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Vietnam Helicopter Pilot  
Trades Chopper For Seminary

By Bob Harrelson

FORT WORTH (BP)--Bob Segrest had his "ups and downs" in getting to the seminary here.

A combat Marine helicopter pilot in Vietnam until March of this year, Segrest experienced crash or force landings three times, twice being literally shot out of the sky.

Upon discharge from the service, the veteran of 100 combat missions and winner of five air medals and the Navy commendation medal enrolled in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here to work toward a master of divinity degree.

Segrest entered Marine officers candidate school and flight training after his graduation from Baylor University (Baptist) in Waco, Tex., in 1962. He foresaw even then the possibility of an eventual call to the ministry, but God's immediate plan seemed to lead him to military service.

After four years in the Marines, Segrest was assigned in February of 1966 to DaNang, South Vietnam, where his primary mission was to transport troops and ammunition.

On one of these transport missions, Segrest's helicopter was rocked hard by a shell tearing through the roof just over his head.

For one terrible moment the young pilot was gripped with fear as he felt a strange, warm red liquid oozing down his neck from above. To his great relief, he discovered that the thick liquid, instead of blood, was hydraulic fluid pouring from a severed line overhead.

With the line out, however, Segrest had to make a forced landing to hurriedly repair the damage and allow temporary flight. He then flew the crippled copter back to his base, where he learned that four of the five aircraft on his mission had been shot down.

On another occasion Segrest was flying what he thought was to be an easy mission when he passed over a supposedly-deserted enemy village. Suddenly the village seemed to light up in one great flash of firepower. An anti-tank shell ripped through the helicopter, and the aircraft went out of control.

The copter fell 25 feet to the ground and landed with a thud in the middle of a Vietnamese cemetery. The tail broke off, the co-pilot's back was broken as he was thrown from the plane, and Segrest was pinned against the instrument panel of the burning helicopter.

As he lay there thinking this was surely the end for him, the door opened and one of the troops he had been carrying pulled him away to safety. Within minutes a rescue helicopter landed and they were on their way to the hospital. Segrest was treated for a concussion and an arm injury and then returned to action.

Once Segrest had just taken off with a copter-load of 45 men when the craft failed and crashed back to earth. Though the helicopter was destroyed, there were no casualties.

Looking back on his experiences in Vietnam, Segrest observed, "My tenure in the service and the many close calls I experienced only served to further point me to God's purpose for my life.

"God simply used this means to make my life-changing decision more meaningful," he said.

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October 24, 1967

Association Sets Membership Rule: "By Immersion Only" 988

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By Toby Druin  
 Associate Editor, Biblical Recorder

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)--Mecklenburg Baptist Association, after a three-hour debate, voted here to limit its membership to churches which require their members to be baptized by immersion.

By a 214-130 vote, the association adopted an amendment to its bylaws, effective one day before the association meets for its annual session next fall.

The amendment states: "All churches affiliated with this association shall be churches who use the New Testament as the statement of their faith and church polity and require that all candidates, who are physically able, be immersed in water, on the basis of belief in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, to qualify for membership."

Approval of the amendment means that at least two churches now affiliated with the association will not be members next fall if they are still following current practices.

The two are St. John's Baptist Church and Myers Park Baptist Church, both of which accept without subsequent immersion members who have been sprinkled or affused (poured) as members of other denominations.

St. John's Church adopted the policy last spring and insists that such candidates for membership must have been sprinkled or affused after belief in Christ as Savior.

Myers Park Church makes no such distinction and has had a virtual open membership policy since 1949.

During the three hours of debate, several attempts were made to sidetrack the vote. One would have made the amendment a constitutional change requiring a two-thirds vote instead of majority approval necessary for a bylaws amendment.

Another attempt would have expressed disapproval of the two churches' practices but would have taken no punitive action. Still another motion would have adjourned the meeting without any action at all.

The bylaws amendment as offered by H. L. Ferguson, pastor of Thomasboro Baptist Church in Charlotte, got the final approval on a simple majority after sharp disagreement over whether it should be a constitutional amendment or a bylaw change.

Robert. Lasater, associate minister at St. John's Church, argued that it must be an amendment to the constitution "which determines the nature of the organization." Saying the measure as a bylaw change was out of order, Lasater argued: "You cannot amend your constitution by bylaw."

Ferguson countered by saying that only the bylaws of the association list rules of affiliation.

The messengers ruled that the amendment could be to the bylaws. The decision was crucial since the 214 votes for the amendment represented only 62 per cent of the total.

Speaking for his amendment, Ferguson argued that the issue was not local church autonomy or the exercise of ecclesiastical authority by the association. The issue, he said, is whether or not the association has the right to determine what kind of association it is to be.

"This action if taken will unite us," Ferguson said. "Because it separates us from other faiths, it unites us with others of like faith and order.

"If you are a real, genuine, sure 'nough Baptist, let your colors fly," he declared.

The pastor of the St. John's Church, Claude U. Broach, argued that the policy of his church to accept some members who as believers were baptized by some other mode than immersion, was made after a five-year study and in fact is not new at all.

"There are Baptists all over the world affiliated with the Baptist World Alliance who have the same policy," Broach said. "And there are Baptists in full fellowship with the Southern Baptist Convention and Baptist State Convention which follow the same practice."

"Let it be crystal clear" he added, "we do not have any desire to separate. We offer you our hearts, and our hand, and in that hand is no threat of control."

A substitute motion was offered by Leland Stephens, pastor of Grace Baptist Church here, that would have reaffirmed that churches in the association recognize immersion for believers only as New Testament baptism, and that would have voiced opposition to churches departing from the practice.

The substitute further would have reaffirmed the autonomy of the local church in departing from the practice, however, and would have taken no punitive action against St. John's and Myers Park.

"This substitute gives us the chance to say we don't agree (with the St. John's and Myers Park policies) but they are our sister churches and we must preserve their autonomy," Stephens said.

"It seems to me that unless we are just out for blood this is what we ought to do," he added.

Carl Bates, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charlotte, supported the substitute, saying the association has done its work for 82 years without a creedal statement. "You are saying now that these other churches must agree with you in every minute detail."

"The first thing you know we are going to be engaged in . . . witch hunts," Bates warned. "You will virtually assume the role of administrator in the life of a church, and that is reserved for the Holy Spirit."

All of the substitute motions, including one that the association adjourn without taking any action, lost.

After the final vote was announced, Lasater, associate minister at St. John's, asked that the association rule immediately on St. John's membership.

"Unless you make the decision, we (the church) cannot, because we don't feel as if we have erred," Lasater said.

Ferguson said the vote went as he had expected. "It is evidence that the majority of our people...are concerned about maintaining New Testament standards," he said.

Broach, the St. John's pastor, had little comment. "We hope to keep on being true to the New Testament and the spirit of Jesus Christ and find our answers along that path," he said.

At least one other association, Central Baptist Association in High Point, N.C., unanimously adopted a similar amendment on the same day, but it was an amendment to the constitution rather than to the bylaws.

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New Georgia Blue Law  
Ruled Unconstitutional

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ATLANTA (BP)--Georgia's newest Sunday closing law, pushed by Gov. Lester Maddox and adopted by the legislature in January, has been declared unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court.

The court said the new law was "patently discriminatory" in that it allowed some stores selling non-essential items such as furniture to remain open on Sunday, but forced others which majored in such sales to close on the Sabbath.

The decision leaves Georgia with only one Sunday closing law, a 1933 statute which prohibits all Sunday sales except in cases of necessity or charity.

Several legal experts have described the 1933 law as "shaky" and "unenforcable."

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3,100 Decisions Reported *990*  
In South Africa Crusade

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JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (BP)--A Crusade for Christ in South Africa led by 30 Southern Baptist ministers, most of them from Mississippi, has resulted in more than 3,130 decisions and a renewed emphasis on evangelism in the Baptist Union of South Africa, officials reported here.

While reports from some churches have not yet been received, at least 1,333 persons made public professions of faith, and more than 1,800 persons "renewed their commitment to Christ or made some other decision," said South African leaders.

The 30 Southern Baptist ministers who participated as evangelists went "on their own" to the crusade after the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board evangelism division cancelled plans to participate when restrictions reportedly forbade white and Negro evangelists to travel together, and seemed to forbid preaching on race relations.

Bob Ramsey, pastor of First Baptist Church in Brookhaven, Miss., served as leader of the group of 30 evangelists. Two Southern Baptist missionaries from Rhodesia joined the group. Fifty-three churches in South Africa participated in the crusade.

As a direct result of the crusade, the Baptist Union of South Africa has voted to establish a department of evangelism with a renewed emphasis on evangelism within the Baptist Union.

Baptist officials in South Africa were enthusiastic about the campaign. "True revival fires have been experienced in many churches," said the president of the Baptist Union of South Africa, J. D. Odendaal.

"It seems to be the consensus of opinion that the coming of the American team can result only in what is good for those churches which participated and for the denomination as a whole," he added. "I believe that this is just the beginning of greater things to come."

Praise for the crusade also came from Chris W. Parnell, general secretary of the Baptist Union, and from Allan G. Pearce, director of the Union's program of home missions and evangelism who organized the crusade.

Ramsey, the Southern Baptist team leader, observed that the crusade "has brought about a new understanding and fellowship between the Baptists of South Africa and Southern Baptists.

"Moreover, it made a spiritual impact on the nation," he said. "God opened the doors for Christian witness far beyond the walls of churches. There was full freedom to preach as we were led of God, and never for one moment was there the slightest feeling of limitation to our witness."

A Texas evangelist who participated in the crusade, Carlos Gruber, added: "I preached exactly the way I do at home and no restrictions were imposed."

In a letter to the Rocky Mountain Baptist, a Johannesburg pastor praised the preaching of a Colorado evangelist who preached in his church, saying "he came simply with a desire to minister to the spiritual needs of the people....He did not find it necessary to speak on race or political issues."

Reginald G. Codrington, minister of Edenvale Baptist Church, Kensington, Johannesburg, added that he was glad that the government restrictions were made. He was also critical of an editorial in the Capital Baptist in Washington, D. C., which urged the SBC Home Mission Board to reconsider its plans to participate in the crusade because preaching on race relations would not be allowed.

The Baptist preachers who participated in the crusade, as well as the South African Baptist leaders, however, had nothing but praise to say concerning the crusade.

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Baylor Eyes Funds *991*  
In Endowment Drive

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WACO, Tex. (BP)--Baylor University's Council for Institutional Development has endorsed a \$20 million endowment campaign and elected new officers.

Council members set Homecoming of 1970 as the date to have the \$20 million committed or in hand. Baylor will celebrate its 125th birthday in 1970.

Dallas real estate man C. T. Beckham was elected president of the council. Houston attorney Willard L. Russell was re-elected as vice president and Gordon Rountree Sr. of Waco was elected secretary.

The additional \$20 million endowment would augment present operating funds and be used for endowed chairs, professorships and scholarships for graduate and undergraduate students.

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