



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Westmoreland Resigns
As Kansas Executive**

WICHITA, Kan. (BP)--N. J. Westmoreland, executive secretary-treasurer of the financially-troubled Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists here, has resigned as the convention's top executive, effective Oct. 1.

Announcement of Westmoreland's resignation was made by Lester Arvin, state senator from Wichita and chairman of the board of management for the convention's Church Loan Association.

The Church Loan Association was declared insolvent last year, when it was disclosed that its liabilities exceeded its assets by \$1.6 million. Of the liabilities on the books, \$1.3 million is in the form of loans to 44 churches which are in arrears on their payments.

Arvin, chairman of the five-man management committee appointed by the State Securities Commissioner on nomination from the convention's Executive Board, said that the committee is making an all-out effort to come up with a solution to the financial crisis in the convention.

Arvin said that the committee will probably propose a restructure of the convention staff, and work out with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Sunday School Board, and Stewardship Commission a plan to secure staff assistance and services to help the Kansas Convention.

"Some time ago, when the committee first took office," Arvin said, "the executive secretary and the entire professional staff of the Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists voluntarily submitted to the management committee their resignations in order to give us complete freedom in restructuring the convention's staff.

"We have now regretfully accepted the resignation of Dr. N. J. Westmoreland, executive secretary of the convention, effective Oct. 1," Arvin said. "No decision has yet been made concerning the resignations of the other staff members."

Arvin said he wished to express appreciation, in behalf of the 50,000 people of the convention, of the work Westmoreland had done during 23 years as the convention's executive leader. "No man has done more to establish Southern Baptist churches and work in Kansas," he said of Westmoreland.

Westmoreland, when contacted by Baptist Press, said he had no immediate plans he could announce at this time, and asked that he not be quoted further "in an effort to be of maximum help to the work."

A native of Texas, Westmoreland was pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Coffeyville, Kan., before becoming executive secretary of the Kansas convention. Previously, he was pastor of three churches in Oklahoma, and four in Texas.

He is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

Arvin called Westmoreland "the founding father of the Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists," explaining his key role in the establishment of the convention in 1946. He was the first and only executive secretary of the convention.

"We wish him well in the future, and know the Lord will lead him and guide him in a new place of service," Arvin said.

The management committee said that during the next few weeks, the committee hope to finalize a plan it would present to the state convention when it meets in Wichita, Nov. 11-13.

The plan, he added, would include a massive fund drive which would be well underway by Jan. 1, 1970, in an effort to "raise sufficient funds to meet the projected deficit of the Church Loan Association."

Arvin said that the management committee is now seeking candidates for the position as director of the Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists and the Church Loan Association, with hopes to fill the position as soon as possible.

Alabama Southern Baptist
Preaches At White House

WASHINGTON (BP)--Allan R. Watson, an Alabama Southern Baptist pastor, preached for the White House worship service here on September 28.

The pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala., talked on "One Nation Under God" to the 250 guests of President and Mrs. Richard M. Nixon.

Among the guests were Mrs. Dwight Eisenhower, Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren Burger, members of the Cabinet, members of Congress, Ambassadors and White House staff and personnel and their families. David and Julie Nixon Eisenhower also attended.

Other guests were the minister's twin brother, Rep. Albert Watson (R., S.C.) his mother, Mrs. Claude Watson, Sr., and younger brother, Claude Watson, Jr., of Columbia, S.C.

Although Watson was the third Baptist to conduct White House services he was the first Southern Baptist pastor to do so. The others have been Evangelist Billy Graham and R. H. Edwin Espy, an American Baptist who is general secretary of the National Council of Churches.

Watson, a native of South Carolina, is a former pastor of the Northwood Baptist Church in West Palm Beach, Fla. It was during that time that he became acquainted with President Nixon, who was then vice president in the Eisenhower Administration.

The Nixon family often worshipped at the Northwood church when they were visiting friends in Florida.

Using I Peter 5:6-11 as his text, Watson urged his hearers to humble themselves before a God who cares.

"Humility doesn't come easily," the Alabama minister declared. "As long as man refuses to humble himself, he will continue to seek and to follow that which Gilbert Chesterton called, 'cures that don't cure, blessings that don't bless, and solutions that don't solve,'" he said.

Watson referred to the words "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag that were added by Congress during the Eisenhower Administration.

He asked, "What is the significance of the expression 'One Nation Under God?'" he answered, "Do these words not mean that we should recognize the vital spiritual forces that were at work in the heart and life of those who founded our nation and constituted this republic?"

The White House preacher then asked, "before what kind of God shall we humble ourselves?"

He replied that this God should not be one of man's own creation but the God who revealed himself in Jesus Christ. He said that this is the God "who so loved the world that he clothed himself in human flesh and came and dwelt among us, the promised Messiah, the Christ, who by his death and resurrection brings life and immortality to them who trust him."

"Under the mighty hand of such a God our nation, and we as individuals, can experience a new birth of freedom," Watson declared.

Special music was provided by the adult choir of Christ Congregational Church in Silver Springs, Md., a Washington suburb. Under the direction of Alfred Newman, the choir sang "O Sing Unto The Lord," by Hans Lee Hassler.

In addition to the Doxology the congregation sang two hymns, "Crown Him With Many Crowns" and "Fairest Lord Jesus,"

The organist for the White House services is Gunnery Sgt. Herbert Hamilton, 24, a saxophonist with the United States Marine Band.

The service was followed by a reception in the state dining room of the White House.

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Youth Consultant Named
At Sunday School Board

9/30/69

NASHVILLE (BP)--Dennis Conniff, formerly minister of education at Daniel Memorial Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., has been named consultant in youth work, by the Sunday School department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Conniff, a native of Alabama, is a graduate of Howard College (now Samford University), Birmingham, and received a master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

He has served as minister of education of First Baptist Church, Long Beach, Miss., and as minister of music and youth at Oakhurst Baptist Church, Fort Worth.

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