



BAPTIST PRESS

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February 23, 1970

Re-examine Bible, Baptist Religion Professors Urged

ATLANTA (BP)--The president of the Association of Baptist Professors of Religion has called for a new look at the canon, message and authority of the Bible.

In an address to the group at its annual meeting at First Baptist Church here, T. C. Smith of Furman University, Greenville, S.C., said that the biblical concept of most Southern Baptists is inadequate.

"We need to come up with a concept that is more suitable to ourselves, our students and our convention," Smith told the professors.

Scoring a recent ouster by a Baptist church in Illinois of a member who doubted the infallibility of the Bible, Smith asserted that more freedom is essential to a modern understanding of scripture.

The Furman professor said that modern Christians should have as much liberty in determining their canon as the church fathers had in their time. Pointing out that the current canon was not agreed upon until the Fourth Century, he said that modern scholarship has more valid criteria for selection of a canon than did religious leaders 16 centuries ago.

In calling for a new probe into the depth of the Bible's message, Smith said that scholars who use the historical-critical method of biblical research are "following Christ who contradicted the self-assumed authority of the rabbis who accepted no new revelation."

Smith pointed out for scholars who reexamine the authority of the Bible that it is "the Bible, not God, whom we are questioning."

The association agreed to deal with the question of the authority of the Bible as its program theme for next year's meeting.

In another major report to the association, two professors from the University of Richmond (Va.) traced the response to action taken by the association last year here when they adopted a resolution critical of publicity given to the book, *Why I Preach That The Bible Is Literally True*, by W. A. Criswell of Dallas, president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Robert Alley and W. C. Smith of Richmond, the authors of the controversial resolution, said that members of the association suffered considerable intimidation as a result of the resolution.

The intimidation, they said, came in the form of statements by Criswell urging those who do not accept the 1963 and 1925 SBC articles of faith to leave the denomination, letters from pastors in the SBC trying to pressure the professors who voted for the resolution to resign, and the publication of a second book by Criswell critical of the professors by Broadman Press, general books publishing arm of the SBC Sunday School Board.

Editorial reaction in the Baptist state papers distorted the facts, shifting the issue from criticism of publicity on the book and opposition to the historical-critical interpretation of the Bible, to a personal attack on Criswell, the two professors said.

They added they felt the silence from SBC theological seminaries on the issue of biblical interpretation was "thundering," and said that Duke K. McCall, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, had become a "champion of biblical fundamentalism" by criticizing the resolution in a widely-distributed article.

In another report to the association, Rabun L. Brantley, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Education Commission, said that enrollment at Baptist colleges and universities is increasing by the rate of three to five per cent annually; and that all of the SBC colleges and universities that are old enough to qualify have been accredited.

Brantley said the projected growth of Baptist schools will present some dilemmas in the decade ahead. Primary among these is the question of whether to accept federal funds, he observed. It may be better to accept some form of federal support than to "leave higher education to someone else," Brantley said.

In another speech, Florida State University Religion Professor Walter L. Moore Jr., reported that the study of religion in state-supported schools is burgeoning. He said 30 per cent of the schools now have departments of religion, and 90 per cent offer religion courses.

He told the Baptist professors that the largest group of participants in religion courses on secular campuses are students who profess no religion affiliation.

Moore said that the teaching of religion on secular campuses has been from an objective standpoint, but many students now are asking professors to take a stand on their own. He called for religion professors at state schools to assume more of a role of religion advocates.

In business actions, the association elected Ray Brown, professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary Wake, Forest, N.C., as president; John Bunn, religion professor at Campbell College, Buies Creek, N.C., as vice president; and re-elected Harold McManus of Mercer University, Macon, Ga., as secretary.

There were no resolutions adopted by the association, which is comprised of about 125 religion professors from Baptist schools and seminaries, predominately in the southeast. There are several other regional associations, such as the Southwestern Baptist Association of Baptist Teachers of Religion.

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Southern Baptists Biggest
Supporters of Bible Society

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NEW YORK (BP)--Southern Baptists were the biggest financial contributors to the American Bible Society during 1969, an end of the year financial report released by the Society here indicated.

During the past year, Southern Baptists gave \$232,765 to support the work of the American Bible Society, according to the report.

Total financial contributions from 73 different denominations which support the organization during 1969 reached \$1.3 million, an increase of about \$50,000 over 1968 contributions.

United Methodists gave the second largest amount, \$189,172, and the American Lutheran Church ranked third, with \$111,980 in 1969 contributions.

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Heart Attack Fatal To Prof
During Faculty-Student Game

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SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--John L. Eighmy, chairman of the division of social sciences at Oklahoma Baptist University, died here of a heart attack after participating in a faculty-student basketball game. He was 42.

A professor of history, Eighmy had taught at the Baptist school since 1961, and previously had taught at Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark.

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State Student Directors
Elect Clayton President

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WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (BP)--About 20 state directors of work with Southern Baptist students discussed student work aims and elected new officers during an annual meeting of the State Baptist Student Directors' Association here.

The association elected Clyde Clayton, Baptist student director in Oklahoma, as president; and named Grady Evans, state student director in Ohio, as secretary.

Clayton succeeds Ralph Winders, of Jackson, Miss., and Evans succeeds John Appleton of Montgomery, Ala.

Principal speakers for the association's meeting here were Kenneth L. Chafin, evangelism division director for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Atlanta; Charles M. Roselle, secretary of the student department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville; and Jed Johnson, former Oklahoma congressman and advisor in the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington.

The association will meet next in Chicago, Feb. 7-11, 1971.

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