a third party, countered by arguing her husband wanted the right "to force (her) to submit to what amounts to compulsory pregnancy and forced childbirth."

The Conns were married 17 months ago and are the parents of an 8-month-old daughter.

Jennifer Conn filed for divorce June 17, 1988, only to have her husband the same day ask the state circuit court to issue the injunction banning an abortion. The injunction was dissolved July 22, one week after the Indiana Supreme Court agreed it violated Jennifer Conn's right under the Constitution to end the pregnancy. Shortly thereafter, she had an abortion. (88-347, Conn v. Conn)

Another abortion case -- this one from Missouri -- also awaits high court action during the current term. In that test, the Reagan administration has asked the justices to re-examine Roe v. Wade and subsequent decisions upholding a woman's constitutional right to an abortion. A decision on whether to accept that case is expected later in the term. (88-605, Webster v. Reproduction Health Services)

--30--

Hawaii Baptists elect
1st woman president

Baptist Press
11/15/88

HONOLULU (BP)--Hawaii Baptists elected their first woman president and set a 1989 budget of almost \$2 million during their annual meeting Nov. 10-12 in Honolulu.

The new president is Donna Farr, who also is the first layperson elected to the office in 14 years. She is director of the field service program for the American Cancer Society's Hawaii-Pacific division and is a member of Kailua Baptist Church in Kailua.

Other officers are Gene Takaki, pastor of First Baptist Church of Haleiwa, first vice president; and Travis Wiginton, pastor of Kona Baptist Church in Kailua-Kona.

The new budget will total \$1,842,326, of which Hawaii Baptists are expected to contribute \$1,037,110. The balance of the budget primarily is expected from the Southern Baptist Home Mission and Sunday School boards.

Hawaii Baptists plan to participate in the worldwide endeavors of the Southern Baptist Convention by contributing 28 percent of the gifts from their churches, or about \$290,390, to the SBC Cooperative Program unified budget. That percentage is a 0.25 percent increase over the current budget.

Messengers to the annual meeting passed a resolution affirming the SBC's 1963 Baptist Faith and Message doctrinal statement. They also passed two resolutions affirming the priority of evangelism in churches, area associations, the Hawaii Baptist Convention and SBC agencies.

They approved a resolution encouraging Hawaii Baptist churches to send their full allotments of messengers to the 1989 SBC annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev., next summer and to participate in evangelistic efforts in Las Vegas in the days surrounding the annual meeting.

--more--

And the convention recognized former Executive Director Dan H. Kong "for his time, talents and love" that he gave to the convention during more than five years that he held the post. Kong became president of Hawaii Baptist Academy Oct. 1 but will continue to be acting executive director of the convention "until the board decides otherwise."

The convention's executive board hopes to elect a new executive director early in the new year, a convention official said.

Kong, who became executive director of the convention in 1983, was named acting president of the academy last June, following the resignation of President Ronald Boggs. Academy trustees elected Kong to the permanent post Sept. 9.

Kong was chosen because of his background and knowledge of both the academy and the convention, said Ralph Honjo, chairman of the presidential search committee. Kong was the academy's vice president for development from 1973 to 1983 and was president of Olivet Baptist Church in Honolulu for 13 years. He also has been president of the convention.

During the annual meeting in Honolulu, the convention presented Kong with a plaque of appreciation and a standing ovation.

The 1989 Hawaii Baptist Convention annual meeting will be Nov. 9-11 in Hilo.

--30--

D.C. Baptists elect woman,
enjoy quiet convention

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
11/15/88

NEW CARROLLTON, Md. (BP)--In sessions devoid of resolutions or debate over doctrinal or theological issues, the District of Columbia Baptist Convention unanimously elected a laywoman as president.

Jeanette P. Holt, a member of University Baptist Church in College Park, Md., became the fourth woman elected president of the D.C. convention. Holt is administrative assistant to the executive director of the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

In a statement made during the convention's closing session, Holt thanked messengers for her routine -- and unopposed -- election.

"I am grateful to be part of a convention that is expansive, with ties to both the Southern Baptist Convention and American Baptist Churches," she said. "And I am grateful also that our convention is inclusive -- that the election of a woman is neither controversial nor symbolic."

The D.C. convention is the only one of 36 state or regional conventions in Southern Baptist life affiliated with both the SBC and American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

In addition to Holt, other D.C. officers are Vice President/President-elect Donnell Harris, pastor of Montgomery Hills Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Md., and Secretary Letha Johnson, a member of First Baptist Church of Camp Springs, Md.

For the past several years, D.C. convention programmers have declined to make room for resolutions in the interest of harmony and because of their non-binding nature.

Messengers adopted a 1989 budget of \$894,330. Of that amount, \$586,165 is anticipated in income from the convention's 73 churches. Another \$308,165 will come from other sources, primarily the Southern Baptist Home Mission and Sunday School boards to help underwrite ministries in Christian education, local missions and church extension, evangelism and higher education.

The D.C. convention, in turn, will contribute an anticipated \$357,000 to SBC and ABC world mission causes. That figure includes regular gifts to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget and the special Easter and Christmas mission offerings.

Next year's convention sessions are to be held Nov. 9-10 at Clifton Park Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Md.

--30--

Michigan Baptists re-elect
president, ratify budget

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (BP)--Michigan Baptists ratified a \$2,666,254 budget and re-elected their president during the Baptist State Convention of Michigan annual meeting Nov. 8-11 in Grand Rapids.

The meeting involved 465 participants, including 255 messengers. It marked the first time the convention has convened in Michigan's second-largest city.

The new budget includes \$1,089,500, or 41 percent of the total, that is expected to come from the convention's 237 churches and 42 missions. The majority of the balance is expected to come from the Southern Baptist Home Mission and Sunday School boards.

Michigan Baptists will contribute 29 percent of the receipts from their churches, or about \$307,226, to Southern Baptist causes through the national convention's Cooperative Program unified budget. That percentage is 0.5 percent more than the previous budget, and the new budget marks the 18th consecutive year that the convention has raised its Cooperative Program contribution by that percentage.

In a related resolution, messengers commended Michigan Southern Baptist churches for their "continued and faithful support of missions" through the Cooperative Program.

Damon Patterson, pastor of Monroe Missionary Baptist Church in Monroe, was re-elected convention president. Other officers are Al Burt, pastor of Baring Cross Baptist Church in Flint, first vice president; Floyd Hughes, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, second vice president; Joe Ryckman, pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Detroit, recording secretary; and Betty Babb, a member of Merriman Road Baptist Church in Garden City, assistant recording secretary.

Messengers honored Claude and Treva Roy upon their retirement following 26 years of ministry through the convention. He was director of missions for 22 years in the South Central and Southwestern Baptist associations and was the convention's church extension director for the past four years.

The convention's 1989 annual meeting will be held Nov. 7-9 at Gorham Baptist Church in Jackson.

--30--

New England Baptists set
budget, honor Currins

Baptist Press
11/15/88

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. (BP)--New England Baptists set a budget of almost \$2 million and re-elected their president during the sixth annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of New England in Bridgeport, Conn., Nov. 10-11.

They also honored James and Margery Currin upon completion of 10 years of service to New England Baptists. He is executive director of Southern Baptist work in New England.

With "Lengthen and Strengthen" as their theme, more than 167 messengers and 64 guests from many of the convention's 150 churches and missions scattered throughout the six New England states met for the annual business and fellowship meeting.

Jack Schneider, pastor of Baptist Fellowship in Columbia, Conn., was re-elected president by acclamation to a second one-year term. Ron Huffman, pastor of New Colony Baptist Church in Billerica, Mass., was elected first vice president. Ken Hale, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Hanover, N.H., was elected second vice president.

Messengers to the meeting adopted a 1989 budget of \$1,999,993. That amount is up \$88,000, or 4.4 percent, from the 1988 budget. New England Baptists are expected to contribute \$531,378 to that budget, with most of the balance coming from the Southern Baptist Home Mission and Sunday School boards.

--more--

The Baptist Convention of New England will support Southern Baptist mission and ministry causes worldwide by channeling 20.5 percent of its receipts, or \$108,958, to the national convention's Cooperative Program unified budget. That percentage is the same as New Englanders contributed to the national Cooperative Program in the 1988 budget.

Throughout the two-day convention, speakers gave testimonies to the power of prayer to open the door for God to do "the impossible" in New England.

Keynote speaker Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., challenged pastors and people to be "servant leaders."

Larry L. Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board, called messengers to a deeper commitment to church planting. He recounted his experiences as a young pastor in church planting in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

In appreciation for 10 years of service as leaders of New England Southern Baptist work, the Currins were honored with a reception and a gift of a trip to Europe.

During the Currins' years in New England, the number of Southern Baptist congregations has more than doubled. In recent years, the convention has led all Southern Baptist state conventions in baptisms per capita, in net increase in church starts and in increase in Sunday school enrollments. Laypeople and clergy alike spoke of how the Currins have given themselves unselfishly to the people of New England.

The 1989 New England Baptist annual meeting will be Nov. 10-11 at Nashua Baptist Church in Nashua, N.H.

--30--

New Orleans tunes in
to seminary radio station

By Breena Kent Paine

Baptist Press
11/15/88

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary ministers to its hometown through Christian radio.

WBSN-FM 89, a radio station owned and operated by New Orleans Seminary, has two purposes. The first is "to provide a laboratory for broadcast ministry experience for some of our students," said Don Stewart, seminary executive vice president. The most important purpose, however, "is to provide a Christian ministry to the community, and hopefully to encourage Christians and reach some lost people."

The station's motto is "Sharing and Caring."

In the past six months, about 25 people have accepted Jesus Christ through the direct ministry of the station. "Those numbers are small compared to a larger evangelistic impact of a second nature," said Stewart, noting the station also encourages and nurtures Christians, and "they in turn have the direct evangelistic impact."

WBSN directly reaches the people in trouble "because they move the dial (on their radio) looking for help," Stewart said.

Rendy Lovelady, station manager and afternoon disc jockey, noted he often says "one-liners," such as, "If your heart's heavy and you feel lonely, call."

People have responded to these one-liners, and both Lovelady and Keith Daniels, morning disc jockey and operations director, reported they have been able to help these people in times of need.

Before daybreak one morning, a teen-age drug addict who was drunk and contemplating suicide called Daniels. The dee-jay dropped everything he was doing to find the boy. "I (pulled him out of) a bar and brought him to the Lord, and then immediately put him in the hands of a local pastor," Daniels reported.

--more--

Others have called the station to say how the music and other programming on WBSN spurred them to talk to a pastor or a Christian friend about how to know Christ.

In the past six months, "we've more than doubled our market in listeners," Lovelady said. "We're one of the few radio stations that people (not only listen to in the car, but) turn on at home."

The station has not always had such a good response, however. WBSN began broadcasting at 10 watts in February 1978. Some equipment had been donated to the seminary, and the station went on the air with the help of Paul Gericke, the seminary library director, and others who contributed both through time and financial donations. However, the power was so low that listeners were few.

In January of 1980, WBSN reached 250 watts, which covered only the area of eastern New Orleans. "At one time, we estimated, in broadcast terms about one-half million (people) could have listened, and even then, for some, the broadcast wouldn't be (very) clear," said Stewart.

In April of 1986, however, the station jumped to 10,000 watts when an antenna was placed on a television tower outside the city. "With the increased power and increased ministry opportunity, we went to 24-hour broadcasting," said Stewart. "We also moved to a different world, ... covering the territory from Gulfport, Miss., to near Baton Rouge -- 2 million people who can listen."

With an increased radius of about 70 miles, "the responsibility for professionally produced broadcasting is highly intensified," said Stewart. The station has added updated equipment and hopes soon to move into a larger space reserved in the seminary's Hardin Student Center.

Until a year ago, the seminary subsidized the non-profit station. Now, however, it is self-supportive through funds generated in four ways:

First, as an "educational frequency, we are required to provide a certain amount of teaching -- in our case, Christian teaching," said Stewart. These non-profit programs, such as James Dobson, Bob Edwards, Chuck Swindoll and Charles Stanley, pay the station for air time.

Second, commercial businesses sponsor segments of music programming through grants.

Third, WBSN sponsors concerts each month, including such Christian artists as Cruse, Russ Taff and Wayne Watson. Once the expenses for the concerts are met, WBSN is able to channel the remaining money into the station. "So, the people, in a sense, who come to the concert are also helping to sponsor Christian radio," said Stewart.

Fourth, people contribute personal donations, ranging from about \$5 to \$25. During a recent "I Care for WBSN Week," more than 400 people pledged monthly support, and more than 1,000 people called offering encouragement and pledging support through prayer.

Hundreds of people who listen to WBSN have commented on how the station has encouraged Christians and lifted the spirits of the sick, lonely people and others facing problems. Also, several have said WBSN is the only radio station their whole family can enjoy together.

After years in which seminary leaders studied other radio stations for advice on how to improve and expand, now other stations are calling WBSN for advice.

WBSN did what radio advisers said could not be done -- block programming. And it worked. Now other Christian radio stations, and even some secular stations, have taken the lead, said Stewart.

"What we are trying to do ... is broadcast at some time during the day for all types of people," he continued. "Advisers said, 'You can't block broadcast. You've got to pick ... your target group, which for us has been 24-45 years old.'"

With that target group, the station was advised to play only contemporary Christian music, with no traditional gospel music.

--more--

"We have the responsibility as a Christian radio station to meet the needs of the entire Christian community," Stewart countered. As a result, traditional music is offered during the day, with a contemporary format primarily throughout the afternoons, nights and early mornings. WBSN also offers Sunday morning praise music leading up to worship at 10:30 a.m., and a late afternoon traditional format leading up to evening worship.

"WBSN shows up in commercial rating books, and educational stations don't show up there normally," said Stewart. Plus, "it shows up extremely well" in those ratings, averaging up to 90,000 listeners in a given 15-minute segment of the broadcast day.

WBSN's ministry can be summed up in Lovelady's words, "We try to bridge the gaps between denominations, to evangelize the lost and to undergird and feed the body of Christ (Christians)."

--30--

Southwestern students find
Green Acres 'the place to be'

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
11/15/88

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--There's a "great commotion over the the Great Commission" at Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas, thanks in part to three students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and two graduates.

Green Acres Pastor Paul Powell has led the church to help start six missions. Three of those churches have pastors who are Southwestern students.

Reggie Thomas, a theology student, is pastor of Good Samaritan Baptist Church, the only black Southern Baptist Church in Tyler. Matthew McKellar and Dennis Wiles, both doctoral students, serve at Sylvania Baptist Church and Southside Baptist Church, respectively.

In addition, David Sheppard, a Southwestern graduate, is pastor of Temple Baptist Church, another Green Acres mission.

Powell felt the need three years ago for his church to be more involved in local missions.

One of the church's first projects was to buy a repossessed building. "The building was run down and it was just sitting there," Powell said.

Green Acres raised the money in one day to buy the building and made needed repairs. The church's minister of missions, Ron Wells, contacted professors at Southwestern for help in finding a pastor for the church, Good Samaritan Baptist.

Thomas accepted the call and began his pastoral duties in July 1987.

"(Good Samaritan) had been a real organized church, but it died," said Thomas, a native of Huntingdon, Tenn. "So, basically I was just restarting a church."

He started with 10 members, all women, and the group spent about two months canvassing the neighborhood and making contacts.

"We have a good reputation, and there's a really good relationship with the whole community," Thomas said.

In 15 months, the church has grown to 145 members. Thomas baptized 57 people in his first year.

"We have a strong outreach program here," he said. "Every visitor that comes to Sunday school or church I get a card on, and I go to see them the next week. And before I visit, I make a phone call or write a letter."

Green Acres also sponsors a soup kitchen, clothing ministry and a mobile medical/dental clinic. Last year, about 12,000 people were fed, 15,000 were clothed, and 1,500 received free medical and/or dental help. The church also sponsors a Korean chapel and a Hispanic mission.

--more--

With the help of Green Acres, McKellar started at Sylvania in August 1987. During his first year as pastor, 132 new people enrolled in Sunday school and 20 were baptized. Wiles started last month, but six people joined on his first Sunday.

The students praise Green Acres for its program and the chance it gives students.

"The tremendous thing about Green Acres is they want the mission churches to develop their own identity," McKellar said. "Their philosophy is, before starting a new church, they try to help existing churches that are having problems."

Green Acres plans to start six more missions in Tyler during the next 10 years.

"There are a lot of Hispanics that work in the rose fields, and nobody is ministering to them," Powell said. "We're going to set up the mobile clinic and attract people there."

Green Acres has an active foreign missions program. The church has built one church a year overseas during the last 11 years. In Belize, Green Acres is attempting to put a Bible in the hands of every person.

Urging more churches to become involved in missions, Powell said, has given his church's members "a sense of purpose beyond themselves."

--30--

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary

Police suspect murder
in missionary's death

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
11/15/88

SAN ANGELO, Texas (BP)--Investigators believe retired Southern Baptist missionary Ona Jones was murdered Nov. 8 or early Nov. 9 before her house was set aflame on the grounds of a Baptist retirement community in San Angelo, Texas.

Police said Nov. 15 they were just beginning their investigation and had not identified a suspect or determined a motive.

The fire was confined mostly to the bedroom where Mrs. Jones' body was found. Investigators did not find carbon monoxide in her lungs, leading them to believe she was dead before the fire started, said Robert Martinez, the San Angelo police detective assigned to the case. However, police found no evidence of forced entry or sexual assault, he said.

Mrs. Jones' husband, Sam, said police told him they believe she was strangled. Martinez would not confirm that report.

Preliminary results of an autopsy conducted in San Antonio, Texas, indicated the death was a homicide, said San Angelo Fire Marshal Ken Land. Complete results of the autopsy will not be available for two to three weeks, Martinez said.

Sam Jones was attending a three-day senior citizens' retreat at a Baptist camp near Kerrville, Texas, at the time of the fire. Mrs. Jones had planned on being with him but changed her mind at the last moment to lead two local programs relating to the Baptist World Alliance's World Day of Prayer.

The Joneses were missionaries for 32 years in Zimbabwe. They lived in that country during its bloody struggle for independence from Great Britain and pioneered Southern Baptist work in the city of Salisbury.

Upon their retirement last year, the Joneses moved onto the grounds of the Baptist Memorials Geriatric Center in San Angelo, a 75-acre retirement and medical community owned and operated by Texas Baptists. The Joneses' brick two-bedroom home, built in 1976 for his mother, was one of 80 houses on the grounds. When the Joneses came to live at the center, they moved his mother into a duplex three houses away.

--more--

On Nov. 8, Mrs. Jones visited her mother-in-law about 7 p.m. Upon returning home, she called several retired missionaries at the center to remind them about an upcoming meeting with a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board representative. Her husband was due to return the next day.

The fire could have started any time between 9:30 p.m., after she finished her last phone call, and about 2 a.m., officials said. By the time firefighters arrived, the blaze was almost burned out, said Taylor Henley, director of the center.

"This is a difficult moment," said the Joneses' oldest son, Byron. "There's a lot of speculation, and we, too, find ourselves sitting here thinking what might have been. The fact is, nobody really knows anything."

Residents of the 315 living units at the complex have become somewhat alarmed for their own safety, but Martinez said he has no reason to believe they are any less safe because of the incident. "I don't think the individual, if it is an individual we are looking for, would come back to that place," he said.

Numerous other retired missionaries and former leaders in Southern Baptist life live at the center.