

August 31, 1958

Survey Committee Talks About Proposed Changes

RIDGECREST, N. C.--(BP)--Matters concerning proposed reorganization of the work of the Southern Baptist Convention were discussed here at a meeting of the Committee to Study the Total Convention Program.

It was the first meeting of the committee following the 1958 session of the Southern Baptist Convention at Houston.

At the Houston session, the Convention adopted 23 of the committee's recommendations for reorganization but returned 15 additional recommendations to the committee for a year of further study.

Committee Chairman Douglas M. Branch of Rocky Mount, N. C., emphasized the fact that the work done by the committee here was tentative. He said final action would come at a future meeting of the committee.

Here are the areas discussed by the Study Committee at its Ridgecrest meeting, and a brief statement about each area, as reported by a committee spokesman:

CARVER SCHOOL OF MISSIONS AND SOCIAL WORK: B. L. Williams of Johnston City, Ill., chairman of Carver trustees, and Hugh A. Brimm of Louisville, carver professor, were present. The committee discussed the future academic program of the school, the necessity for accreditation, and the need for this type of school by Southern Baptists. No definite action by committee.

CHURCH LOAN BOARD: This recommendation was reconsidered at instruction of Convention. Difficulties of inaugurating such a program at this time were recognized, and the fact was faced that there is a definite need in this area of church loans. Committee to study further; no definite action.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: Committee tentatively adopted a modified report from its original recommendation. This new report will be studied further and discussed at next meeting of the Study Committee.

HOME MISSION BOARD: Committee spent an entire afternoon session with representatives of administration and board of this agency. Present were its executive secretary, Courts Redford; Asst. Executive Secretary Frank Garrison, Loyd Corder, S. F. Dowis, and Alfred Carpenter, members of the administrative staff in Atlanta.

Also present: C. G. Cole, chairman of Home Mission Board, and board members Dick Hall, J. T. Ford, Joe H. Music, and Henry F. Barksdale.

Committee heard of the reorganization plan of the Home Mission Board, its projected plan for a unified Southern Baptist program of home missions, and the suggestions of the Home Mission Board for a modified report of the Study Committee to the Convention.

Study Committee recognized that the plans of the Home Mission Board and recommendations of the Study Committee are very close together. A revised report is in the working and will be discussed further with representatives of the Home Mission Board and at next meeting of Study Committee. Action is pending discussions at committee's next meeting.

Next meeting of Study Committee is to be held in Nashville Dec. 11. Revised recommendations of Study Committee, when they are final, will be released through Baptist Press to the Southern Baptist Convention in time for study and discussion before the 1959 session of the Convention in Louisville.

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BP Folks and Facts.....

.....Schuyler M. Batson, assistant pastor, First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., has accepted call to become pastor of First Baptist Church, Oxford, Miss.

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Hill-Burton Amendment
Hospital Survey Made

NASHVILLE--(BP)--One of the major bills to pass Congress this year, many Baptist leaders feel, was that which amended the Hill-Burton Act to permit hospitals to borrow money from the government for construction.

Until this amendment carried, the Hill-Burton Act gave only direct grants to hospitals. With one exception, hospitals related to the Southern Baptist Convention have declined such grants. They believe grants to be out of keeping with separation of church and state.

A Baptist Press survey has been made of administrators of the 39 Southern Baptist-related hospitals. Actually only two hospitals are operated by the Southern Baptist Convention itself. The other 37 are institutions of state Baptist conventions or of local associations of churches.

20 administrators filled in the questionnaires. Three more administrators responded, but said they could not fill out questionnaires until consulting their hospital directors.

Of the 20 completing questionnaires, only one felt that loans from the federal government constituted a violation of church-state separation.

17 administrators said the passage of the amendment to permit loans would be a stimulus to construction among Baptist hospitals. Three felt construction would not increase as a result.

The hospital managers were about divided however, on whether their own hospitals would seek a Hill-Burton loan. Nine said their hospitals would seek loans, but two of the nine "yeas" were conditional. Eight said they would not seek such loans. Three administrators who returned questionnaires did not answer this particular question.

Administrators of four hospitals indicated that requests for government loans to their hospitals had already been filed, or would be filed soon. These requests totaled about \$9 million.

The executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Hospital Commission, an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, said that the commission "gave active support to the amendment." The official, Frank Tripp of New Orleans, has supervision over the two Convention-operated hospitals, one located in New Orleans and the other in Jacksonville, Fla.

Administrators were asked if they believed "a great number, less than half, or few or none" of the Baptist hospitals would take advantage of government loans. 10 said they believed "a great number" would borrow money. Three said "less than half" would and one said "few or none." Six declined to answer this question, although they answered other questions on the form.

One of the administrators who had no statement on whether his particular hospital would seek a loan said: "I cannot give an unqualified 'yes' because this decision would be made by our board of directors. It is my opinion that the answer will be 'yes' when our hospital needs additional facilities."

An administrator who said his hospital would not seek a government loan (although he did not consider it an infringement on church-state relations) told the Baptist Press: "Satisfactory loans can usually be made at the local level."

Another hospital manager said his would seek such a loan if it did not conflict with the policy of the state Baptist convention operating the hospital.

The administrator of another hospital in the same state said his hospital could not seek a loan because it was already paying off a 20-year loan negotiated only two years ago.

"Had the Hill-Burton Act amendment been effective at the time (the hospital borrowed money in 1956), I feel certain we would have tried for a government loan

at a lot less interest rate," he continued. His commercial loan bears a 4-3/4 per cent rate of interest.

One other hospital indicated that the burden of an existing debt would not allow it to seek a Hill-Burton loan.

At least three hospitals have filed, or will file, applications for Hill-Burton loans.

"Request will be made in September, 1958, for \$500,000 to build a 100-bed addition to our hospital," one replied.

"We have filed application for a loan of \$3-1/2 million to be used in construction of a new 300-bed hospital. However, it appears that there will be no money available until 1960 for this loan," said another.

"We plan building a new hospital. My guess is that we would want to borrow probably \$2 million" toward a total of six times that amount, said a third.

"Application was filed on July 18 for approximately \$3 million to build an entirely new hospital of approximately 200 beds," said the fourth hospital official.

One administrator wondered if there is necessarily any difference between a grant and a loan in applying the doctrine of church-state separation to use of Hill-Burton funds. He said he personally felt a government loan was a violation of the principle.

Here is the statement of Frank Tripp, New Orleans, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Hospital Commission:

"We gave active support to the amendment to the Hill-Burton Act which allows hospitals which do not accept grants to borrow funds under the provisions of the amended bill.

"It is my judgment that if adequate funds are appropriated to implement legislation a substantial number of Baptist groups will undertake to secure loans for the construction of new hospitals and the modernization and expansion of presently existing hospitals.

"The Southern Baptist Hospital Board enjoys a very favorable rating with banks and insurance companies and has been successful in borrowing large amounts at low interest rates with favorable pre-payment terms.

"It is my judgment that if we can continue to borrow money under such favorable conditions from commercial institutions we will do so rather than borrow the funds from the federal government."

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Chicago University
Calls T. C. Smith

CHICAGO--(BP)--T. C. Smith, former professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, will assume in October his duties as lecturer in New Testament in the divinity school of the University of Chicago.

Smith is a native of Pineville, La., and a graduate of Louisiana College. He received his master and doctor of theology degrees from Southern Seminary and a doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Smith has served pastorates in Virginia and Kentucky.

Mrs. Smith, the former Ellen Bernice Stewart of Springfield, Missouri, is a graduate of the Carver School of Missions and Social Work. The Smiths have three sons.

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Mississippi Convention
Fills Staff Vacancies

JACKSON, Miss.--(BP)--Two posts of leadership on the Mississippi Baptist Convention staff here were filled recently.

Bryant M. Cummings, minister of religious education at First Baptist Church, Jackson, accepted the position of state Baptist Sunday school secretary. He will join the staff Sept. 15.

M. Lee Ferrell, minister of education at Capitol Heights Baptist Church, Montgomery, Ala., accepted the position as associate in the Brotherhood department of the convention.

Ferrell was state Royal Ambassador secretary for Alabama Baptists from 1953-57. He will be in charge of RA promotion in Mississippi.

Cummings succeeds E. C. Williams, who resigned Jan. 1 from the post he had held since 1925. Since Jan. 1, Williams has continued as acting state Sunday school secretary.

Cummings is a former vice-president of the Southwestern (Baptist) Religious Education Association. Ferrell is a former youth director at Mississippi Baptist Orphanage here.

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Furman Has New Editor

GREENVILLE, S. C.--(BP)--W. Fletcher Allen, sports editor of the Florence Morning News, has been named director of the Furman University news service and editor of Furman Magazine.

He will assume his duties Sept. 1.

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Consider Your Pastor's Salary

by

Brooks Hays, President of Southern Baptist Convention

As the period approaches for completing action upon church budgets, I hope that our people will be giving special attention to ministerial salaries. Along with our concern over the needs of our mission program, there should be a sensitivity to the failure in many situations to adjust the pastor's salary in the light of an unprecedented increase in the cost of living.

The plight of many ministers is serious. Adjustments have been made in many churches, of course, and it is not a uniform problem by any means. I am thinking particularly of the smaller churches where receipts are such that considerations of economy naturally must be weighed. Still Baptists do not want their dedicated ministers to suffer and they will want to provide equitable treatment for all of them. I have observed that Congress has assiduously taken care of groups suffering most from rising living costs and has tried to adjust incomes in the light of this change. Surely, we Baptists will do as well.