



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #7
Nashville, Tennessee 372
(615) 244-2300
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 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

April 27, 1990

90-59

Key SBC committee appointments made

By Dan Martin

N-CE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Appointments to four key committees to serve during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 12-14, in the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans, have been announced by SBC President Jerry Vines.

Vines announced the appointment of the Committee on Committees and the Resolutions, Credentials and Tellers committees April 27.

The SBC bylaws require the SBC president to announce the appointments "at least 45 days in advance of the annual meeting."

The bylaws also require the president to appoint the Committee on Committees and the Resolutions Committee "in conference with" the two vice presidents, and the Credentials Committee "in consultation with" the vice presidents. The Tellers Committee is appointed "in consultation with" the SBC registration secretary.

The vice presidents are Junior Hill, an evangelist from Hartselle, Ala., first vice president, and Ernest Myers, executive director of the Nevada Baptist Convention, Reno, second vice president. The current registration secretary is Lee Porter of Nashville.

Vines told Baptist Press he is pleased with the appointments. "I have kept my two commitments in these appointments. I have not knowingly appointed anybody who believes there are errors in the Bible, and these appointments represent the best Southern Baptists I could find.

"To my knowledge, there is nobody appointed here who has a personal axe to grind, or has a personal, private agenda. These are just good solid Jesus-loving, Bible-believing, denominationally faithful Baptists."

He said he consulted on several occasions with the vice presidents, and encouraged them to make any suggestions they might have. He also said he had talked with Porter and encouraged the registration secretary to write a letter containing suggestions, which he did.

"I would encourage Southern Baptists to pray for these people that they might take their responsibilities seriously and that they might be effective in the work which they have been assigned to do," Vines said.

COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

The committee has 66 members, 2 from each of the 33 state or regional conventions qualified for representation on SBC entities.

SBC Bylaw 21 says the Committee on Committees "shall nominate all special committees authorized during session of the convention not otherwise provided for." The usual responsibility of the committee is to nominate members of the Committee on Nominations, which, in turn, nominates trustees to serve on the 24 national entities of the SBC.

Vines named Howard Gates, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Walton Beach, Fla., as chairman.

--more--

The committee includes a clergy or denominationally-related person and a layperson from each convention. In the listing, clergy will be listed first.

ALABAMA - Frank Whitaker, pastor Gilliam Springs church, Arab; Mary John Wilson, homemaker and member of First church, Gadsden.

ALASKA - Charles Bridges, pastor, Jewel Lake church, Anchorage; William Milewski, state employee and member of First church, Kenai.

ARIZONA - Jimmy Dean Prock, pastor, First church, Chandler; and Louise Coffey, homemaker and member of First Southern church, Glendale.

ARKANSAS - Ronnie Mays, pastor of First church, Beebe; and Robert Ray Wilson, a dentist and member of First church, Heber Springs.

CALIFORNIA - Herb Carson, pastor of Cerritos Valley church, LaPalma; Linda Peterson, a homemaker and member of Stine Road church, Bakersfield.

COLORADO - Jim Henderson, pastor of Pleasant Valley church, Colorado Springs; Judy McClellan, a teacher and member of First church, Rifle.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA - Harold Sorill, pastor of Clinton (Md.) church; and Velma Henderson, nursing administrator and member of Hillcrest church, Oxon Hill, Md.

FLORIDA - Gates; Kim Curry Orman, housewife and member of Garden church, Hollywood.

GEORGIA - David Drake, pastor, First church, Cartersville; Allen Kuykendall, Air Force captain and member of Eastwood church, Acworth.

HAWAII - Malcolm Stuart, pastor of Kailua church, Kailua; Morris Takushi, state employee and member of Nuuanu church, Honolulu.

ILLINOIS - Max Samples, pastor of Third church, West Frankfort; James Perryman, an engineer and member of Bethel Church, Kankakee.

INDIANA - Robert Tibbs, pastor, Memorial church, Brownsburg; Diane Wright, administrative assistant and member of Pleasant Heights church, Indianapolis.

KANSAS-NEBRASKA - Fred Dycus, pastor of First church, Baxter Springs, Kan.; Bruce Davisson, business manager and member of Shawnee Heights church, Topeka.

KENTUCKY - Ferrell Gardner, pastor of Carlisle Avenue church, Louisville; Thomas Adrian Jones, automobile dealer and member of Friendship church, Grand Rivers.

LOUISIANA - Jimmie Herring, pastor of Bonita Road church, Bastrop; Suzanne Grigsby, homemaker and member of First church, Moss Bluff.

MARYLAND/DELAWARE - Robert H. Depp, pastor of First church, Chestertown, Md.; Helen Scott, teacher and member of Cockeysville (Md.) church.

MICHIGAN - Robert Spivey, pastor of North Prospect church, Ypsilanti; Edward Dauzy, layman and member of Pine Mountain church, Iron Mountain.

MISSISSIPPI - Bobby Williamson, pastor of Park Place church, Brandon; Mike Hatten, manager of a nursing home and member of Big Level church, Parkington.

MISSOURI - Dennis McGowan, pastor of Spring Valley church, Raytown; Robert Miller, self-employed and a member of First church, DeSoto.

NEVADA - Michael Rodrigues, pastor of Sunrise church, Las Vegas; Ann E. Brown, clerk and member of Desert Hills church, Las Vegas.

NEW ENGLAND - Jim Beddows, pastor of Candlewood church, Danbury, Conn.; Murray Wheeler, retired and a member of First church, Tolland, Conn.

NEW MEXICO - Joe McKinney, pastor of First church, Albuquerque; Margaret Witt, homemaker and member of Sandia church, Edgewood.

NEW YORK - Larry Pridmore, pastor of Grace church, Whitehall; Bonita Leary, homemaker and member of Farmingdale (N.Y.) church.

NORTH CAROLINA - Dennis Patton, pastor of Mount Hebron church, Connelly Springs; Gary Parker, a furniture salesman and member of Lawing's Chapel, Maiden.

NORTHWEST - A. Wade Thomas, pastor of Galvary church, Vancouver, Wash.; Betty Gantenbein, homemaker and member of First church, Madras, Ore.

OHIO - Tom Walters, pastor of Urbancrest church, Goshen; Karen Alexander, homemaker and member of Sharon Woods church, Columbus.

OKLAHOMA - Chester Ward Jr., director of associational missions and member of Victory Park church, McAlester; Norman Lamb, attorney and member of Emmanuel church, Enid.

PENNSYLVANIA/SOUTH JERSEY - Lamar Duke, pastor of Absecon (N.J.) church; Malcolm Taylor, vice president of a consulting firm and member of Pittsburgh (Pa.) church.

SOUTH CAROLINA - Marion Jones, pastor of Langston Memorial church, Conway; Greg Hasselbring, a sales representative and member of Central church, Darlington.

TENNESSEE - Todd Zeigler, pastor of First church, Alcoa; Tommy Doyle, a medical doctor and member of First church, Milan.

TEXAS - Hayes Wicker, pastor of First church, Lubbock; James Brunson, attorney and member of First church, Houston.

VIRGINIA - Phillip Hunt, pastor of Wayne Hills church, Waynesboro; Lon Clayton Warner, an employee of the Central Intelligence Agency and member of Jefferson (Va.) church.

WEST VIRGINIA - Lonnie Chenowith, pastor of Mineral Wells (W. Va.) fellowship; Georgette James, beautician and member of Edgemont church, Bluefield.

UTAH/IDAHO - Don Falke, pastor of First church, Moab, Utah; Harold Luke, a maintenance technician and member of First church, Helper, Utah.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

The Resolutions Committee is made up of 10 members, three of whom must be members of the SBC Executive Committee. The committee, according to Bylaw 21, has the "duty ... to prepare and submit to the convention resolutions which the committee deems appropriate for adoption and to report on all matters submitted to it by the convention, with or without recommendation or amendments."

The bylaw also asks that proposed resolutions be sent to the committee 30 days before the annual meeting.

Vines named Mark Corts, pastor of Calvary church, Winston-Salem, N.C., as chairman. He also named Mark Coppenger, executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, and the 1989 Resolutions Committee chairman, to the 1990 committee.

Executive Committee members are Paul House, an assistant professor of religion at Taylor University, Upland, Ind.; Russell Bush, a retired dentist and pastor, from Hattiesburg, Miss.; and Miriam Kibelbeck, a homemaker from Port Charlotte, Fla.

--more--

Other members are Andy Buckley, Baptist Student Union director at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, and member of East Bayou church, Lafayette, La.; Mrs. Bobby Vereen, a homemaker and member of Woodridge church, Mobile, Ala.; Robert Sloan, a professor at Baylor University and member of First church, Lorena, Texas; Bill Merrill, pastor of Country Estates church, Midwest City, Okla.; and Charles Page, pastor of First church, Nashville.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The Credentials Committee works with the registration secretary during the annual meeting "to review and rule upon any question which may arise in registration concerning the credentials of messengers."

Bylaw 8 adds any committee ruling "may be appealed to the convention during business session. Any contention arising on the floor concerning seating of messengers shall be referred to the committee for consideration and the committee shall report back to the convention."

Vines named Lawton Searcy, pastor of First church, Baton Rouge, La., as chairman.

Other members are Sammy Wilson, pastor of Calvary church, Alcoa, Tenn.; Mrs. Steve Felker, a homemaker and member of Swift Creek church, Colonial Heights, Va.; Harry Michael, pastor of Poplar Springs church, Hiram, Ga.; Mrs. Steve Drake, a pathology lab technician and member of Newton (Ala.) church;

Mrs. Curt Dodd, a homemaker and member of Metropolitan church, Houston; Forrest Lowry, pastor of Spring (Texas) church; Joe Cobb, pastor of First church, Booneville, Miss.; Herbert Cole, pastor of Beulah church, Carrollton, Ga.; Tommy Knotts, director of missions and member of First church, Belvedere, S.C.;

Frank Bell, pastor of Webb church, Newport, Tenn.; Gene Lindsay, pastor of First church, Wills Point, Texas; Johnny Beard, pastor of Colonial Hills church, Tyler, Texas; Step Martin, pastor of Calvary church, Shreveport, La; Doug McKinnon, a financial planner and member of Sandia church, Albuquerque;

Steve McVey, pastor of Bemiston church, Talladega, Ala.; Mrs. Ron Meyers, a program administrator and member of First Church, Springfield, Ill.; Delano McMinn, pastor of Mt. Lebanon church, Greer, S.C.; Mrs. Emerson Lyle, a teacher and member of Whitesburg church, Huntsville, Ala.;

Kenneth Hale, pastor of Trinity church, Hanover, N.H.; William T. Spencer II, director of missions and member of Cornerstone church, Ankeny, Iowa; John Bridges, retired insurance agent and member of First church, Cartersville, Ga.;

James Rock, pastor of Mt. Pisgah church, Austell, Ga.; Harry Clause, a medical doctor and member of First church, Roanoke, Va.; Steve Carr, pastor of Old Bethlehem church, Union City, Tenn.; Don Wills, investments and member of Park Cities church, Dallas; and Steve Frank Bain, pastor of Lakeview church, Selmer, Tenn.

TELLERS COMMITTEE

The Tellers Committee, working under the supervision of the SBC registration secretary, tabulates any votes taken during the annual meeting.

Vines named Tim Hedquist, administrator at Bellevue church, Cordova, Tenn., as chairman of the committee. Hedquist recently resigned as vice president of business and finance of the SBC Executive Committee and convention manager to accept the post at the suburban Memphis, Tenn., church.

--more--

Other members:

Mrs. Ernie Myers, a homemaker and member of First Southern church, Reno, Nev.; Mrs. David Bruce, a homemaker and member of Riverside church, Denver; Claude Cone, executive director of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico and member of First church, Albuquerque;

Earl Potts, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Convention and member of Eastern Hills church, Montgomery, Ala.; Paul Murphy, pastor of Twelfth Street church, Gadsden, Ala.; R. Albert Mohler Jr., editor of the Christian Index, newsjournal of the Georgia Baptist Convention and member of Atkinson Road church, Lawrenceville, Ga.;

Mrs. Tony Chester, a homemaker and member of Riverside church, Fort Myers, Fla.; Randall Williams, pastor of First church, Tampa, Fla.; Eddie Hamilton, pastor of Oak Forest church, Jackson, Miss.; Wendell Estep, pastor of First church, Columbia, S.C.;

Bill Prince, manager with a telephone company and member of Abilene church, Martinez, Ga.; Ray Spence, pastor of Second church, Richmond, Va.; Ted Mace, pastor of First church, Elkton, Md.; and Marshall Albritton, attorney and member of Park Avenue church, Nashville.

--30--

High Court sends Amish case
back to Minnesota for review

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press
4/27/90

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has sent a dispute over a Minnesota law that requires Amish to display slow-moving vehicle emblems on horse-drawn vehicles back to that state's highest court.

The court vacated the judgment in Minnesota v. Hershberger and instructed the Minnesota Supreme Court to reconsider the case in light of a recent decision that limits the application of a "compelling state interest" test in free exercise of religion cases.

In Employment Division of Oregon v. Smith, a majority of the Supreme Court held the test -- set forth in a 1963 Supreme Court decision and requiring that governmental actions that substantially burden a religious practice must be justified by a compelling governmental interest -- should be applied only in unemployment compensation cases.

"We're already beginning to see the effects of the Smith decision on Religious freedom," said Oliver S. Thomas, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. "Today it's the Native Americans and the Amish, but soon it will be the Baptists and the Catholics. Everybody suffers under this decision."

The dispute over the Minnesota law began when 14 members of the Old Order Amish refused to place red and orange triangular warning signs on their buggies, claiming it would violate their religious beliefs. Old Order Amish shun bright colors and "worldly symbols," which the 14 individuals claimed the triangular warning signs represent.

A district court judge upheld the sign law, saying Minnesota was justified by "a compelling state interest in requiring a uniform and universally recognized (slow-moving vehicle) emblem."

But the Minnesota Supreme Court voted unanimously to overturn the decision, holding the Amish have a "sincere religious belief" that is protected by the First Amendment. The state instead could require the use of reflective silver tape and lighted red lanterns, which Old Order Amish find less objectionable, the court said.

--30--

Fighting in Liberia's Nimba County
forces Baptist churches to close

By Donald D. Martin

N-FMB

Baptist Press
4/27/90

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Fighting between Liberian government and rebel troops has closed all Baptist churches and mission stations in northern Nimba County.

--more--

Southern Baptist missionary Earl Williams, now on leave with his family in Louisiana, said when he left Yekepa, a city in northern Nimba County, few people remained in the cities and villages of the area.

All nine Baptist churches and eight mission stations in northern Nimba County had closed. About half had stopped meeting in March because of the fighting.

Some churches and preaching points may never meet again because the fighting displaced entire towns and villages, Williams said. Some villages will take a long time to regroup, he added.

Five Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to Buchanan, Liberia, now are in the capital city of Monrovia waiting for the fighting to die down. They decided to wait in Monrovia, about 70 miles northwest of Buchanan, after the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia advised an estimated 10,000 U.S. citizens to leave Liberia because of increased fighting between government and rebel troops.

The missionaries are Brian Barlow of Pensacola, Fla.; Vicki Barlow of St. Petersburg, Fla.; Mary Katherine Campbell of Abilene, Texas; and Ron and Sharon Hill of Albuquerque, N.M. Campbell and the Barlows are new missionaries still attending language school. The Hills have worked in Liberia since 1975.

In Monrovia, the American Cooperative School held graduation early and closed out the school year April 27 because of the growing unrest, according to the U.S. Embassy.

A number of Southern Baptist missionaries' children attend the school, and Lanette James, a Southern Baptist journeyman from Farmersville, Texas, is an elementary teacher there. The school provides education for children of embassy workers, international business personnel and missionaries from various denominations. About 50 percent of the students are U.S. citizens.

Fighting earlier this month in Nimba County forced several Southern Baptist workers to leave Yekepa. Williams and his wife, Jane, left Yekepa in mid-April. He is from West Monroe, La., and she is from Knoxville, Tenn.

Volunteers Cecil and Ellajane Sutley returned to their home in Arkadelphia, Ark., a few weeks before the end of their volunteer term. Journeyman Lynette Sneed of Liberty, Mo., also had to leave her work in Nimba County and is in Monrovia.

President Samuel Doe said April 25 he would launch a military campaign to crush anti-government rebels if they did not surrender in two weeks, according to news reports.

So far the fighting, which began last December when rebel troops invaded Liberia from Ivory Coast, has concentrated in Nimba County. The rebels are trying to overthrow Doe, who seized power in a 1980 coup. The fighting has forced more than 140,000 Liberians to flee to neighboring Guinea and Ivory Coast.

Fifty-three Southern Baptists still are working in the Liberia, which was settled in the 1820s and founded in 1847 by freed American slaves. Southern Baptists began work in Liberia in 1846, but the effects of the American Civil War caused Southern Baptists to suspended work in 1875. Southern Baptist missionary work resumed in 1960.

U.S. officials estimate about 10,000 Americans live in Liberia. Most are businessmen and missionaries.

--30--

Cultural captivity may cripple
SBC, panelists warn historians

By Marv Knox

N-10

Baptist Press
4/27/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--Cultural captivity and self-centeredness may cripple the Southern Baptist Convention, despite its many virtues, a panel of observers warned.

--more--

The trio -- an American Baptist, a Roman Catholic and a United Methodist -- addressed the joint annual meeting of the SBC Historical Commission and Southern Baptist Historical Society in Nashville. The theme for the April 23-25 meeting was "Southern Baptists and Relationships with Other Denominations."

"The Southern Baptist Convention is significantly shaped by Southern culture," said J. Richard Peck, manager of general church periodicals for the United Methodist Publishing House in Nashville.

"Members of this denomination, because they are in the South, seem more conservative, more friendly and hospitable and yet less tolerant of the views of those who differ with them. Southerners are generally more charitable than northerners, but they are less likely to be concerned about social justice issues. They are more likely to be tithers, and they clearly attend church more frequently than their northern counterparts."

"In many ways Southern Baptists epitomize the American ethos," warned Robert A. Dalton, vice president of Glenmary Home Missioners in Cincinnati and the Roman Catholic liaison to the SBC.

"Your danger is that you will fall into cultural captivity and lose your prophetic edge of biblical strength. If you become merely a 'civil religion,' you will become another mainline denomination falling into decline."

After noting the SBC exhibits tendencies toward both individualism and imperialism, American Baptist George D. Younger said members of his denomination look toward the SBC with both anxiety and optimism.

"Anxiety, because you seem to be so much a part of the Establishment; optimism, because you have a wide enough span within your fellowship to include those who are out as well as those who are in," said Younger, executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey in East Orange. "Anxiety, because you seem to be the prototypical American organization; optimism, because you have been able to retain the ability to spawn vital religious movements."

Peck, who presented a perspective from mainline Protestantism, reported: "A disheartening survey ... found that, in general, the religiously devout are on the average more bigoted, more authoritarian, more dogmatic and more anti-humanitarian than the less devout. Unfortunately, Baptists were found to be relatively more devout than other denominations."

But he also cited another survey that determined Southern Baptists have a "higher degree of faith maturity" than mainliners. Consequently, Southern Baptists' faith makes more of a difference in their lives, and they tend to be more loyal to their denomination and churches than the others, he said.

Mainliners also get the impression that Southern Baptists are "dominated by politics and polemics," particularly in relationship to their institutions, Peck said. But this has cost the denomination dearly, he noted: "Most mainliners would agree that Southern Baptists have effectively amputated their academic community's major reason for being -- a marketplace for free inquiry. It is a place for education, not indoctrination."

The SBC is impoverished if only people who agree that Scripture is without error are allowed positions of leadership, he added. "Mainliners might envy your denomination for its evangelical fervor, its compassion for others around the globe, its fine publications, its healthy budgets and large membership, but they would not trade all of these together for freedom of thought," he said.

Dalton praised Southern Baptists for their support of another freedom -- religious freedom. He also cited their "fire for evangelism," structural efficiency, passion for the Bible, emphasis on the individual, "important insight about the priesthood of all believers" and "prayerful hearts."

But he warned about the pitfalls of climbing the social ladder, paying too much attention to numerical success, failing to "focus on a hurting world" and structuring worship that is more concerned with "show rather than substance."

As a close observer of the SBC during most of its decade-long theological/political controversy, Dalton cautioned, "If you do not find a way of altering your image of fighting and feuding, your biblical message will fall on deaf ears."

Younger admitted that American and Southern Baptists have seen each other through "self-justifying images" since they split in 1845. "These images are deep-seated, yet unworthy, on both sides," he added.

Some of the images American Baptists see in their Southern siblings, he said, are: The "last defenders of the Lost Cause of Confederacy;" "ecclesiastical super-organization"; "mission imperialism"; "theological obscurantism," particularly in the 1988 SBC resolution on the priesthood of Christian believers, which critics have dubbed a resolution on the authority of pastors; "social quietism," especially regarding civil rights; "denominational exclusivism"; and an over-emphasis on individualism and independence.

Yet in a changing world, both sets of Baptists need to move beyond their images of each other, Younger insisted: "The future of the Baptist Christian witness depends upon our willingness to draw upon the resources that have come to us out of Scripture, out of the life and thought of the church in all ages, and especially out of our heritage as Baptists. It will also depend upon our openness to the Holy Spirit, ... who continually draws us into new forms of response."

--30--

CORRECTION: In the 4/24/90 BP story titled "Helms receives PAC's 1st religious liberty award," please change the date in the first paragraph from June 19-20 to April 19-20.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

CORRECTION: In the 4/26/90 BP story titled "Conservatives take control of Southern Seminary board," please change the ending of the second paragraph to read: ... used a new working majority to approve a variety of contested motions.

Thanks,
Baptist Press