

(BP) — — —

BAPTIST PRESS

June 24, 1964

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Dear Baptist Editor:

A few days ago we sent you a questionnaire, seeking help on our post-SBC summary of your editorial comments on the Convention. Response has been swift enough and good enough that we can make this report to you, question by question.

20 replies from editors with our questionnaire on the Convention editorial roundup have been received. These are enough to indicate the trend, (even if the nine still out come in.)

Question 1: 8 published BP roundup; 11 did not, 1 will publish it later.

Question 2: Of the 11 did nots, 8 said they wanted it for reading material even if they were not able to use it. The other 3 did not mark the question.

Question 3: Though this question was intended to be marked only once--it had three choices--it was marked more than once by a few. 11 said the summary should be done the first week, even to missing some papers. 7 said wait till BP has all the papers, despite delay. 3 said the summary can be done without.

Question 4: Again this question was marked more than once by some. It also had three choices. Next year's roundup, said 6, should have comments from every paper possible. 9 said choose 10 or 12 papers, permitting Baptist Press the right of choice. 9 said take the papers coming the first week however many there are. (Note we lost two from question 3.)

Question 5: None marked 500 words. 2 marked 750 to 1000 by penciling in these marks. We gave fixed wordage, rather than a sliding scale, as our choices. 12 said 750 words. 4 said 1000 words. 2 said 1000 or more, one saying he could cut copy.

Question 6: There were 8 choices and they were asked to mark any which they thought applied. 6 said BP story this year was too late to be of much value. 6 said it was in time. 3 said it was too sketchy. 14 said it contained a fair balance of comment. No one said it was too long! 2 said it was too brief. 1 said BP missed the general feeling of the editors, but 15 said the story captured the variety of sentiment expressed.

Question 7: "For 1965, I plan to--" Several quite properly remarked they couldn't or weren't going to say this soon what they would do in 1965. At least one marked more than once, giving more than 20 marks total. 1 did not mark any choice. 2 said they would do their own summary of other papers entirely. 11 said they would combine BP with their own excerpting. 4 said they'd rely entirely on BP. No one said he would run nothing from other papers, regardless of source. 3 were uncertain--those who would not commit themselves on 1965 stories this soon.

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Question 8: Open end for other comments. Here were the comments from those who did add their own.

"I doubt you can get enough of the editorials in quick enough after the Convention to make it worth your effort."

"Let's promise an editorial roundup."

"Why wait forever on all of 'em?" (meaning wait for every paper to editorialize before doing BP summary)

"If you can use only one or two sentences please allow editor to say what he considers his summary opinion."

"I think you are doing all right."

"We need every aid, including BP roundup, even tho' many editors may not use it."

This leads us to believe about next year:

1. BP should continue the summary, even if half is most who can use it.
2. BP should pick the papers available first, and use selectivity if necessary.
3. BP should send the story out earlier if possible. Time may have been the balancing factor in some not using it this year. This ties in to conclusion N . 2.
4. BP should retain the final right to decide the key comment. The editor, however, should continue to tell BP what were his main sentences.
5. BP should not exceed 1000 words and will try to limit to less. BP may have to go to 1000 but, of course, editors can always cut.
6. BP should consider the value it may be to secular press who do not have access to any or all of the Baptist state papers. They were not included in our survey. This and conclusion 1, above, based solely on Baptist editor response, justify continued use of the roundup.

Thank you for giving us your guidance.

Sincerely,

Theo Sommerkamp

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Cutlines

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Baptist Press Photo

A YEAR'S SENTENCE--Trying out the roles of witness and lawyer in the new law school court room of Howard College are Curtis V. Bishop, left, and John A. Fincher, both of whom will serve a year as elected heads of their organizations. Bishop is president of the Southern Association of Baptist Colleges and Schools, and Fincher is chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Education Commission. Fincher, dean at Baptists' Howard College in Birmingham, was host to Bishop, president of Averett College for women, a denomination college in Danville, Va. (BP) Photo