

May 9, 1959

Carolina Picks Branch  
To Lead Convention

RALEIGH, N. C.--(BP)--North Carolina Baptists followed the recommendation of their nominating committee and elected Douglas M. Branch of Rocky Mount, N. C., as next general secretary of the Baptist State Convention.

Branch will succeed Dr. M. A. Huggins, who retires June 30. Huggins has served since 1932. Branch was elected at a special session of the convention here, receiving a clear majority over two other North Carolina ministers nominated from the convention floor.

The convention gave a parting tribute to Dr. Huggins. It voted to supplement his retirement income through the Southern Baptist Relief and Annuity Board with \$150 a month, nearly doubling this source of income. It also voted to permit Dr. and Mrs. Huggins to live in the convention-owned general secretary's home until their deaths.

Pastors and other Baptist leaders in the state contributed \$1038 in a free-will love offering for Dr. Huggins.

The general secretary-elect is pastor of First Baptist Church, Rocky Mount. He is well-known in state as well as Southern Baptist Convention circles. Branch is presently chairman of the SBC "Survey Committee," which will report at Louisville May 21.

Convention President A. Leroy Parker of Greensboro and M. O. Owens, Jr., pastor, First Baptist Church, Lenoir, N. C., were nominated from the floor in opposition to Branch. The committee's nominee was elected on the first ballot.

Branch is a native of North Carolina and is a graduate of the convention's Wake Forest College. He is vice-chairman of the college's trustees and received an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Wake Forest in 1956.

For nearly three years, Branch served as president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. The presidency is not a full-time salaried position, while as general secretary he will be full-time chief administrator of convention affairs.

For the past five years, Branch has served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.

He has served as pastor of several North Carolina Baptist churches and as president of the state Pastors' Conference. He became pastor at Rocky Mount in 1953.

In addition, he was field worker for the Baptist State Convention for two years. Branch also has served on several key committees of the convention, including the North Carolina "survey committee" which reported to the same special session at which he was elected general secretary.

The Southern Baptist Handbook reports nearly 850,000 Baptists belong to the 3300 churches affiliated with the Baptist State Convention. North Carolina is second only to Texas in total membership of states in the SBC. Its number of churches also is second to Texas.

Its total church offerings of \$36-1/3 million a year are almost half that of Texas churches and again are second largest among states.

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Doing Church History?  
Conference To Help You

RIDGECREST, N. C.--(BP)--"Do you have any records that Luther Rice was ever in our city? I am preparing a historical pageant and need to find out."

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This request for information was received recently by the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Another person wrote the Commission: "Our church will celebrate its 100th birthday. In compiling the church history we find no records from the time the church was organized in 1857 until 1894. Can you help us bridge that gap of 37 years?"

In a third instance, a pastor queried, "I have been asked to write a brief history of our association. As you know this is a large task and I do not know where to begin. What should I include in the history? Our minutes for several years are not available."

These three requests for aid are typical of those coming to the Commission. A special history writers' conference and workshop will be sponsored by the Commission this year at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly here to meet the needs of people like these. The dates are June 18-24.

Norman W. Cox of Nashville, Tenn., Commission executive secretary, said workshop leaders will tell history writers how to gather information---and where to find it---as well as how to write it after information has been assembled.

"Many people do not know that their state Baptist historical collection has a wide range of material, including associational minutes, which will help them in history-writing assignments," he said.

Cox also said that the Commission office in Nashville has much historical data on microfilm which is valuable in research projects.

It was because of increasing interest in writing histories of churches, associations of churches, and Baptist institutions that this first workshop-conference was called.

Robert A. Baker, professor of church history, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex., will tell how to write histories. Lynn E. May, Jr., Nashville, research director, Historical Commission, will discuss how to find resource materials.

Reservations for the conference may be made by writing the assembly management.

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North Carolina Press  
Faces Further Study

RALEIGH, N. C.--(BP)--Further study will be given to a proposal to establish a combined printing operation for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Such an operation had been recommended by the convention's "committee of 25" which surveyed state Baptist work to make proposals for improving and strengthening it.

The estimated 1900 messengers at a special May session of the convention here voted to refer the Baptist Press proposal intact to a group of nearly 120 persons who comprise three key boards in state Baptist circles.

These are the 85-member general board, the 16-member board of directors for the Biblical Recorder, and the 18-member board of trustees of state Baptist children's homes.

The survey committee said its recommendation, if adopted, would eliminate competition now existing between the Biblical Recorder, convention newsmagazine, and the children's homes' newspaper, Charity and Children. Both carry general denominational news and are issued weekly.

The Biblical Recorder, by committee recommendation, would serve as the news journal of the state convention, while Charity and Children would limit its coverage to children's home work. But the Baptist Press arrangement would make use of a press located at the Thomasville, N. C., site of a children's home. Charity and Children operates the printing plant.

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The Biblical Recorder has its offices in Raleigh, where state convention offices are located. It recently negotiated a five-year offset printing contract with a private Raleigh printing firm.

The large committee of the whole is expected to make a study of its own and to report at some future convention session. Meantime both papers will continue under their present editorial and printing policies.

The printing issue was one of the main ones in the lengthy committee report. However, it was by only a slim majority that the convention adopted a recommendation cutting the size of its general board, which functions in administrative matters between sessions, from 85 to 60 members.

The vote on this section of the survey report was 306 to 293 in favor of the reorganized board. New convention bylaws must be drafted and adopted for this and other approved features of the survey report to become effective.

The convention laid down strict conditions for establishment of any new denominational hospitals in North Carolina.

Included in the conditions is a requirement that the people of the area where any new hospital is to be located provide at least three-fourths of the cost of constructing a building and equipping it to care for at least 100 patients.

The community would also be required to provide a site "suitable for future expansion and adequate parking on the grounds."

The action was considered a blow to the hopes of Baptists who have been asking the convention to establish a hospital in the New Bern, N. C., area.

Among other recommendations were these affecting Baptist colleges of the state:

That Mars Hill, Campbell, and Wingate Colleges consider advancing from junior to senior college status; and that Wake Forest College, a senior college consider resumption of graduate work.

The convention adopted a recommendation that its homes for the aging secure a professionally-trained business manager and that any future homes for the aging be "in smaller, more modest homes strategically scattered throughout the state."

The convention also approved a recommendation that the council on Christian education make a special study of the school of pastoral care at Baptist Hospital, Winston-Salem, N. C., "with a view to securing adequate financial support for its growth." It was suggested that the Southern Baptist Convention might contribute to the support of the school.