

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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March 20, 1972

Former SBC Vice President
Conducts White House Service

WASHINGTON (BP)--Fred B. Rhodes, noted Baptist layman and deputy administrator of the Veterans Administration, said in a sermon at the 35th White House worship service (March 19) that if the world is to have peace it must come by the power of the Spirit.

Rhodes is one of three other laymen who have conducted the White House services which were begun under the administration of President Richard M. Nixon. He was vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention 1970-71, and is a former member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.

An active deacon in the Briggs Memorial Baptist Church in the Washington suburbs, Rhodes has also served as president of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. He is presently a member of the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance.

As President Nixon and Rhodes entered the East Room of the White House, the more than 300 guests stood to their feet. After the group was seated the President introduced the speaker of the day, who conducted a brief service consisting of prayer, the Doxology, scripture, anthems and a sermon.

Following the service President and Mrs. Nixon, together with Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes, went to the White House State Room where each guest was introduced to the President. Coffee, orange juice and pastries were served at the reception.

Music for the worship service was provided by "Campus Sing," a voluntary choral group of ten young women from Stephens College, Columbia, Mo. The group was in the nation's capital at the conclusion of a four-state spring tour. Howard Ashley is the director.

Rhodes used for the scripture reading Romans 8:1-11 from the translation "Good News for Modern Man." His 15-minute sermon emphasized that there is a constant search for power in the world. The most significant power, however, he stressed, is spiritual power, the power of prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Baptist layman drew upon his experience as the first director of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy for an illustration on power. He talked about the scientific experiments of bringing together two masses of radio-active materials to produce a chain reaction.

Rhodes pointed out that prayer cells for peace have been formed throughout the world. These are moving the hemispheres close together, which gives "hope for a chain reaction for peace in our time," he concluded.

The appearance of Rhodes as leader of the White House worship brought together an interesting combination of history, theology and an emphasis on freedom.

President Nixon is a Quaker whose own religion makes leadership of the laity appropriate. Baptist emphasis on the priesthood of the believer makes it possible for laymen to exercise spiritual gifts the same as clergymen.

Perhaps even more significant is the fact that Rhodes dates his religious heritage from Zachariah Rhodes, who was a partner of Roger Williams in the founding of the first Baptist church in America at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1636. Some historicals suggest the possibility that he could have been the source of the name of the state of Rhode Island.

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More significant yet is the fact that Rhodes is a direct descendant of Roger Williams, the patriarch of religious liberty and separation of church and state in America. Geneological tracings show that John Rhodes, the son of Zachariah, married Williams' granddaughter, Waite Waterman, and that the direct line of descent continued through that union.

A lawyer by profession, Rhodes is at home in both governmental and religious circles. After his duties with the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, he has served as chief counsel of the Senate Armed Services Committee, minority counsel for a special Senate Committee on Unemployment Problems, general counsel of the Veterans Administration, minority counsel of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and secretary of the Senate Republican Policy Committee.

Since 1969, Rhodes has been deputy administrator of the Veterans Administration. He says he is firmly convinced that public service through government gives him an opportunity to put his Christianity into action. In his job, he helps minister to the needs of some 27 million veterans of American wars.

An active churchman, he is a deacon, Sunday School teacher, choir member and charter member of the Briggs Memorial Baptist Church. He tells his men's Bible class that religion is a seven-day-a-week affair, and that Sunday church services are just a "service station" to provide spiritual fuel and inspiration as they "live and witness" their faith in business and social contacts during the week.

Rhodes' pastor, Charles Holland, says he is a man with extremely sensitive concern for the happiness and welfare of other people.

Baptized and listed on a church roll in 1926, at the age of 12, Rhodes said his real conversion came at age 38 when he went to a noonday service led by Evangelist Billy Graham. Unable to get in, he stood outside and fell into conversation with Dan Platt, a member of the Graham team. The conversation, he recalls, led to a vital Christian experience.

"That is when things began really to happen in my life," Rhodes says. "God became very real to me."

Now he is seeking to use government service as an opportunity to help people in need because of the reality of God in his life.

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Williams Elected Chairman
Of SBC Business Officers

3/20/72

DALLAS (BP)--John H. Williams of Nashville was elected general chairman of the Conference of Southern Baptist Business Officers during their 10th annual session here.

Williams is financial planning secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Attending the three-day conference at the Southern Baptist Annuity Board were 130 persons representing 93 different Baptist organizations, a record number.

As general chairman, Williams will preside over the 1973 session in Dallas next March.

Changing its election procedure, the conference from now on will rotate its general chairmanship annually among the seven types of organizations sending business officers to the conference.

Leon P. Spencer, business manager, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Raleigh, would thus succeed Williams in 1974. Spencer is current chairman of the group made up of Baptist state conventions.

The chairman for each new year will rotate in alphabetical order by type of organization, in becoming general chairman of the conference, according to the new procedures.

Williams chaired the group comprised of those from SBC agencies, boards, and commissions, and from Baptist state papers and foundations.

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The remaining five groups are child care institutions, churches, educational institutions, homes for the aging, and hospitals.

The group chairmen for 1973 conference are: children's homes, J. E. Paynter, Illinois Baptist Children's Home, Carmi; churches, Cliff Elkins, Second Baptist Church, Houston; educational institutions, Badgett Dillard, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Homes for the aging, Charles E. Neal, Culpeper, Va.; hospitals, Michael C. Wilkinson, Jackson, Miss.; and agencies, boards, and commissions, and Baptist state papers and foundations, William H. Sellers, Baptist Record (newspaper), Jackson, Miss.

Mrs. Janie Neal, office secretary at the Annuity Board, continues as conference secretary-treasurer.

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New Orleans Elects Development
Chief, Approves New Doctorate

3/20/72

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The board of trustees for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here elected a new director of development and approved curriculum and degree program changes including ratification of a new doctor of ministry degree.

Russell McIntire, pastor of First Baptist Church in Clinton, Miss., was named director of development for the seminary, effective April 15.

McIntire, pastor of the Clinton church for the past 20 years, will be responsible for setting up and administering a program whereby the seminary may benefit from deferred gifts, bequests and wills, according to seminary President Grady C. Cothen.

Ratifying plans recommended by the faculty and two trustee committees, the board voted to set up a divisional structure for the entire seminary under a single academic dean. The new structure will replace the old plan of individual schools of theology, religious education and church music.

The five divisions are Divisions of Biblical Studies, Theological and Historical Studies, Pastoral Ministries, Religious Education Ministries, and Church Music Ministries.

Also approved as part of the new curriculum was the doctor of ministry degree which will stress a high degree of excellence in ministry under a flexible study program, according to seminary officials. Under the degree program, the student may design his study to best prepare himself for the ministry to which he has been called, officials said.

The new program provides for a stronger emphasis on ministry, and offers greater flexibility to a student's course of study, seminary officials added.

Under the new curriculum, all students in the master's degree and diploma programs will take 28 hours (approximately one year) of basic courses providing a broad base for specialization in the various kinds of ministry.

The student selects his major and chooses the supporting seminars best designed to prepare him for the ministry to which he feels called. Also involved is a special ministry project which the student formulates, implements and evaluates in a detailed report.

More than 5,000 seminary alumni were surveyed in preparation of the new program, and their needs and suggestions were carefully considered in planning the new program, officials added.

In other action, the board authorized a study, with professional assistance, of space utilization in physical facilities. Special attention will be given to library space needs, the trustees reported.

The board also promoted Eugene Brasher to associate professor of choral conducting, and granted indefinite tenure to George Kelm, associate professor of archaeology.

Re-elected president of the board was A. Morgan Brian, New Orleans attorney. Elected new treasurer was Hugh R. Brooks of New Orleans. Re-elected vice president was Floyd Lewis of New Orleans, and re-elected secretary was D. I. Tanner of Metairie, La. All officers of the board are laymen.



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