

**BAPTIST PRESS**

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Francisco To Prepare
Broadman Genesis Text

NASHVILLE (BP)--Clyde T. Francisco, John R. Sampey professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, has accepted an invitation to prepare a new treatment of the text on Genesis for the Broadman Bible Commentary.

Clifton J. Allen, general editor for the commentary, extended the invitation following action of the Sunday School Board trustees in July, and the subsequent authorization of executive secretary-treasurer James L. Sullivan.

The trustees had voted to comply with the action of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis by authorizing the administration of the board to seek to secure a new author for the commentary on Genesis.

Francisco was selected to write the comments after consultation involving the two Old Testament consulting editors, John I. Durham of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Roy L. Honeycutt of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, plus Allen, Sullivan, and Broadman Press staff representatives.

Francisco prepared one of the general articles for Volume I, and the commentary on I and II Chronicles for Volume III.

As he accepted the invitation, Francisco stated: "My acceptance of this assignment does not imply my rejection of the previous work of G. Henton Davies, for whose doctrinal integrity I have the greatest respect, but is in response to the expressed desire of Southern Baptists for further discussion of the implications of current biblical studies for our common faith.

"My decision to undertake this task is based upon my confidence in the historical method of biblical study, the trustworthiness of the Bible, and the willingness of Southern Baptists to be open to truth wherever it may be found," Francisco added.

Davies, principal of Regent's Park College, Oxford, England, and currently president of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, wrote the original commentary on Genesis for the 12-volume set.

A majority of messengers present and voting at the Wednesday morning session of the Southern Baptist Convention in Denver in 1970 voted that Volume I of the Broadman Commentary was "out of keeping with the beliefs of the vast majority of Southern Baptist pastors and people," and requested that it be withdrawn from distribution and rewritten "with due consideration of the conservative viewpoint."

Allen estimated that the manuscript prepared by Francisco could not be expected before January, 1973. Publication of the new volume is expected late in 1973, according to Ras B. Robinson, manager of the Broadman products department of the Sunday School Board.

Following action by the Sunday School Board trustees in August, 1970, and January, 1971, plans were initiated to revise Volume I according to the request of the convention in Denver.

Before these plans could be carried out, the St. Louis convention in 1971 took action stating that "the Sunday School Board [should] be advised that the vote of the 1970 convention regarding the reWriting of the Broadman Commentary has not been followed and that the . . . board [should] obtain another writer and proceed with the commentary according to the vote of the 1970 convention in Denver."

Objection expressed at the St. Louis Convention and criticism through other media centered on the treatment of Genesis. The recent action of Sunday School Board trustees in August was a response to that concern and to the request of the convention.

Eight volumes of the commentary have already been released. Volumes V and VI are due to be released this October. Volumes VII and XII are scheduled for release in May, 1972, completing the original set.

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Herman King Named
To New Position

10/4/71

NASHVILLE (BP)--Herman L. King, director of the Publishing Division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board for 10 years, has been named executive assistant in the board's executive office.

In his new position, King will assist executive secretary-treasurer James L. Sullivan in general administrative matters and special projects. His travel will be related to interpretation of the People-to-People project, in addition to interpretation of board policies and actions to pastors, churches, associations and other groups.

King directed the Publishing Division from its beginning in 1961 until it was phased out this year in major reorganization of the board. The largest portions of the work went into two new divisions, Church Services and Materials, and the Broadman Division.

Before King became director of the Publishing Division, he was executive assistant from 1958-1961, and held positions in the Sunday School department from 1939-1958. He practiced law in Nashville for seven years before coming to the board.

King is scheduled to retire at the end of September, 1972.

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Clergy and Congressmen Unite
To Fight "Prayer Amendment"

10/4/71

WASHINGTON (BP)--Clergymen and congressmen united here in an unusual press conference to condemn the proposed constitutional prayer amendment as a "threat to religious freedom."

Declaring "alarm" over the effort to alter the first amendment, the group of seven national religious leaders and nine congressmen issued a statement urging all citizens to join with them in expressing concern over the proposal to amend the Bill of Rights for the first time in history.

Carl Bates, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was one of the seven national religious leaders signing the statement and participating in the press conference called by both Republican and Democratic congressmen.

Other Baptists present at the press conference were Mrs. Marcus Rohlf, president of the American Baptist Convention; Warren Magnuson, executive secretary of the Baptist General Conference and chairman of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; and G. K. Zimmerman, executive secretary of the North American Baptist General Conference.

"We believe and aver that we . . . now have adequate protection of religion in the first amendment; that the Supreme Court decisions of 1962 and 1963 served to strengthen that freedom, and that, contrary to its supporters' contentions, House Joint Resolution 191 would restrict that freedom," the congressmen and clergymen declared in their 900-word statement released at the press conference in the Cannon House Office Building.

House Joint Resolution 191, sponsored by Cong. Chalmers P. Wylie (R., Ohio), reads: "Nothing contained in this constitution shall abridge the right of persons lawfully assembled, in any public building which is supported in whole or in part through the expenditure of public funds, to participate in nondenominational prayer."

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Both in the statement and in the 50-minute press conference, the panelists pointed out that Americans "are already guaranteed the right to participate in prayer--nondenominational or denominational, and in buildings public or private.

"None of this has been diminished by any opinions of the Supreme Court," the statement continued. "Thus the proposed amendment might actually serve to lessen our religious liberty rather than broaden it," the religious and legislative leaders declared.

The group attacked the proposed authorization for "nondenominational prayer" as "anti-theological to religion."

Religion by its nature is "intensely personal and denominational," they declared.

"A nondenominational consensus prayer could only serve to reduce religion to its least common denominator, to neutralize it, and finally to create what might be called a nonsectarian public school religion," the ad hoc group further stated.

They added they did not believe "that even the proponents of the Wylie Amendment wish such a result."

Cong. Fred Schwengel (R., Iowa), a prominent Baptist layman in the North American Baptist General Conference, and one of the chief congressional opponents of the proposed amendment, said that the proposal would, indeed, "weaken religion and weaken prayer."

"It is a major assault on religious liberty," affirmed Cong. Don Edwards (D., Calif.). "It would be a serious tragedy (for this to pass Congress)," declared Cong. Donald Fraser (D., Minn.).

The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Emanuel Celler, labeled the prayer amendment movement as a "most serious and deleterious attack" on religious freedom.

In 1964 in the wake of the Supreme Court's "school prayer" decisions, Celler's committee held extensive hearings over a period of three months on a variety of proposed amendments.

Cong. Celler told the large gathering of press persons and personnel from a number of Washington-based religious organizations that his committee "was unable to devise language which it could recommend to the House that would not do violence to religious liberty now guaranteed by the first amendment."

Despite this, a movement has persisted in the country to get a "prayer amendment" through Congress.

Through the efforts of a small lobbying group rallying grassroots pressure on their congressmen, 218 members of the House of Representatives recently signed a "discharge petition" to force the prayer amendment proposal out of committee to the House floor for a vote. The House is expected to vote on this bill on November 8.

In the press conference, Cong. Celler turned to Carl Bates and asked him why, "despite all the glorious resolutions" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention and most other mainline denominations, constituent pressure caused so many congressmen to sign the discharge petition.

"A false issue is being used to stampede the Congress," Bates responded.

Cong. James Corman (R., Calif.), who presided at the press conference, predicted that the amendment would be defeated in the House. Celler interrupted him by observing sharply, as he turned and looked at Bates and other religious leaders, that it would not be defeated "unless religious groups do more to inform their people about the principles involved in this."

Other religious executives signing the statement and participating in the press conference were: David K. Hunter, deputy general secretary of the National Council of Churches; Bishop John Wesley Lord, the United Methodist Church; William P. Thompson, stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA; and Robert E. van Deusen, director, Office of Public Affairs, Lutheran Council in the USA. Cong. Robert F. Drinan (D., Mass.), the only Catholic priest to be elected to Congress, was among those at the press conference vowing "to fight against passage" of the prayer amendment.