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May 11, 1971

#### Cothen Inaugurated As Seminary President; Urges Cooperation

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--During his inauguration as president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here, Grady C. Cothen urged all six Southern Baptist seminaries to quit competing and instead emphasize cooperative planning to improve theological education.

He said such cooperative planning by all the seminaries might rally their alumni around the cause of theological education "instead of putting them against each other in competition for support."

"In a time of polarizing around issues when name calling is easier than problem solving, in a time when it is obvious that financial support may shortly diminish, we have a remarkable opportunity to demonstrate to Southern Baptists and to the world a genuinely cooperative effort in theological education," Cothen said.

"The overall welfare of the Southern Baptist Convention and its theological education enterprise needs a new communion of cooperation in planning our corporate future," he emphasized.

If the six seminaries placed the corporate good higher than their individual needs, then "Christ would be honored in fact instead of word, theological education would prosper in a new way, the individual institutions would gain new stature, and we would furnish quality of leadership the denomination badly needs," Cothen said.

The new seminary president said that the six SBC seminaries have made strides in that direction in recent years through the work of the seminary president's council.

He cited as one such example of cooperation the joint efforts at working out agreements in all six SBC seminaries offering the doctor of ministry degree as the basic professional degree program for all seminaries.

Cothen offered several specific suggestions for other areas of cooperation instead of competition in the future by the six seminaries.

He proposed that some of the seminaries offer the doctor of ministry degree with emphasis on specialized areas and specialized programs, such as one seminary concentrating on student work.

"This would eliminate the necessity of all schools offering all kinds of work," he said. It would also "allow some schools to develop a degree of expertise not now possible in the presentation of such programs."

Earlier, Cothen had emphasized in general terms the tasks of theological education, saying it must have a strong biblical orientation with an emphasis on personal spiritual development.

Saying that the seminaries must help students develop spiritual resources adequate to meet the needs of the people whom they serve, Cothen observed that "one of the great crises of our times in ministry seems to be the inadequacy of the spiritual resources on the part of many ministers confronted with the difficulties of their time."

Theological education must also help the students develop professional skills to fulfill their functions. "Sharpening professional tools in order to accomplish the work expected of a profession" is one of the basic functions of theological education, he said.

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Cothen's inaugural address came during a weekend of activities planned in connection with his inauguration as the sixth president of the seminary.

A former president of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Cothen was elected president of the seminary on Sept. 17, 1970. He assumed his responsibilities in mid-November. Cothen is also a former executive secretary of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California.

The inaugural activities began with a dinner, featuring an address by Southern Baptist Convention President Carl E. Bates, pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.

Bates told the group that the seminary's task was "not only to educate the men and women who come to this place, but to train them in the skills that are calculated to keep our churches warm spiritually and sound in their outreach until our Lord shall appear."

Official representatives of about 75 education institutions across the nation, of the American Association of Theological Schools, and of the Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies took part in the inaugural activities.

Climax of the ceremonies came when A. Morgan Brian Jr., New Orleans attorney and chairman of the seminary's board of trustees, placed around Cothen's neck a pendant seal of the seminary signifying his investiture as president of the institution.

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25,000 Responses Projected  
For "Operation Talk Back"

5/10/71

NASHVILLE (BP)--"Operation Talk Back" is only five weeks old and already the research and statistics department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board has received more than 15,000 questionnaires expressing strong opinions about Southern Baptist literature.

The questionnaires were included in the April-June literature of the Sunday School Board, Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union in a joint effort to encourage Southern Baptists to express opinions about the literature.

Martin Bradley, secretary of the board's research and statistics department, said many people have written letters and included them with the "Talk Back" questionnaires to further express their praise, criticism or suggestions.

The researcher continued that the only potential problem encountered thus far in the survey has been where groups appeared to have filled out questionnaires simultaneously, all checking the same answers.

"We want to encourage people to express their own opinions. If they don't, then we won't get correct evaluations from the results," he added.

The responses still are coming in at a rate of more than 500 per day with the closeout date of June 1 just a few weeks away, Bradley said.

He predicted a total of about 25,000 responses before the closeout date.

The questionnaires have come in held together by such things as straight pins, safety pins, tape and glue, Bradley said.

One enterprising respondent stapled the three edges of the form with more than 25 staples and another sewed around the form's edge with a sewing machine.

Responses have been received for all of the 75 board, Brotherhood and WMU periodicals being surveyed from all 50 states and Japan, Germany, Mexico, Switzerland and Brazil.

Report date for the results of the survey will be Sept. 1.

The total "Operation Talk Back" project, however, also includes two other phases involving personal contacts and studies in local church situations and will not be completed until January, 1973.

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BP PHOTO BEING MAILED TO BAPTIST STATE PAPER EDITORS.

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HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SBC

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