



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention  
**FEATURES**  
produced by Baptist Press

460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
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July 9, 1969

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE  
(Another in a series)

### TO SIGN OR NOT TO SIGN

by T. B. Maston  
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Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Writers of Sunday School and Training Union materials for the Sunday School Board and teachers in Southern Baptist seminaries could have faced a difficult decision if a motion that was made at the Southern Baptist Convention had passed.

If the administrative staffs of the board and of the seminaries had conformed to the stated purpose of the motion, writers and teachers would have been required to sign a statement that they believed "in the authority, doctrinal integrity and infallibility of the entire Bible, the word of God."

Fortunately, a substitute motion by James L. Sullivan was approved. As disturbing as the original motion itself were the "amens" and the applause that greeted the introduction of the motion and the speakers defending it.

The motion was unfortunate and unwise for several reasons. First of all, why should writers and seminary professors be picked out and isolated from all other denominational employees such as home and foreign missionaries and even the administrators of agencies and institutions such as the Sunday School Board and the seminaries?

Another argument against the motion made in New Orleans was its limitation to one particular aspect of our faith: the Bible. A person might agree with the content of the motion and yet be thoroughly unorthodox from our perspective in regard to other great doctrines.

Also, the implementation of the motion would have violated something basic in Baptist life. As central as any other doctrine in our Baptist faith is our belief in the priesthood of the believer. Does this doctrine apply to writers and teachers as well as to other members of our churches?

There is at least one strictly common sense argument against requiring anyone to sign a statement of faith. Men who might sign such a statement would differ widely in their interpretation of it. For example, in the motion that was made in New Orleans, what is meant by "authority" and particularly by "doctrinal integrity" and "infallibility?"

Furthermore, does the term "the entire Bible" mean that the Old Testament is to be put on the same level as the New Testament? There would be no assurance of "orthodoxy," what *ver* that word means, if writers and teachers signed a statement such as the one introduced in New Orleans.

When the "amens" were the loudest the following question kept coming to my mind: "What if pastors were required by a pulpit committee or by deacons to sign a similar statement?" Would they conform? Or, would they consider such a requirement an infringement of the freedom they have in Christ?

What would have happened if the original motion had passed and if administrators had attempted to enforce it? I am persuaded that it would have created a crisis as acute as any Southern Baptists have ever faced.

I am positive that many writers and teachers whose orthodoxy is unquestioned would have refused to sign. Others, who might have signed, would have placed their own particular interpretation on every word in the statement.

July 9, 1969

Nutt Resigns to Enter  
Entertainment Field

LOUISVILLE (BP)--Grady Nutt, director of college relations at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here, has resigned effective Aug. 1 to enter the field of professional entertainment.

Nutt, who was assistant director of the fund campaign to support the Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism, has served in various public relations roles for the seminary since he received his bachelor of divinity degree here in 1964.

He is best known in Baptist circles as an after-dinner and special occasion speaker, and humorist. During the past year, he has been a frequent guest on the Mike Douglas Show, a nationally televised afternoon variety program.

Nutt said that he feels his new career in the field of professional entertainment will provide an opportunity for a positive Christian influence. He said he does not want to separate himself from the ministry, and will continue to fill church-related engagements.

In explaining his decision to enter the entertainment field, Nutt said that while traveling for the seminary, he has talked more about Christianity on buses, trains, and planes and in restaurants, hotels and motels than he was ever able to do in the pastorate.

"I found through all of this that God wants me to focus on my own strength, which are humor and music, so that I can minister to people where they are," Nutt said.

He added that he hopes to contribute "good, clean fun" where so much of humor is dirty and in poor taste.

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Dalrymple Named To  
Texas Hospital Post

7/9/69

BEAUMONT, Tex. (BP)--Guy H. Dalrymple, administrator of the Baptist Hospital of Southeast Texas here, has been named president-elect of the Texas Hospital Association. He will assume the presidency of the association in 1970.

Dalrymple has been a member of THA for 20 years and has served on its board of directors, as its vice-president and has chaired several important committees. He has 21 years experienced in hospital leadership and is a member of the American College of Hospital Administrators and a Texas delegate to the American Hospital Association.

An active church worker, the hospital executive is a former deacon and trustee of the First Baptist Church in Beaumont. He also taught Sunday School and led the church building committee.

The Sabathany, Tex., native holds a baccalaureate degree from Baylor University. He is active in many local civic and charitable groups.

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JUL 10 1969

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