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**Dissertation Examines Role  
Of SBC Presidential Address****BUREAUS**

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MAGNOLIA, Ark. (BP)--The annual presidential address to the Southern Baptist Convention plays a key role in promoting unity and harmony in the denomination, a professor at Southern State College here has concluded as a result of extensive research for a doctoral dissertation.

Robert L. Hartsell, assistant professor of speech at Southern State College, said the research had revealed that the annual convention presidential address "definitely has the effect of promoting unity and harmony" in the convention, regardless of the individual president delivering the address.

Hartsell observed, however, that there is no way to measure the effectiveness of any one presidential address on specific actions of the convention, since it is only one of many elements of influence on convention actions. Only when a convention action or resolution refers specifically to the presidential address can the action be attributed to that influence, he said.

Hartsell examined the role of the annual presidential address to the Southern Baptist Convention during the years 1950-70. It apparently is the first study of its kind in the denomination.

In an article prepared for the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Hartsell identified three major aims for the presidential address: "To promote convention unity and harmony, help maintain doctrinal purity and foster denominational relevance."

"The presidents have used it (the address) to 'set the tone' of the convention, or to encounter live controversial issues," he noted. "The address, then, is issue-centered rather than simply ceremonial. All of the presidents used it to mold convention attitudes and opinions."

In a few cases, proposals made by convention presidents in their addresses resulted in convention action. In 1923, a portion of President E. Y. Mullins' address was adopted by the convention as its own statement. Mullins, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, dealt with evolution in the address.

In 1956, C.C. Warren, then pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., proposed the 30,000 Movement (to establish new churches and missions) in his address. The convention later adopted his proposal.

Brooks Hays, former Congressman from Arkansas, recommended a committee on world peace in his 1958 address. The committee served briefly, and then turned its duties over to the denomination's Christian Life Commission where they are still being carried on.

In a 1950 controversy over a constitution amendment excluding members of churches affiliated with the Federal Council of Churches as convention officials or employees, President R. G. Lee's address built such a case for the autonomy of the churches that his address was voted the expression of the convention.

In his analysis, Hartsell praised the 1962 presidential address of Herschel Hobbs, pastor of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, describing it as a "masterful address" to help convention messengers "understand the issues involved in the (theological) controversy and to deliberate intelligently upon them."

"If it were possible to isolate any one human force which preserved the convention from a split" during the 1962 theological controversy, "Hobbs' address probably would be that force," Hartsell wrote.

The theological controversy which Hobbs inherited as president was "stirred up rather than settled" by sweeping charges against liberalism in Baptist schools and seminaries in the 1960 and 1961 presidential addresses by Ramsey Pollard, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Hartsell observed.

The three-year controversy waned after the convention in 1963 adopted a "statement of Baptist Faith and Message" prepared by a committee composed of 24 state convention presidents' under Hobbs' chairmanship. Hobbs helped set the stage for its adoption in his 1963 address, the study said.

Neither W. A. Criswell nor Carl Bates referred specifically to a theological controversy in 1970-71 over the Broadman Bible Commentary, although Criswell did have a strong section in his presidential address in the 1970 convention on "doctrinal conviction."

On the issue of race relations, former Arkansas Congressman Brooks Hays during his 1958 and 1959 presidential addresses tried to set the stage for adoption of the SBC's Christian Life Commission report on race relations, but the convention only received the reports "as information."

In 1965, when the Christian Life Commission brought a strong recommendation on race relations, the convention voted instead to ~~accept~~ a substitute motion leaving the question of racial matters in the hands of local churches. Hartsell observed: President Wayne Dehoney, then pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Tenn., "had said nothing in his 1965 address to help passage of the commission's statement. In fact, his dismissal of the racial issue as relatively unimportant may have encourage the watered-down amendment."

In 1968, H. Franklin Paschall, pastor of First Baptist Church, Nashville, "gave the most courageous and clear-cut statement of any convention president" on race relations, saying that "Christianity and racism are incompatible," wrote Hartsell. After the address the convention adopted a "Statement on the Crisis in the Nation" which "stands as the strongest (statement) to date."

In the article written for the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, Hartsell also examined the influence of the presidential address on relations with other Christian groups, autonomy of the churches and social implications of the gospel.

He also described the nature of each president's addresses, characterizing some of the addresses like this:

"R. G. Lee's addresses were the most 'literary' in character;... Herschel Hobbs' the most intellectual, and W. A. Criswell's the most sermonic. The president with the strongest memory probably was H. Franklin Paschall, who delivered his 1967 and 1969 addresses with almost word-for-word fidelity to his prepared text without using a manuscript.

"Ramsey Pollard drew the most repeated response of any president," Hartsell continued, "with 22 'amens,' 12 bursts of applause and 11 appeals of laughter.

"Wayne Dehoney drew the loudest and most sustained peal of laughter," Hartsell observed, when he said that if the convention were to ever split, "I'll go which ever way the Relief and Annuity Board goes."

Generally, he wrote, "the address... is primarily convincing and secondarily stimulating and motivational. The speakers use much amplification--narration, description, exposition--but almost no argumentation."

In the study, Hartsell paid tribute to the presidents "for their part in keeping the convention close to its original missionary purpose, focused upon the scripture as its authority and centered in the will of God as manifested in the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

"...Year after year the typical president has dealt with the issues of greatest importance before the convention and has attempted to provide positive leadership of a constructive nature in a direction calculated to strengthen and unify the convention," Hartsell concluded.

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Baptists Plan Housing, Nursing  
Complex in Nation's Capital

9/16/71

WASHINGTON (BP)--An American Baptist housing group is in the process of completing a \$2.7 million purchase of prime inner-city property here on which they plan to build a nursing home and housing units for low and moderate income families.

The American Baptist Service Corporation has bought an option on eight acres of land and, subject to Federal Housing Authority approval, with plans to build in three stages a 17-story complex estimated to cost \$30 million.

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The American Baptist corporation, the nation's largest nonprofit housing sponsor and producer, plans to develop the site as "a national showcase" for its housing efforts, officials said. It will be the largest complex of its kind sponsored by a religious group.

Site of the proposed complex is the old Henderson Castle, a Washington landmark for a century that once dominated a hill high above the city. It is located on a major traffic artery only a few blocks away from an area devastated by 1968 riots.

If the American Baptist group secures FHA approval for its section-by-section development plan, construction of the first phase will begin in 18 months. It will include 400 units of low-income housing and a playground.

The second stage would include a 480-bed nursing facility which would be the largest FHA-insured nursing home in the nation and the final stage would contain from 400 to 600 units of housing for elderly persons of low to moderate incomes.

Organized in 1968, the American Baptist group is currently involved in 274 projects with financial outlays totalling \$587 million. More than half of the projects are sponsored by American Baptist churches. When completed the projects will furnish low-cost housing to about 60,000 persons.

"Almost the greatest need of millions of Americans today is housing" said John Vanderbeck of Valley Forge, Pa., president of the corporation. "If the church is to minister adequately to physical as well as spiritual needs, it must begin with this number one priority," Vanderbeck said.

Some of the spiritual problems of the nation are growing out of the festering sores which constitute slum housing, Vanderbeck added. "Whether a person feels that life is worth living at all often depends upon what he lives in."

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California Board Recommends  
Budget, Names Three to Staff

9/16/71

FRESNO, Calif (BP)--The Executive Board of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California meeting here voted to recommend a record \$2.8 million budget and named three new staff members.

Named as editor of the California Southern Baptist was Donald T. McGregor, associate editor of the Baptist Standard in Texas. Elected as director of stewardship, education and promotion was William H. Bell, pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Redlands, Calif.

Appointed Baptist Student Union director at the University of California, Berkeley, was Delmore F. Olson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Lafayette, Calif.

In other major actions, the convention's Executive Board recommended adoption of a proposed 1972 budget totalling \$2.8 million. If approved by the state convention in November, the budget would represent an increase of \$70,000 in Cooperative Program goal.

The board also adopted a recommendation commending state assemblymen and senators who participate in a weekly prayer breakfast in Sacramento, Calif., for "setting this example of reliance upon God.

In electing new staff members, the board named McGregor to succeed J. Terry Young, who resigned in June as editor of the California Southern Baptist. The Texas newsman will assume the position effective Oct. 11.

McGregor has been on the editorial staff of the Baptist Standard for more than 15 years. He also has been a reporter and columnist for daily newspapers in Dallas and Midland, Tex., a continuity director for a Midland radio station and a magazine editor for a Dallas insurance company.

Bell, the new stewardship director for the convention, has been a member of the convention's Executive Board and several of its committees. He assumes the post in October.

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During the past 17 years, Bell has been pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Hanford, Calif.; Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church in Riverside, Calif.; and pastor of Temple Church in Redlands for two periods.

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

Olson, the new Baptist Student Union Director at University of California, Berkeley, has been pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Lafayette, for five years. Previously, he was pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Tulare, and First Southern Baptist Church, San Mateo, both in California.

A native of Texas, Olson is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

In other actions, the board adopted policies at its state assembly in Jenness Park, Calif., urged opposition with state education officials of the use of education voucher experiments in California and reviewed the audit of California Baptist College, Riverside, finding it "acceptable with no areas of new concern."

The board also heard a report from its total program committee suggesting addition of notations to a staff-prepared "crisis study" document, voted to plan its state convention programs on the basis of five-year periods and recommended a constitutional change which would require approval of funding for any special convention study committees by two successive conventions.