

# Associated Baptist Press

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## **Presentation of mission statement to highlight Fellowship meeting**

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Presentation of a new mission statement and a keynote address by popular speaker Anthony Campolo are expected to highlight the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's fifth annual General Assembly, scheduled July 20-22 in Fort Worth, Texas.

The mission statement is designed to guide the Fellowship, which was founded in 1991 by moderates to protest a conservative takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention, into the future.

Four commitments highlighted in the document -- Bible freedom, soul freedom, church freedom and religious freedom -- will frame presentations during the opening session. Later, the General Assembly will be asked to vote on the mission statement.

Campolo, a noted speaker, writer, educator and activist in social ministries, is an ordained American Baptist minister and one of the nation's leading ecumenical voices. Other scheduled speakers include Russell Dilday, interim dean at Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary; Molly Marshall, a theology professor at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kan.; Sam Medina, an attorney and bivocational pastor from Lubbock, Texas; Texas evangelist Richard Jackson and Cecil Sherman, Fellowship coordinator.

The theme for the meeting will be "Come to Joy," based on Psalm 126, said Dallas pastor George Mason, chair of the General Assembly committee. In addition to plenary sessions, the meeting will offer a series of one-hour "breakout" sessions addressing practical ministry issues and highlighting missions and ministries offered or supported by the Fellowship.

Also scheduled at the General Assembly are the introduction of the Fellowship's 16 newest missionaries and a missions update by global missions coordinator Keith Parks, consideration of a \$13 million budget and election of new members to the Coordinating Council, the Fellowship's 76-member governing board.

The meeting will be held at Fort Worth's Tarrant County Convention Center.

The Fellowship received gifts from 1,377 churches in 1994, totaling \$11.2 million. During 1991, the organization's first year, 391 congregations contributed a total of \$4.5 million.

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-- By ABP staff

EDITOR'S NOTE: Photos of Campolo and Parks are available by request.

## **Sehested uses peace award to protest Cuban embargo**

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (ABP) -- The recipient of a major award for peacemaking announced he would turn over the \$1,000 gift to a Baptist group in Cuba as an act of civil disobedience protesting U.S. policies there.

Ken Sehested, executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, accepted the 1995 Edwin T. Dahlberg Peace Award June 23. It is one of the highest honors given by the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. and was presented during the group's recent biennial meeting in Syracuse, N.Y.

Sehested told 3,000 delegates and visitors he planned to give the cash award to the Fraternity of Baptist Churches in Cuba as a form of protest against the United States' economic embargo against Cuba. He said the gift would honor Clara Rodes, an ordained woman and president of the Fraternity who died during a kidney transplant operation last November. Her death could have been prevented by drugs readily available in the U.S., Sehested said.

The embargo, imposed in the 1960s, is a vestige of U.S. Cold War policy. Since the collapse of Communism in eastern Europe, Cuba's foreign trade has plummeted, along with aid from Russia, producing the worst economic crisis in the island's history.

"The wall of Cold War hostility has fallen in Europe. It's time to bring it down in the Caribbean," Sehested said. He urged delegates to tell elected leaders they oppose the embargo, which he said violates international law and "the clear teachings of Scripture" as well as stated policies of several religious bodies including the ABC.

Sehested's gift "is a crime according to the legal statutes of our nation and thus an act of civil disobedience," he said. "I prefer to think of it as an act of holy obedience."

The Dahlberg Peace Award recognizes American Baptists who have "worked constructively for peace with justice and freedom." Past winners of the award include Martin Luther King Jr., Jimmy Carter and William Sloane Coffin.

-- By Bob Allen

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