

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS

June 12, 1964

Theo Sommerkamp, *assistant director*  
460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville 3, Tennessee

Dear Baptist State Paper Editor:

We have a question. Your answers are needed. Please fill out the enclosed questionnaire, stick it in the self-addressed envelope. Mail it to us.

After the Southern Baptist Convention each year, it has been our policy to comb the state papers for their evaluations of the Convention. This is the editorial evaluation, not the news stories. We quoted from them in a roundup of comment.

As publication deadlines have shortened, copy is printed much earlier. Many of you have been turning to direct pickups from the papers from other states, running selections from the editorials as the papers come in week by week. Many of your pickups come out before we can summarize all of the comments, since some papers publish their editorials two weeks after the Convention.

In 1963, we did not summarize editorial appraisals of the Kansas City meeting. This year, after several editors said they missed it, we decided to run one.

Here are our problems in developing such a summary. (1) Some delay evaluating the Convention editorially till after they run all the news from it. Others comment on it in the very first issue. (2) We have felt we should contact all the editors, rather than exercise the selection of say 10 or 12 editorials for quotation--either the 10 or 12 most representative in our opinion, or the first 10 or 12 to publish an evaluation. (3) Space limitations bother us. We have wondered if passing 750 words will kill the use of the story in papers due to the unusual length. (4) Trying to write within the word limit, we have to reduce quotes from any given paper sometimes to two sentences, when the editor wrote 1000 words. We have had some complaints on this count.

We are considering what to do in 1965. Should we have a story at all of this sort? Should we change, slightly or drastically, the framework of it if we have one? Your indications on the attached form will help us greatly.

Please DO NOT confuse our editorial evaluation summary with the news summary of the Convention provided in the press room the final day or in the (BP) the week after the Convention. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Theo Sommerkamp

TS:lm

Enclosures: questionnaire, addressed mailer envelope

1. I published the editorial roundup you sent this year.  Yes  
 No  
 Appearing later
2. I couldn't publish it, but I do want it to read anyway.  Yes  
 No
3. As far as I'm concerned, this roundup next year
- should be done the first week even if you miss some papers.  
 should wait till you can include all papers, despite the delay.  
 can be done without.
4. The roundup next year should include
- comments from every paper possible--omit no one.  
 comments from only 10 or 12 papers, permitting Baptist Press to select what it considers to be most representative of all papers.  
 comments from the papers, how ever many there are, arriving the first week with editorial evaluations. Then move your story without further delay.
5. The length of next year's roundup should be (Indicate one nearest your wish.)
- 500 words  1000 words  
 750 words  over 1000 words (\_\_\_\_words, if over 1000)
6. I felt the 1964 roundup (Check more than one if appropriate.)
- arrived too late to be of much value to us.  
 came in time to help me.  
 was too sketchy.  
 contained a fair balance of comments from the papers.  
 was too long.  
 was too brief.  
 missed the general thinking of the editors.  
 captured the variety of opinions the editors expressed.
7. For 1965, I plan to:
- do my own selecting from other papers, not relying on Baptist Press.  
 combine my own selecting with the Baptist Press account.  
 rely entirely on Baptist Press for an editorial summary.  
 run nothing from other papers, regardless of source.
8. The above questions still do not allow me an avenue to express all my feeling about the editorial roundup. I have these additional comments below:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Editor)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Paper)

Mail to: Theo Sommerkamp  
 Baptist Press  
 Nashville, Tenn.