



BAPTIST PRESS

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September 23, 1969

Leave SBC If Faith Statements
Unacceptable, Criswell Urges

NASHVILLE (BP)--Questioning how long the Southern Baptist Convention can stay together with so much diversity within its ranks, the president of the 11 million member denomination said here that Baptists who don't accept the convention-adopted statements of faith ought to leave and join another church.

W. A. Criswell, pastor of the 15,000-member First Baptist Church, Dallas, and president of the Southern Baptist Convention, made the statements in a personal report to the Southern Baptist Executive Committee meeting here.

In introducing his topic, the outspoken pastor called his report, "Being a Baptist--My Greatest Dilemma." Then he described his "dilemma of despair, my dilemma of grief" with this question:

"How far do you compromise what you believe in order to stay together?"

He asked how long the Southern Baptist Convention can stay together, saying: "There are among us liberals, conservatives, fundamentalists; open communionists, closed communionists, alien immersionists; persons who would emphasize the social application of the gospel; those who would emphasize evangelism."

Criswell stated that the Southern Baptist Convention is not a geographic body of churches; it is a doctrinal commitment, adding that Baptists have never been hesitant to publish and defend articles of faith such as the ones adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925 and 1963.

"Now the drift today is to be broad and inclusive and ecumenical," he said.

As an example, he cited the forced resignation in 1879 of Crawford H. Toy as professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary because, Criswell said, he had become infatuated with German rationalistic theology. Criswell said that Toy became a Unitarian and never went to church again.

"But that is the illustration (Toy's being forced to resign) some people are using to say that Southern Baptists are too narrow," Criswell said.

"Somebody is changing; somebody is different," he declared. "Is it I, or is it they? Are we going to give up the doctrines of faith we hold and be like other denominations?"

"If we have men who do not believe in our articles of faith, why don't these people leave us and join denominations where they would be happy?" he asked.

"Is there any place for me and my church in this denomination, or should we attempt to change?" he further questioned. "How far am I willing to compromise? 'How can two walk together,' said Amos, 'except they be agreed?'"

Criswell said that the early Christians, such as Peter and Paul, were unwilling to compromise. He added that the early church was persecuted by the Roman Empire because they refused to accept other gods, and to bow down before Caesar, but rather were willing to die before they would do so.

"Today, I don't know whether we would die for anything. I don't know as president of this convention whether there is enough commitment for us to pay any price for any doctrine," he said.

The SBC president then stated that he felt if a Baptist church member believed in pedo-baptism or the Presbyterian form of church government, he ought to join the Presbyterian Church or some other denomination.

"In my humble judgment, I think we ought to take those articles of faith of 1925 and 1963 and say: 'This is what it is, being a Baptist. If you don't believe that, you are not a Baptist.'

"But don't try to bore from within and destroy us," he said, directing his remarks apparently to any who reject the convention adopted statements of faith. "Leave and join another denomination," he urged.

Criswell closed his report with an impassioned prayer that God would keep the denomination true to its doctrinal statements.

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HMB Loses Staff Members;
Appoints Eight Couples

9/23/69

ATLANTA (BP)--The resignation of one staff member and the appointment of eight missionary couples to full-time service has been announced by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Roy Lewis, assistant to the director of the board's church loans division, has resigned to accept the pastorate of the Calvary Baptist Church in Lilburn, Ga. Lewis, employed by the board for more than eight years, said his resignation will be effective Oct. 31.

Before assuming his present position in 1967, he was loan officer of the board. Prior to joining the board he was pastor of the Napoleon Baptist Chapel in Napoleon, Ohio, and Westside Baptist Church in Sandusky, Ohio.

His work has included responsibility for delinquent accounts and other administrative duties as well as additional responsibilities in the field.

Of the eight couples appointed as missionaries, four will serve in northeastern states. Mr. and Mrs. Joel Land will serve in Tuckerton, N.J.; Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Webb in Syracuse, N.Y.; Mr. and Mrs. Mack Taylor in Boston, Mass. and Mr. and Mrs. James Allen Wright, Jr. in Hartford, Conn.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee Gregory were appointed to West Virginia, the only couple appointed to a southern state. The Gregorlys will serve in Morgantown as student workers.

The other three missionary couples will be serving in Alaska, California and Nevada. Mr. and Mrs. James Akin will be pastoral missionaries in Palmer, Alaska; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wells will be area missionaries in Reno, Nev., and Mr. and Mrs. Guy Bradley will serve as superintendents of missions in Lancaster, Calif.

Land, a native of Cuthbert, Ga., will be a pastoral missionary. A graduate of Samford University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, he is now pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church of West Lafayette, Ind., and has had three previous pastorates.

Land's wife, the former Carolyn Joyce Martin, will assist her husband. She is also a graduate of Samford University and holds a master's degree from Purdue University.

Florida native, Malcolm Webb will be working with the deaf in New York. He is a graduate of Carson-Newman College and Southwestern Seminary. Before going to Fort Worth where he now lives, he was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Bennington, Okla.

Mrs. Webb, the former Suzanne Chaffin, is also a Carson-Newman graduate. She will be assisting her husband.

A graduate of Union University, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary, Mack Taylor will be a student worker in Boston. He has pastored to two churches and served as a social worker for the Trenton State Prison and a counselor for the Jersey City Job Corps Center for Women. He is a native of Dresden, Tenn.

His wife, Mrs. Sandra Gayle Taylor, has taught in the public schools of Orlando, Fla., and Louisville, Ky.

Wright becomes the third James Wright appointed by the board to work in the northeast. (the other two are James S. Wright, pastor of Highland Avenue Baptist Church in Long Island and James K. Wright a US-2 ER at the same church.) Wright graduated from Furman University and Southwestern Seminary. He is now pastor of the Mission Bautista Bethel of Dallas, Tex. He will work with Spanish speaking people in Hartford, Conn.

Mrs. Patricia Sarratt Wright, a music education graduate of Furman will assist her husband in Connecticut.

Gregory, now serving as minister of youth and music at First Baptist Church in Security, Colo., graduated from the University of Tulsa and Southwestern Seminary. During his college days he was music and youth director at First Baptist Church of Barnsdall, Okla., and minister of youth and music at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Independence, Mo. His wife, Marilyn Lucille Gregory, is a native of Colorado Springs. She will assist her husband.

Akin, a Texan, graduated from Howard Payne College and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He has had four pastorates in Alaska and is presently pastor of the Tok Baptist Mission, Tok, Alaska. His wife, Anna Fern Akin will assist him.

Wells is a Bible and speech graduate of Ouachita Baptist University. He also holds a bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary. He is a native of Ratcliff, Ark.

Mrs. Sara Louise Wells is also a Ouachita graduate and native of Amory, Miss. She has been a public school teacher.

Appointed to Lancaster, Calif., Bradley will assume the position of superintendent of missions. A graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and Southwestern Seminary, he has had six pastorates and is now pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in Chula Vista, Calif.

His wife, the former Anna Louise Houser, will serve with her husband. Mrs. Bradley is also an OBU graduate.

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June Whitlow Elected WMU
Promotion Division Head

9/23/69

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Miss June Whitlow, consultant on administration and research for the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Auxiliary for the past two years, has been elected director of the WMU promotion division.

Miss Whitlow will take office immediately, succeeding Mrs. R. L. Mathis, who was elected president of the Woman's Missionary Union in June.

Her election was announced by Miss Alma Hunt, Woman's Missionary Union executive secretary, who described Miss Whitlow as "an excellent organizer, effective speaker and conference leader, and sympathetic listener."

During her two years on the WMU staff, Miss Whitlow has participated in the design of the church WMU program for the 1970's and has prepared the leadership section of the Royal Service magazine.

As promotion division director, she will be in charge of development of the WMU program design, research, field work and preparation of literature and supplies.

Miss Hunt said that the job carries heavy responsibilities for cooperative work with other Southern Baptist programs.

A native of Arkansas, Miss Whitlow was Woman's Missionary Society director for Georgia Baptists from 1964-66 before joining the national WMU staff. She taught high school in Vandalia, Ill., for three years previously, and was a summer WMU field worker for several years.

She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John P. Whitlow, a Baptist minister in Little Rock, Ark. Her uncle, S. A. Whitlow is past executive secretary of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and her cousin, C. Eugene Whitlow, is editor of the Baptist New Mexican. Another cousin, Henry Whitlow, is Southern Baptist foreign missionary, and a brother, Sam Whitlow, is on the staff of Westside Baptist Church, El Dorado, Ark.

Miss Whitlow is a graduate of Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain, Miss., and of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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