

February 16, 1962

Academic Freedom  
Defined For Editors

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--A seminary professor's academic freedom carries with it responsibilities to God and to the denomination employing the teacher.

In reporting on "Theological Education and Academic Freedom," C. R. Daley of Middletown, Ky., editor of the Western Recorder said, "The concept of freedom is basic to the understanding of the role of any Baptist teacher or preacher."

On the other hand, he pointed out, there needs to be "some boundary for academic freedom. The boundary is summed up in the word responsibility."

Daley addressed the mid-winter meeting here of the Southern Baptist Press Association, composed chiefly of his fellow editors of 27 other weekly and semi-monthly Southern Baptist newspapers.

He noted academic freedom "is a very warm and live subject among Southern Baptists today. In at least two of our Baptist (Southern Baptist Convention) seminaries teachers are now under open and strong criticism for practicing academic freedom as they understand it in writing and teaching."

The Kentucky editor acknowledged the theologically conservative position which Southern Baptists have held "from the very beginning of our history." He claimed a "new kind of orthodoxy" prevalent in the denomination's life is "programmistic. It has come about with pyramiding statistics interpreted as the sure favor of God and a hard-hitting super-duper brand of promotion."

Some accepted programs of the Convention have become as orthodox as long-held doctrines of the Bible and church autonomy, he said. Anyone who questions these has "often been branded heretical," according to Daley.

He called attention to creedal statements which professors teaching at Southern Baptist Convention seminaries sign when they are employed to teach.

"The time has come, however, when we might have to give some definite interpretation to these creeds," Daley added. Asked later who would be the interpreter, Daley said it would be the task of the seminaries' trustees first, and possibly even that of the Convention.

He suggested that instead of blanket interpretations being made, individual professors should be counseled if their interpretations appeared to be different from that of the seminary leadership.

He warned that Southern Baptists are faced with two threats to academic freedom: (1) "theological liberalism (which) could well result in a popular reaction (and) the loss of almost all academic freedom," and (2) "the heresy-hunting brand of fundamentalism which would enforce its particular creed upon every Southern Baptist seminary teacher." Commenting on Daley's address, Reuben E. Alley of Richmond, Va., said Southern Baptists are in danger of "so circumscribing theology that the young people of our coming generation who are thinkers will have no respect for it whatsoever."

Editor of the Religious Herald, Alley said Southern Baptists have as good biblical scholars as other denominations "but they're too scared to write. Baptists are using interpretations from other denominations which will write."

Other editors said they did not necessarily agree with the statements by Daley nor with later remarks by Alley.

Communism Series  
Suggested To Papers

Phoenix, Ariz. (BP)--Southern Baptists' 28 state papers should print "a new and different series of four articles on communism," E. S. James, editor of their largest paper, reported here.

James edits the Baptist Standard in Dallas, serving the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Fellow editors attending the Southern Baptist Press Association mid-winter meeting here accepted his proposal to select a committee of seven to draft the articles. The committee will be nominated later this year.

James said many Baptists "want to stay the progress of communism but know not how. Others say they have the only answer to it." He said still others don't care or are unmoved by the threat it poses and think the United States is "immune."

Another group thinks communism has taken over the United Nations, the Supreme Court of the United States, the National Council of Churches, the White House and Congress, James contended.

James suggested these four topics: (1) communism in history, (2) communism in this generation, (3) communism in the Baptist people, (4) communism and its alternatives.

In other business, the association elected Leon Macon, editor of the Alabama Baptist, Birmingham, president, succeeding S. H. Jones of Greenville, S. C. James O. Duncan of Washington, D. C. is the vice-president and Erwin L. McDonald of Little Rock was named as secretary-treasurer.

The 1963 meeting will convene at Williamsburg, Va., Feb. 11-13.

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Blankenship To Direct  
Baptist Literacy Ministry

(2-16-62)

ATLANTA (BP)--The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention elected Miss Mildred Blankenship of Birmingham to direct its literacy ministry.

The missions board entered the literacy field about two years ago when Miss Anne Grove of Nashville was employed to conduct pilot projects in the southern Appalachian mountains.

The ministry seeks to coordinate the literacy efforts with Baptist associations and churches.

Miss Blankenship started her literacy work in 1958 when she studied literacy techniques at the Koinonia Foundation in Baltimore. She had previously secured a master's degree in human development and had taught school for 13 years.

Since 1958 she has worked in literacy projects and special schools in North Carolina and Alabama.

"Literacy is a ministry of missions, and opens the door of the mind to God's word," M. Wendell Belew of Atlanta said in announcing the election of Miss Blankenship to succeed Miss Grove. "A Baptist church can be found in almost every community where literacy missions are needed. It is our responsibility as well as a spiritual opportunity."

Belew is secretary of the associational missions department, which supervises the literacy ministry.

Miss Blankenship is a native of Birmingham and received her education at Howard College there and at the University of Maryland in Baltimore.

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