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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 31, 1971

SBC Brotherhood Executive,  
George Schroeder, Dies

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--George W. Schroeder, executive secretary of the Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention for 19 years, died Friday night (May 29) at Baptist Hospital here after an illness of almost one year. He was 57.

Services were held at First Baptist Church, Sunday afternoon. Burial was in Pinckneyville, Ill.

Schroeder retired a month ago as chief administrative officer of the Southern Baptist mission education agency here when his ill health kept him from his duties.

Under Schroeder's leadership, enrollment in Brotherhood units in Baptist churches climbed to a high of 634,646 in 1964. It is now 422,000.

Schroeder assumed his leadership of the Southern Baptist agency on January 1, 1952 as the third executive secretary in 43 years. He replaced Lawson Cooke, who retired.

During the late years of his career, Schroeder said he set three goals in life.

They were to provide a suitable home for Brotherhood work, develop a challenging program for men and boys, and lead men into putting that program into practice.

Born and reared in Pinckneyville, Schroeder was graduated from Community High School in Pinckneyville in 1931.

In 1945 he received a bachelor of arts degree from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and a master's degree a year later.

In 1940 he was employed as director of Brotherhood work for Illinois Baptists, a post he held for six years before joining the Brotherhood Commission as an associate secretary.

Internationally, Schroeder worked actively in the men's section of the Baptist World Alliance, ultimately serving as leader of it's men's department. Schroeder was preparing to leave for Tokyo last July to lead a meeting of this group when he became ill.

A writer for a wide variety of national religious journals for the past 20 years, Schroeder also wrote two books, Brotherhood Guidebook and You Can Speak for God.

Schroeder left his wife, Mrs. Lorraine Schroeder, a daughter, Dr. Harriet Schroeder of Memphis, two sons, Dr. George T. Schroeder of Little Rock, Ark., and Dr. Lawson L. Schroeder of Batavia, N. Y.; his mother, a brother, and two sisters.

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Pre-Convention Sessions  
Focus on Creative Ministry

5/31/71

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Southern Baptists focused on the themes of lay involvement and personal morality as they closed out four inspirational conferences Monday night and prepared to open a three-day annual convention at Kiel Auditorium.

A battery of speakers developed the lay involvement emphasis at the day-long session of Woman's Missionary Union and at a two-hour Baptist Men's Conference. Meanwhile Southern Baptist ministers were receiving advice on the value of personal morality in doing their work during the SBC Pastors' Conference.

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Dale Cowling, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., used the ministry activities of men and women in his church in an effort to motivate Southern Baptist lay persons to help others when they return home.

Cowling told the women's convention that the Little Rock church is trying to develop a concept of spreading an umbrella of spiritual concern over the whole city, by establishing ministry points, each with a broad span of activities designed to meet specific needs of individual communities.

The minister emphasized his church was trying to meet "the real needs" of all the people in the community, regardless of race, using such activities as tutoring sessions, sewing classes, instruction in family nutrition, family planning, medical self help, and directed recreation.

The church also operates a Christian medical clinic, refers persons to two dental clinics and an orthopedic clinic, provides a nursery school-kindergarten program, visits on a regular basis six nursing homes and sponsors a special hard rock radio program.

James E. Johnson, a computer executive from Arlington, Tex., described the wide variety of services Texas Baptist laymen were offering. They ranged from building construction and vacation Bible schools on the Rio Grande to the operation of mobile medical clinics in the Big Bend Country.

Johnson, told the Baptist Men's conference of a growing need for help from physicians, dentists, carpenters, agronomists, truck drivers, journalists, accountants, and pilots.

Grady Cothen, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, underlined the value of personal morality as he advised ministers to settle moral problems ahead of time. He spoke to the SBC Pastors' Conference.

"When sexual temptation arises--and there will be for most preachers--many opportunities and temptations--prior decision is crucial," Cothen observed.

"The preacher who drifts morally is headed for trouble. He needs to have made some decisions in his life," Cothen said. "He needs to have previously settled moral questions and predetermined what his course of action is going to be in a given set of circumstances."

Cothen told the preachers their conduct was so basic to their ministry that persons examine it to see if there is anything to the claims about God.

John F. Gibson, pastor of Wesleyan Drive Baptist Church in Macon, Ga., urged the ministers to pay their own way in the world and not rely on ministerial discounts and clergy rates. He also suggested that the ministers pay their debts on time.

"The economy of our time demands credit buying by every segment of our society, preachers included. However, when we must engage in such business transactions there should be a valid recognition of our obligations as for any other person. There is no sound, rational reason whereby we may declare ourselves exempt from these debts, even though we might wish it so," he said.

"Our creditors have every right to expect us to deal honestly with them, and leave the playing of modern-day Robin Hoods to the Federal government," Gibson added.

The ministers also got help on how to get along with their wives from H. Franklin Paschall, pastor of First Baptist Church of Nashville, and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Paschall called for unity on money matters, harmony with in-laws, agreement on disciplining children and a bridle on dispositions.

Religious Educators Urged  
"To Heal Humanity's Hurts"

ST. LOUIS (BP)--An emphasis on creative approaches to ministry and sensitivity to the "hurts" of individuals highlighted the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association meeting here (Sunday night).

James L. Pleitz, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla., described his church's award-winning program for youth; and Peter McLeod, pastor of First Baptist Church, Waco, Tex., called for increased sensitivity to the "heart hurts of humanity."

They addressed more than 250 persons who had registered for the two-day Religious Education Conference preceding the Southern Baptist Convention here. The conference is being held at the Chase-Park Plaza Hotel.

Pleitz's address on "Involving Youth in a Dynamic Church Program" was one of the five "Happening Now" topics to be discussed during the conference. McLeod delivered one of five scheduled major addresses.

Pleitz said an effective youth program must be creative, must allow youth to be involved in helping people and must meet the needs of the "total person."

"Young people are just itching to get involved," he said. "They are tired of huddling and want to run some plays."

He said 94 young people of the Pensacola congregation and 12 physicians and dentists from the area have formed "Good Samaritan South," a singing-healing group that will minister to people in the Dominican Republic for two weeks this summer.

The young people, most of high school age, have been learning Spanish during church training meetings in preparation for the trip.

"Don't tell anybody," Pleitz said in a loud whisper, "but they're being taught Spanish by a Catholic couple who are friends of ours."

The young people also are training as teams with the medics so that they can assist them in treating patients during the summer trip.

To raise money for "Good Samaritan South," Pleitz said he is encouraging members of the church to donate household items for a "Sell It Like It Is" attic sale.

Youths from the Pensacola congregation helped rebuild a church in Pass Christian, Miss., when Hurricane Camille flattened that Gulf-coast town.

Norman Vincent Peale, nationally-known author and minister, preached to Pleitz's congregation and presented them the Guideposts magazine award for its youth program in January of 1970.

Young people serve on committees and are involved in planning various aspects of the church's program, and a teen-ager reads the Scripture and leads a prayer during every Sunday evening service, Pleitz said.

McLeod said Southern Baptist ministers need to guard against professionalism in which they are untouched by "the real deep needs of people, many of whom are hurting like hell inside."

Consider persons as unique individuals, he admonished his audience as he reminded that Jesus placed human personality above the letter of the law or institutions.

"I am somebody! That is the message of this day and time," McLeod said. "Blacks, women's liberationists, young people---it's what they're saying and it's what Jesus says."

Like Jesus, the minister of today needs to get down into the market place and know what is going on, the Waco pastor continued.

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The minister needs to get back to where the people live, "where they hurt like hell because they are sinners," he said.

Jesus doesn't save souls in the abstract; he redeems every part of one's being--- the total person, McLeod declared.

He criticized what he called "a creeping humanism" among Southern Baptists.

"We have come to believe we can do it by ourselves but there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. We still must stand unquestionably on the centrality of Christ," said McLeod.

In another major address, Gaines Dobbins, emeritus professor of religious education for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told the group that the genius of Southern Baptists is that they go after the people. Dobbins, now retired, lives in Birmingham, Ala.

Speaking on "The Contribution of Religious Education to Baptist Life," Dobbins called for the recovery and renewal of Southern Baptists' heritage in the teaching and training of church members.

Basically, what Southern Baptists have done is "get the Bible to the people," Dobbins said. This has come mainly through the Sunday School as a teaching agency.

In their attitude toward the past, Southern Baptist educational workers must not seek to reproduce "the good old days" of denominational beginnings, Dobbins said, nor can they ignore their history and "meet revolution with revolution."

Rather, they should say "the past is prelude" and make their plans "right on, ... to match the times."

The pragmatic approach of Southern Baptists in finding, enlisting, teaching and winning people--a "science of the Sunday School"--may sound naive to a sophisticated generation, said Dobbins, but "it works."

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Mission Motive, Methods  
Stressed at Women's Meet

5-31-71

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Twin emphases on motive and method in missions were featured at the opening session of the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

The motive element beckoned Southern Baptists to greater personal and institutional commitment to sharing Christ. This emphasis will climax at the evening session with a time of commitment.

G. Webster Carroll, Southern Baptist missionary in Uganda, urged the audience to preface their attempts to share Christ with a full comprehension of who Jesus is.

"Some Southern Baptists have been doubting who Jesus is," Carroll said. "When people doubt the authority and compassion of Jesus, they begin not to care. Their Christianity has no authority." He added he sees a real revival spreading among Baptists.

"Pastors know once again who Jesus really is," he said. "Hundreds of church members are being washed of prejudice and lethargy and worldliness in the renewal of the real Jesus," the missionary observed.

Carroll urged the audience to enact their concern for world missions by sharing Christ with their neighbors in addition to giving prayer and financial support.

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A multimedia presentation by Kenneth Chafin of Atlanta, director of evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, also supported commitment. A panorama of pictures flashed behind Chafin as he talked about people with needs. Chafin urged Baptists to have a closer identification with persons in order to break down walls of alienation such as age, race, class, and culture.

Seven persons from six states told success stories in mission study. Mrs. T. Shad Medlin and Don B. Harbuck of First Baptist Church, El Dorado, Ark., told of the impact of their first churchwide study of missions.

Miss Ruth Provence of Columbia, WMU executive secretary for South Carolina, attested to the role WMU mission study has played in calling out missionaries.

Mrs. Bruce Andrews, WMU leader from Wheaton, Ill., described how she began a chain of WMU Bible study groups in her home.

Miss Claudia Jones, Dallas, staff member for Texas WMU, told of the determination and ingenuity of women in providing missions education for children.

Mrs. Huber Drumwright, WMU leader from Fort Worth, Texas, urged women to create a spirit of zest and vitality to attract participation in WMU.

Harper Shannon, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dothan, Ala., told how he assisted Baptist women in his church to boost involvement. He described a successful churchwide week of prayer for home missions, combined with prayer for the church's revival.

In a closing plea for greater commitment, Mrs. Robert Fling, president of New York WMU and former president of the Woman's Auxiliary, asked WMU members to study missions for their own enrichment and to teach missions so others can become aware of world needs.

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#### Baptist Pastors Urged To Be Modern-Day Prophets

5/31/71

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Three pastors and two evangelists scrutinized the motives, methods and message of modern-day prophets in the opening session of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference here.

Examining the theme, God's Preacher as a Prophet, "the speakers urged pastors to be faithful to their prophetic role.

"Far too many so-called modern-day prophets make about as much impact upon society as a rubber balloon filled with dry oatmeal dropped on a foam rubber cushion," said J. D. Grey, pastor of First Baptist Church, New Orleans, La.

Citing prophets of the Old and New Testaments, the former Southern Baptist Convention president said God's plan--today and in Biblical times--has always been to spread his message through a man.

"We modern-day Jonahs are not left to our own discretion nor must we attempt to gratify the tastes of the people," Grey said. "We must preach the message God gave us earnestly and faithfully."

Grey cited God's approach, through the Prophet Jonah, to ancient Ninevah and said, "If God's Word preached by His prophet got these results in the ancient city of Ninevah, I maintain emphatically that God's word when faithfully preached by his modern-day prophets will bring results in our modern Ninevahs."

Howard H. Aultman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Columbus, Miss., said the prophet today must have the right motive--to faithfully follow Christ, his master.

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Aultman emphasized that a man must be selected by God before entering the ministry.

"One of our troubles today is that we are so interested in filling our pulpits that we forget to ask 'Did God call you to preach,'" he declared.

That special call by God to preach does not place a merit badge on the one called not place him above others, Aultman said. He described it as a peculiar call to a particular task.

James Coggin, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, described a new approach to method which he says transformed the ability of his congregation to reach people.

After study of 15 large churches of several denominations in the United States which were reaching people, Coggin and his staff revamped the church's methods.

The church's priority became evangelistic outreach, giving prime emphasis to the church's Sunday School program, Coggin said.

Resulting changes included simplicity of organization and operation and use of the Bible as the primary text.

"We had so many meetings in our church that no member could keep up with all of them. We were so busy meeting that we were failing to reach people for Christ and involve them in Bible study," he said.

The result was paring down and combining meetings and emphasizing visitation. Sunday School attendance increased from more than 1,400 to almost 2,000, he reported.

"God will bless any church that gives priority to reaching people," Coggin said. "But it matters little what we have unless we really care, unless what we do is undergirded by compassion."

Coggin urged the pastors to be as anxious to reach the underprivileged as the affluent.

"There's not much competition to reach those out there where no one seems to care. But you'll get run over by those after people moving their church membership."

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Argentine Baptists  
Approve State Aid

5/31/71

MENDOZA, Argentina (BP)--Argentine Baptist agencies are free to seek assistance from the state for some activities, according to an action taken during the 63rd annual sessions of the Argentine Baptist Convention here.

A majority of the 272 messengers to the convention approved the proposition that "organizations of the... convention are free to secure state aid for those activities not related to evangelism and missions if they think it advisable."

The issue had been debated on the floor of the convention many times before, and some individual churches have been receiving government help for the schools they operate, reported Southern Baptist missionary James O. Teel.

Long-time leader of the opposition to state aid for Argentine Baptists, professor Santiago Canclini, was absent from this year's sessions because of a recent illness. In past years, similar motions have been "roundly defeated" under Canclini's leadership, said Teel.

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The Argentine Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries) cooperates with the convention but does not give any financial assistance to those churches receiving state aid, he said.

In another controversial action, the convention decided to send missionaries to Peru.

Although in its early years the convention sponsored mission work in Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, there was strong opposition this year to sending missionaries to other countries "until the work was self-supporting at home," Teel said. However, after the debate was over, the messengers unanimously approved the motion that missionaries be sent to Peru.

Teel said that "one of the biggest eye openers" during the sessions was the annual report of the convention's executive secretary, Esteban P. Elias, who emphasized the need for Argentine churches to increase their support of national Baptist work.

Esteban told the messengers that 29.5 per cent of financial support for the work comes from Argentine churches and 70.5 per cent from other sources, mostly "fraternal aid" provided by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The report of the social work board expressed appreciation of Peruvian Baptists for the help of Argentine Baptists following earthquakes in Peru.

"All of the help from Baptists of different countries was appreciated," a Peruvian Baptist leader had written, "but that from Argentine Baptists was the most significant and by far the largest in comparison to the number of Baptists."

Samuel O. Libert, convention evangelist, was elected president during the sessions here, and 10 churches were admitted to the convention, making a total of 260.

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Bisagno Elected President  
of SBC Pastors' Conference

5/31/71

ST. LOUIS (BP)--John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church at Houston, Tex., was elected president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference during the annual meeting of the 25,000 member ministerial group.

Bisagno, whose churches have led all other Southern Baptist churches four out of the last six years in persons baptized, won in a close race with James L. Pleitz, pastor of First Baptist Church of Pensacola, Fla., and outgoing vice president of the pastors' conference.

Bisagno replaces Landrum P. Leavell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Tex.

In a nominating address, Bisagno was also praised for an aggressive social service program which led to 300 jobs for persons in his church community last year.

Pleitz was cited for a strong bus ministry and for mission action programs involving young people.

Elected vice president was Gene Phillips, pastor of University Baptist Church at Peoria, Ill. He was opposed by R. B. Culbreth, pastor of Hoffman Baptist Church of Birmingham.

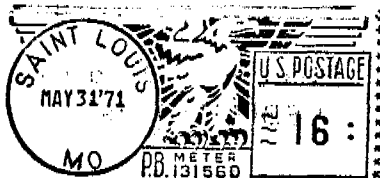
Bill Wallace, pastor of Woodlawn Baptist Church of Charlotte, N. C., was elected secretary without opposition.

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