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June 5, 1972

**Astronaut Irwin Resigns
To Tell Others of Faith**

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Astronaut James Irwin told almost 6,000 Southern Baptist women and their guests here Sunday night he was dropping out of the space program to give his total attention to God's work.

During a testimony period, Irwin, a Southern Baptist layman who was the pilot for the Apollo 15 moon trip, said his goal will be to tell men everywhere of his faith in Jesus Christ and that God was there on the moon.

In describing his moon flight, Irwin said the thing that thrilled him most was that he could feel God's presence.

"We faced many unexpected challenges and problems. Each time I gave a quick silent prayer to God and the answer was there."

Irwin shared the podium at the opening session of the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist woman's auxiliary with W. A. Criswell of Dallas, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Criswell is pastor of the 16,000-member First Baptist Church of Dallas, the largest congregation in the Southern Baptist Convention.

In speaking on Freedom's Holy Light, Criswell touched on freedom of the soul and the nation, but spent most of his time describing the threat of communism to the freedom of the world.

"In atheistic communism, Christian civilization faces the greatest threat it has ever known in 2,000 years," Criswell said. For the first time in the history of humanity nations are openly, statedly, and publicly atheistic.

"The whole world is divided into two great camps--the East and West, the slave and the free. Behind these two camps are two great ideas in mortal combat--Christianity and communism.

"The two religions are irrevocably, eternally incompatible and irreconcilable. There is no middle ground between them. The world is not big enough for both," Criswell declared.

However, Criswell said he believes there are millions who would die in the name of Christ if necessary

Pointing to the foreign missionary as an example, Criswell said the light and hope of freedom calls for a dedication that is unwearying and complete.

"Christianity will never be heroic if I am a coward, gigantic if I am a pigmy, universal if I am not evangelistic, or redemptive if I am unregenerate," he intoned.

A second group, the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association, meeting at Holiday Inn Penn Center, heard a progress report on a national conference for religious educators planned for February 3-7, 1975, at Houston.

Morton Rose of Nashville, who presented the report, said the program will emphasize inspiration, fellowship, and depth studies into 50 specialized subjects.

Rose said he expected 2,000 religious educators from throughout the nation to attend.

Among the subjects getting work group attention will be the church and the aging, deaf, child care, mentally retarded, alcoholic, and juvenile delinquents.

Panel Says Education Minister
Shouldn't Resign for New Pastor

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--The minister of education should not automatically resign when a new pastor comes to the church, but he should be willing to, delegates to the 17th annual conference of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association were told Sunday.

Luke Williams Jr. of San Antonio, Tex., who has spent 22 years and served six churches as minister of education, urged the religious educators to consider each case on its own merits.

"It is my conviction that a staff member should be willing to leave or stay according to God's leadership as the new pastor is determined," said Williams, director of church activities for First Baptist Church of San Antonio.

In four of the six churches he has served, Williams said he remained during the pastorless period and has continued to serve under the new pastor. In the other two churches, he came and left while the same pastor served the congregation.

Williams was one of three panelists who spoke to the 300 persons attending the two-day conference at Holiday Inn Penn Center, one of three Baptist meetings preceding the Southern Baptist Convention which opens a three-day run Tuesday.

Another panelist, Robert Bingham of Atlanta, said a minister of education's value to the church is not measured in terms of the former or future pastor, but by his relationship to the congregation. Bingham is executive assistant for program services for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

By staying with a church during a change of pastors, the minister of education offers the congregation stability and continuity during the pastorless period, Bingham, a former minister of education, reminded.

In addition, he offers the incoming pastor the counsel of an experienced associate, Bingham said.

The church, not the pastor, should call the minister of education, according to Bingham. He believes the trend is moving away from a pastor-called to a church-called staff.

When a pastor resigns, Bingham indicated, he usually has received a call to another church. If the minister of education must resign at the same time, he may not have any new opening available at the moment.

When religious education was in the formative stage, the pastor employed the individual. When the pastor resigned, the educator did too, Bingham said.

The Religious Education Association includes not only church ministers of education, but also seminary and college teachers in the field, and denominational agency staff members working in religious education.

Charles A. Tidwell, a seminary professor, read a "declaration of interdependence" in which the pastor, minister of education, and other professional church staffers are asked to respect the abilities and specialized ministry each has to contribute.

Tidwell is associate professor of church administration for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex.

Tidwell said the call is to perform a ministry rather than to take a position as minister.

"God's gifts are to be understood in terms of function, of doing something, rather than in positions," he explained.

In 1915 there were only four persons in the nation serving as educational leaders of churches on a staff basis. By 1930, it was still possible to list all of them in a brief space. Today, there are 8,000 in the SBC in some religious education capacity, the majority of them associated with churches.

In his address to the conference, Baker James Cauthen, Richmond, executive secretary, SBC Foreign Mission Board, warned against becoming so absorbed with domestic problems in the nation that overseas missionary concern and commitment is neglected.

Cauthen said that as important as President Nixon's visits to Russia and China were, they did not resolve "the basic problems of the 20th Century." These problems linger because "there is something wrong in man himself."

The religious educators also heard a progress report on plans for a national conference on the church educational ministry scheduled for February 3-7, 1975, in Houston.

Morton Rose of Nashville, chairman of the planning committee, said features will include inspirational activities, fellowship and a series of work groups on five major themes, including ministries to the aging, deaf, alcoholics, juvenile delinquents, and child care.

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SBC Pastors Urged to Pattern Lives After John the Baptist

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Southern Baptist ministers were challenged here Monday to pattern their lives on earth after John the Baptist and to make certain their congregations are traveling the highway to heaven.

The advice to members of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference at Convention Hall was offered by two fellow preachers, Charles D. Graves, pastor of Nichols Hills Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, and R. G. Lee, pastor emeritus of Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn., and former three-time president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Graves, who held up John the Baptist as the model, told the pastors to face the fact that John the Baptist was a square.

"The question is not whether we are going to be a square, but whose square we are going to be. And the most fulfilled people in the world are those who dare to be God's squares."

Preachers can also be like John the Baptist by telling it like it is, but first "we have to know it like it is," Graves said.

"I am a fundamentalist. The severest criticism I have about us fundamentalists is that we are often unloving. It seems almost impossible to have conviction and compassion. We forgive people by proxy. We need to be careful about forgiveness which costs us nothing while we hate the neighborhood kid who lets his hair grow long and who comes to church barefooted," Graves confessed.

Calling on the ministers to be faithful to their calling, Graves said Southern Baptists are prospering while other evangelical denominations are declining. He attributed it to Baptist belief in the inspiration of the Bible and in a God-called ministry.

Graves said some men are impressed of God to press for social equality, to rehabilitate the environment, or to counsel professionally, "but I'm going to concentrate on preaching Jesus as well as I can."

In drawing the road map to heaven, Lee, who is 86, first charted nine highways to havoc he told the ministers to avoid. He identified them as the highways of wickedness, criminality, abuse and misuse of sex, booze, materialism, forgetting God, infidelity, modernism, and Bible neglect and ignorance, then explained each in detail.

In touching on criminality, Lee said 75 per cent of all teachers in East St. Louis carry guns to protect themselves against possible assault in school while Chicago has 460 policemen patrolling 200 schools. He claimed Philadelphia and Detroit also use "security" people in their schools.

Lee described booze as the sewerage in the drinking fountain, poison ivy in the bride's bouquet, strychnine in the baby's milk, a rattlesnake in the nursery, a mad dog on a child's playground, a rapist in a girl's dormitory, and a maniac armed with a razor in an old folk's home.

Materialism flatters pride, stimulates desire, deadens conscience, mutilates the Bible, minimizes sin, and humanizes God, Lee contended.

"Modernism lays emphasis on education, social service, and world betterness instead of on evangelism," Lee said. "The purpose of modernism is to destroy faith in the supernatural. It strikes at the deity of Jesus Christ and seeks to undermine his infallibility."

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"These Bible critics who summon the Bible to appear at the bar of human reason, remind me of a rill sitting in judgment on the volume of a river, or of a candle summoning the sun to appear for judgment for not being bright enough."

Lee told the preachers they can recognize the highway to heaven because it has no saloons, gambling casinos, dirty movies, burlesque shows, dance halls, drunken midnight orgies, red light districts, infidelic publishing houses or pornography displays."

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Mrs. Mathis Re-elected
As WMU President

6/5/72

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Mrs. R. L. Mathis of Waco, Tex., was re-elected to a third term as president of Woman's Missionary Union at the annual meeting of the auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention here Monday.

Mrs. Roy Snider of Camden, Ark., was re-elected secretary. Chosen as members at large to the WMU Executive Board were Mrs. Huber Drumwright of Fort Worth, Tex., and Mrs. Edward Byrd of Florence, S. C.

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Tax Reform Proposals Affect
Churches and Their Agencies

6/5/72

WASHINGTON (BP)--Churches and their agencies will be severely affected if newly proposed tax reform legislation is approved by Congress and if new legislation is not enacted to continue certain tax benefits.

Specifically, the new proposal calls for the elimination or review of income tax deductions for charitable contributions, which include gifts to churches. It also sets a date for an end to the provision allowing the exclusion of the rental value of parsonages.

The bill, which leaders say will come up for a vote in early summer, calls for the termination of charitable contribution deductions by Jan. 1, 1976. Also to terminate by the same date is the provision allowing the exclusion of the rental value of parsonages.

Rep. Wilbur D. Mills (D., Ark.), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and Sen. Mike Mansfield (D., Mont.), majority leader in the Senate, introduced the measure simultaneously in both houses of Congress.

Both Mills and Mansfield took great pains to explain that the inclusion of items in the long list of provision to terminate by certain dates does not mean approval or disapproval of this deduction allowance.

The purpose of the bill, according to the sponsors, is to provide "an orderly and systematic review of virtually all provisions of the Internal Revenue Code giving any special exclusion or deduction or special tax rate to any particular type of group or category of income."

The bill would cause 54 sections of the tax code to lapse in three groups of 18. The first group would end by Jan. 1, 1974; the second one year later, and the third list, including charitable contributions and the rental value of parsonages, would end by Jan. 1, 1976.

Among the other provisions scheduled to terminate which may affect churches or church agencies are these: medical and moving expense deductions, the capital gain treatment of lump-sum distribution from pension funds, the tax exemption for credit unions and certain mutual insurance funds, the deduction for nonbusiness interest, and the exclusion from gross income of scholarships and fellowships.

In a speech to the Senate when the bill was introduced, Mansfield supported strongly the need for tax reform and stressed the value of having Congress review "and renew every preference if it is to be continued.

"If a preference has clear validity, then Congress will renew the provision," Mansfield said.

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The majority leader explained further that in reviewing the special tax provisions Congress may decide that there is some way outside the tax system which will better achieve the goals sought, or there may be a need for modification of the provision.

In a release describing the bill, which is called the "Tax Policy Review Act of 1972," Mills said tax reform should be made on a "continuing basis" in the years ahead.

Promising "extensive hearings" on the various aspects of the tax laws, Mills said that many of the provisions "appear to be desirable under present circumstances." But the intent of the bill, Mills emphasized, "is to be sure that the provisions will be reviewed."

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Vander Warner Elected
Pastors' Conference Head

6/5/72

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Vander Warner Jr., pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., was elected here president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

The new president defeated Frank D. Minton, pastor of Tower Grove Baptist Church, St. Louis, Mo., in a run-off election.

A third nominee for the office was James L. Pleitz, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla.

Both Warner and Minton spoke to this year's session of the pastors' conference. Warner will preside over next year's meeting in Portland, Ore. He succeeds John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church, Houston, Tex.

The ministers elected Minton vice-president and Pleitz secretary-treasurer.

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Minton Urges Old-Time
Approach to Evangelism

6/5/72

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--A St. Louis pastor cautioned his fellow ministers attending the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference here not to stray from the proven way of evangelistic preaching and personal, door-to-door housecalling and witnessing.

"I can do more in five minutes of winning someone to Christ on the street in St. Louis than I can in chasing around a week picking up the pieces in a social program," declared Frank D. Minton, pastor of Tower Grove Baptist Church in that city.

He said the church he serves was losing ground despite its investment in recreational facilities and benevolent programs.

"People didn't even care to participate in the recreational building," he told the 5,000 ministers, their wives and other women visitors. "But with just plain simple 'Jesus' preaching all of the activity suddenly came alive," Minton reported.

Some of the old, mainline denominations failed when they departed from the evangelistic approach, he said.

"Today we hear advocates on every hand calling for the church to abandon its main task and adopt new positions. Some even within the ranks of Baptists are trying to mature us by leading us to follow in the step of other major denominations, suggesting that Southern Baptists throw away all those things that make us live and adopt things that will make us die."

At the same session of the pastors' meeting, Jess C. Moody of West Palm Beach, Fla., drew frequent laughter and applause in picturing the Jesus Movement among young people today, including his own 15-year-old daughter, Martha.

Moody told the pastors they must take the Jesus Movement seriously, and the churches must give it guidance and financing "to keep it on a New Testament course."

"Be convinced of this," said Moody, pastor of First Baptist Church. "The Church will either cheer the Jesus Movement or the Jesus People will create a side movement and when it institutionalizes, it will become yet another denomination or a host of soured off, disillusioned ex-Jesus People."

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He noted that "the most startling fact about the Jesus Movement is that the wrong people are upset about it." He referred to the church, which he said has become disturbed because "someone believes its message."

Baptist interest in the Jesus Movement, he pointed out, would be in their request for water baptism by immersion. The associate pastor of the West Palm Beach church, Fenton Moorhead, baptized more than a hundred youth in a month's time who had asked to be immersed in the nearby Atlantic Ocean.

Moody said Jesus Movement people have been tracking presidential campaigners all across America, and bombarding them with questions like, "Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing flood?"

When the presidential aspirants were in Florida to win votes for the primary there, Moody said his own daughter asked a flabbergasted Sen. Edmund Muskie of Maine, "Have you been born again?" and then plastered the back of his coat with Jesus stickers that later showed up in the TV newscasts of the senator's activity that day.

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Autrey Urges Removal Of Bible Rejectors

6/5/72

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Evangelist Jarry Autrey of Houston, Tex., told Southern Baptist pastors "We're going to find the way to remove people from our institutions who don't believe the Bible."

A moment before, he had said he didn't believe in academic freedom and accused some professors of using it as a cover, apparently to get around certain Baptist doctrines.

The speaker is the son of C. E. Autrey, retired director of evangelism for the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board and former professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Autrey did not elaborate by naming any school, although it was evidently intended to embrace Baptist-supported educational institutions. Neither did he cite any professor by name.

Autrey injected the remarks while exhorting 5,000 fellow ministers to "remember that one of our great works is to present the Word of God. The Bible is our authority in all we do. When we put the Bible down, we've had it."

The attack on academic freedom subsided as suddenly and unexpectedly as it had arisen. Autrey did not press the issue further, and other program participants did not pick it up.

Otherwise, the pastors, listening to a "banquet of preaching," were feasting on speeches that urged them to stay close to the Bible.

In another message, Charles D. Graves of Oklahoma City, said, "When I am asked why Baptists have continued to prosper when the other evangelical denominations of the frontier era have declined, I give two reasons: because Baptists believe in the inspiration of the Bible and in a God-called ministry." Graves is pastor of Nichols Hills Baptist Church.

James E. Coggin of Fort Worth, in an address on the Holy Spirit, described how the Spirit guided translators working on contemporary language editions of the Bible.

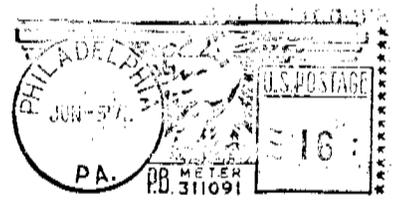
Recounting the preaching results of John Wesley, George Whitfield, and Dwight L. Moody, he said, "Lord, no longer will I be a powerless preacher." It is the Holy Spirit who empowers those who preach, said Coggin, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

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