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June 7, 1972

SBC Refuses to Recall
Broadman Bible Commentary

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention refused by an overwhelming standing vote Tuesday afternoon to order the withdrawal and rewriting of the 12-volume Broadman Bible Commentary being produced by its Sunday School Board.

No headcount was taken but the ratio of the vote appeared to be about four to one.

Gwin Turner, a pastor from Los Angeles, Calif., in his motion to recall the commentary in its present form, argued that it "is out of harmony with the spirit and letter of the Statement of Baptist Faith and Message adopted by this Convention." The statement was approved in 1963.

Turner went on to enumerate areas in which he said commentary authors from Leviticus through Psalms had challenged the infallibility of the Scriptures.

Former SBC president Herschel H. Hobbs, pastor of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, responded to Turner's chief argument in his rebuttal statement opposing the motion. He was chairman of the committee which drafted the statement adopted in 1963.

Hobbs said commentary opponents, in anchoring their stand on the Statement of Faith and Message, had overlooked the preamble to the statement.

"However, we must never forget that the 'preamble' is as much a part of the 'Baptist Faith and Message' as the various items treated in it," he said.

Messengers rejected a debate and voted to act immediately on Turner's motion after hearing from only Turner and Hobbs. A lone messenger attempted to push through a point of order, but Convention President Carl E. Bates ruled that effort out of order.

Turner conceded "there is much good material in this set" of commentaries, adding, "We are not objecting to all of it."

While "not calling in question the motivations of the writers," Turner said, "The one issue is this. We charge that some writers of this commentary have attributed error to the Bible."

He promised to "give you enough instances today to substantiate my claims."

Turner then attacked portions of the commentary on Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Esther, Job, and Psalms and named the author of each. He was ready to continue listing more evidence, he said, but the time allowed for stating his case expired.

In his original motion, Turner asked "the Sunday School Board to withdraw from further sale the entire set, seek a new editor, and rewrite the commentary from the point of view that the Bible is 'truth, without any mixture of error.'"

Hobbs responded that "no man alive today could write a commentary on the Bible with which all Southern Baptists would agree entirely."

"Had the 1963 Statement been presented without the preamble which safeguards the individual conscience the Convention most likely would not have adopted this statement of The Baptist Faith and Message. For without the preamble it becomes a creed. And Southern Baptists are not a creedal people," the former SBC president continued.

Hobbs said, "There is more to this (Turner) motion than a set of books. The motion strikes at the very heart of basic principles dear to every Baptist heart."

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Later, in an interview, Hobbs said he felt the action of the convention was the most significant in the denomination's history. "If we had passed that motion, it would have cut the jugular vein of freedom of conscience in the denomination and established a creed in the SBC," he said.

Following the action, Turner went to the news room of the convention for a lengthy interview with a number of reporters attending the session. Hobbs was not present, nor was any other convention official. Turner talked with newsmen nearly two hours.

Turner attributed the defeat of his motion to three factors: the location of the convention in Philadelphia, the opinion that the messengers were tired of fighting over the commentary question; and the remarks by Bates in his presidential address.

Turner said he would remain a Southern Baptist, and said he knew of no organized plans to revive the issue at the convention next year. He added that he did not feel the action this year negated the actions of the two previous conventions.

Turner predicted that the action this year would cause more distrust of denominational leadership, seminary professors, and the Baptist Sunday School Board among conservative Southern Baptists.

He said the Fellowship of Conservative Southern Baptists which backed his motion has nearly 3,000 members.

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SBC Requires 2/3 Vote to Deal
With Motions on Agency Work 6/7/72

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention decided here that a two-thirds majority of their number must decide when motions about SBC agencies will be considered.

After a flurry of debate from the floor the messengers approved a new bylaw--Number 17--recommended by the SBC Executive Committee.

Bylaw 17 would refer motions by messengers about internal operations and programs of SBC agencies to the elected board of that agency which would report at the next annual session for action--unless two-thirds of the messengers vote to consider them at the same convention.

Messengers defeated an amendment to the proposed bylaw by Doug Chatham of Milton, Fla., to change the two-thirds requirement to a simple majority.

But they approved a recommendation by the SBC Executive Committee that the two-thirds requirement will not go into effect until the end of the 1972 annual session at the Civic Center here.

That delay was recommended to head off any speculation by messengers that attempts were being made to gag the expected theological controversy over the Broadman Bible Commentary to come in a later session.

Messengers unanimously approved a record 1972-73 operating budget of $31,826,184 recommended by the Executive Committee for convention institutions. The total budget, which included capital needs, was $33,042,506.

Two other Executive Committee recommendations, which grew out of a controversy last year at the SBC in St. Louis, passed unanimously.

Two specific motions were made at the St. Louis convention to assure the right of messengers to introduce motions and resolutions affecting an agency without automatic referral and delay of the matter for a full year. Both were referred to the Executive Committee with a request that the question be the first order of business in Philadelphia.

Messengers approved resulting amendments to Bylaws 12 and 16 and the new Bylaw 17.

The Bylaw 12 change spells out a procedure for considering motions by messengers presented in miscellaneous business sessions and scheduling of actions on such motions during that same convention by the committee on order of business.

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Bylaw 16's amendment clarifies the wording to stipulate that recommendations from any SBC agency which are not published before or during the convention would be referred to the Executive Committee or to such other committees as the convention may direct.

During the debate on Bylaw 17, Chatham and several others contended that a two-thirds requirement would hinder the democratic procedure of the messengers and "gag the convention beyond the will of the majority."

"This proposed bylaw implies distrust of the messengers . . . that we must be protected from ourselves," Chatham said.

Others said there must be a balance between the will of elected messengers to an annual convention and the boards of trustees to which messengers have entrusted the work of the SBC agencies.

"In order for agencies to function," said Ernest White of St. Joseph, Mo., "we must delegate responsibility to them."

"We cannot run agencies from the floor of the convention," said Knox Dambert of St. Matthews, S.C. "If we pass the amendment we run the risk of overriding trustees and will get into a maze of controversy unnecessarily."

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SBC Priorities on Starvation,
Doctrine, Wrong, Bates Says 6/7/72

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--President Carl E. Bates called on Southern Baptists Tuesday to put aside theological debate and begin lighting torches of concern for the spiritual welfare of people.

The address by the 57-year-old president of the 11.8 million member Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church of Charlotte, N.C., sought to strike a mood of harmony at opening session for the three-day convention here.

Bates alluded to a major theological debate expected later in the day on the future of a 12-volume Broadman Bible Commentary some messengers feel is too liberal and needs to be rewritten by more theologically conservative Baptists.

Declaring Southern Baptist churches are in trouble, Bates told the messengers that twice during the past 10 years they have been content to debate theology while people only a few yards away were dying with nothing more stable to sustain them than a wad of grass in their bellies and dry leaves of humanism in their brains.

"How can we justify fighting one another in order to preserve little zones of personal stability for ourselves when the vast majority of the world's people have no hope of salvation?

"Already power structures are being developed to engage our people in the true church controversy of 100 years ago."

Bates reminded messengers determined to have theological and ecclesiastical sameness in the denomination that they have two choices: join another denomination or deny basic democratic principles to fellow Baptists.

In turning to the positive, Bates said he felt Southern Baptists stand upon the threshold of their greatest era with every one of its organizations making honest efforts to serve the people.

Categorizing denominational workers theologically, Bates put them right of center in Christendom and declared "it would surely be wrong to try to commit our agencies to either extreme."

Bates said he sees hope for Southern Baptists but it is not in boasting about numbers, buildings, or organizations.

"It is hope in the transformation that is sure to come to our churches as a result of our new interest in the lost (nonChristian)," Bates said.

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Find Real Freedom Under
Discipline, SBC Urged

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Southern Baptists were challenged here to reassess the value persons place on a carefree life and to find real freedom under the divine discipline of Jesus Christ.

E. Hermond Westmoreland, minister-at-large of South Main Baptist Church of Houston, threw out the challenge as he keynoted the 125th annual Southern Baptist Convention at Convention Hall.

In the annual convention sermon, Westmoreland reminded Southern Baptists they were living in a day when people rebel against discipline of any description.

"Many clamor for the abolition of all laws, all standards of morality, all rules and restraints. Man parrots the word 'freedom' every time his so-called liberty is threatened. He wants to live an unfettered life, free to do his own thing regardless of the consequences to himself and others. But the undisciplined life is doomed.

"The only freedom worth having is the freedom which Christ offers. It is freedom under his yoke and under his divine discipline."

Westmoreland also encouraged the messengers to claim the divine promise of rest but reminded they wouldn't find it in the modern church.

"If we are honest we must answer that peace and rest are about the last graces to be found in organized religion. Rather, we find so often anxiety, uncertainty, bickering, controversy, ceaseless activity and a general air of restlessness which seems to be prevalent among ministers and laity in our modern day churches."

The place to find that rest is in a new relationship with God, he said.

A pageant depicting the heritage of the denomination and tracing its local and national beginning back to Philadelphia shared the spotlight with the convention preacher.

Scenes in the dramatic presentation included such historic events as the organization of the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1707, Philadelphia's role in starting the second association in Charleston, S.C., in 1751, the founding of the first Baptist college in Rhode Island by the Philadelphia Association in 1764, and the historic plea for religious liberty at the Continental Congress in 1774 by Baptists.

A 30-piece orchestra and the Centurymen, a choir of Southern Baptist ministers of music, provided the music for the pageant.

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Owen Cooper, First Layman in
13 Years, Elected SBC President 6/7/72

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Owen Cooper, an industrialist from Yazoo City, Miss., was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention here, becoming the first layman to head the 11.8 million member denomination in 13 years.

Cooper, president of the Mississippi and Coastal Chemical Corps., a farmers' cooperative fertilizer group, defeated James Coggin of Fort Worth in a runoff election. Coggin is pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth.

The messengers selected Cooper, outgoing chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, from among five nominees to serve for the one-year term.

Cooper will take over the denominational reins from Carl Bates, pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C., at the close of the annual meeting of the Convention Thursday.

In his first news conference, Cooper expressed his views on a wide range of topics ranging from abortion to the inspiration of the Bible.

He started out by predicting that laymen will be highly involved in the next upsurge of Christianity, and will become much more active in his own denomination.

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"There is a growing awareness for the greater involvement of laymen in the denomination," he said. He cited the efforts to involve laymen of the SBC Brotherhood Commission, the Home Mission Board, the Foreign Mission Board, and the Sunday School Board.

"My role is to support these efforts now underway among the agencies."

The possibility of a merger of the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Convention looked dim to the new president.

"I do not foresee the day when the two denominations will come together. But I don't have the longest range of vision into the future. I do see a time when we will be working together in more programs.

Asked about liberalism in the SBC, Cooper quipped that he would like to stand a Southern Baptist liberal beside some liberals of other denominations and see how liberal that Southern Baptist really looked.

"I do not think the Southern Baptist Convention is in any danger of being overcome by liberalism in the classic sense," he added.

He said he did not favor the withdrawal of the Broadman Bible Commentary. The previous day, the convention defeated a motion that would have recalled the 12-volume set because it was allegedly out of harmony with the views of most Baptists.

Cooper said he believed in the inspiration of the scriptures, but not the inspiration of any commentaries. Such commentaries should be read with an open mind, he said. "I'm not afraid of ideas different from mine."

Asked to state his stand on abortion, Cooper replied this way: "The population explosion is hanging over our heads a potential disaster far greater than all the atomic bombs put together. I believe the emphasis should be on prevention of conception."

Saying he was against abortion on demand, Cooper added he felt the New York abortion law is too liberal, allowing abortion up to 24 weeks after conception. He expressed "very grave doubts" about abortion when life in the fetus is clearly established.

He supported a resolution that was adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention last year in St. Louis which favored abortion in cases of "rape, incest, clear evidence of severe fetal deformity and carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental and physical health of the mother."

Asked if he supported a resolution introduced the previous day on the Vietnam war, Cooper replied: "This convention is in order to speak on any subject it wants to. Whether I thought it should or not, they'd go ahead and do what they wanted anyway."

He took a firm stand on airline hijacking, saying "piracy has reared its ugly head" and "the only way to deal with piracy is to act firmly on it." He opposed in principle those countries which openly welcome skyjackers who endanger the lives of 375 people.

Cooper said he supported a motion made the previous day proposing that the SBC President serve a single one-year term and the vice president become president-elect. A president could serve two years with effectiveness under such a system, he said.

On the possibility of a denominational name change, Cooper said he believed the issue was dead for a reasonable length of time but that it could revive from time to time.

Cooper said he favored equal opportunities for blacks and followed that practice at his company. When blacks become more numerous as members of Southern Baptist churches, he said he felt attention should be given to creating employment for them in the denomination.

"They should be considered for any job without regard to bias or color," he said.

Cooper saw a need for more young people to participate in the activities of the denomination but was skeptical of a dramatic transition because of structure.

"When you begin making room for the young people and the women, the older people are crowded out and they don't like it.

"However, I noticed a very large number of young people introducing resolutions yesterday at the Convention."

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Ministers' Divorce Rate
Increases, Women Told

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--The divorce rate among ministers and their wives is increasing at an alarming rate, marriage counselor Donald Moore of Wake Forest, N. C., told a luncheon meeting for Southern Baptist ministers' wives.

"The divorce rate in the United States is 41 per cent. This does not spare ministers and their wives. More and more ministers' families are breaking up," said Moore, director of counseling and associate professor of pastoral care at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest.

"The minister spends an average of 25 hours per week with his family. That's less than one-fourth of his waking hours. Those who have children spend the same amount of time at home as childless couples or those whose children have already left home. This seems strange to me when you consider the Christian concept of the family," Moore told the women.

"The man who is indispensable too many hours a week may be playing God more than he should," Moore said.

Moore attributes the increase in marital difficulties to a decline in understanding between married partners and a loss of determination to stay married.

"There is also a development of an unrealistic view of love and marriage. On television there are less than 26 minutes to meet, fall in love, and get married," he remarked.

Moore listed mismanagement of available money, inlaws who become outlaws, sex, disagreement on the discipline of children, laziness, recreation, and religion as reasons given for divorce.

"Many pastors' wives ask me 'Do I have to go to church every time the door is opened?' When I tell them 'No,' then they say, 'Well, I wish you would tell my husband that.'"

Moore said unfaithfulness is mentioned more and more frequently as a cause of marital difficulties among pastors. "This includes emotional unfaithfulness as well as actual physical unfaithfulness."

"However, these are just symptoms of real problems. Down at the grass roots the things that really cause the difficulty are emotional immaturity or unwholesome experiences with parents.

"The best way to prepare your child for marriage and parenthood is to show him a good marriage. This really needs to start with the grandparents, at least one generation ahead. So many parents are not showing a good example, and the child ends up in his own marriage acting out what he saw in his parents 25 years ago."

Moore urged the Baptist women to remember they are women and wives first, and ministers' wives second.

Elected officers for next year were Mrs. Roy Babb of Nashville, Tenn., president; Mrs. James Landes of Dallas, vice president; and Mrs. Charles Jolly of Madison, N. J., secretary.

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CORRECTION

On Page 3, this mailing (6/7/72), please correct last graph of top story (6th graph of page) to read, ". . . convention,' said Knox Lambert" (not Dambert as typed). Thanks.

--Baptist Press

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SBC Defeats Proposal to
Abolish Stewardship Group

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention here defeated a proposal that would have dissolved its Stewardship Commission and assigned its work instead to the SBC Executive Committee.

The recommendation by the Executive Committee would have reassigned Stewardship Commission functions effective Oct. 1, 1973, after a constitutionally-required second vote of the convention in Portland, Ore., in June, 1973.

In other action, messengers approved a recommendation to hold the 1977 annual meeting of the SBC in Memphis, Tenn., June 14-16.

They also approved an Executive Committee recommendation to encourage the Stewardship Commission in its cooperation with other Baptist organizations, in "launching a program to revitalize mission giving through (the convention's) Cooperative Program. . . ."

A series of other recommendations accepted by the messengers dealt with financial reporting procedures for SBC agencies, 1974-75 SBC promotion plans and revisions in program statements of five SBC commissions and boards. They are the Brotherhood, Christian Life and Radio and Television Commissions and the Sunday School Board.

Before rejecting the recommendation to shift the Stewardship Commission, messengers rejected a motion by Horace Twine, a pastor from Washington, D.C., who opposed the recommendation but wished to refer it back to the Executive Committee for further study.

Twine, a member of the Stewardship Commission, labeled the recommendation as "an unwise action."

He said a majority of the elected members of the Stewardship Commission opposed the recommendation which had grown out of a study by the Committee of 15, an Executive Committee subcommittee.

The Committee of 15 also had recommended the changes in the program statements of the Brotherhood and Radio and Television Commissions.

Changes in the Brotherhood Commission, missionary education and action organization for men and boys, broadened its missions scope, specifically calling for involvement in personal witnessing and evangelism.

Proposals for the Radio and Television Commission were also designed to broaden its base but aimed it more in the direction of a service agency for other SBC agencies through radio and television ministries.

Revisions in the programs of the Christian Life and Education Commissions and the Sunday School Board were designed mainly for consolidation and simplification, with no substantive change in content.

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SBC Asks for Study
of Retirement Benefits 6/7/72

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention voted here to ask its Annuity Board to appoint a commission to recommend a way to upgrade benefits for a group of retired ministers.

Harvey T. Whaley of Charleston, S.C., said his motion calling for the commission study concerns those "who retired in previous years under totally inadequate retirement plans."

The Annuity Board also was asked to continue to investigate the possibility of finding a hospitalization insurance company other than Blue Cross-Blue Shield, which now writes coverage for several thousand pastors and church staff employees.

But the messengers approved an amendment deleting statements which called Blue Cross-Blue Shield "negligent, abusive, and careless."

Ray O. Jones, Knoxville, Tenn., pastor, offered the motion to look for another insuror. He said there is "widespread discontent about the rising costs" of hospitalization insurance the organization provides. "Benefits are not consistent with rising costs," he contended.

A messenger who attempted to reopen the issue to withdraw the 12-volume Broadman Bible Commentary was ruled out of order because he had voted with the minority. On Tuesday, by a ratio of about 4 to 1, messengers refused a request to withdraw the commentaries from sale and rewrite them from a more conservative view.

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SBC Educators Face Issues;
Elect Durst as President

By Robert O'Brien

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Delegates to the 17th annual conference of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association confronted a wide range of educational issues, heard a series of speakers and elected officers during a two-day meeting here.

John K. Durst of Columbia, S. C., director of theSunday School department of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, moved into the association's presidency. He succeeded Joe Burnette, minister of education, First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N. C.

Luke Williams, director of church activities, First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Tex., was named president-elect.

Two vice-presidential slots went to Roger Skelton, professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., and Robert Fulbright, supervisor of the children's section of the Sunday School department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

William E. Young, children's section supervisor of the Sunday School Board's church training department, was re-elected secretary-treasurer.

Several speakers urged the religious educators to lead church members to convert spiritual power into direct action.

"Compassion is more than a tingling sensation in the gizzard--it's something you do," said Peter Rhea Jones, assistant professor of New Testament Interpretation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Christians, he said, must assume personal responsibility for and sensitivity to the hurts of others.

But he noted that both "liberals" and "conservatives" avoid personal responsibility in different ways.

"Liberals put it on a back burner and conservatives neutralize it."

He cited the controversial My Lai massacre as an example of liberal-conservative polarization.

"The conservatives said (Lt. William) Calley was innocent of the massacre, excusing him because 'war is hell.'

"The liberals used it to accost the system as the real culprit, saying 'We all are guilty.'

"The liberal stance says bad systems excuse bad conduct. Conservatives say bad situations excuse bad conduct," Jones said.

"Both sides represent wooly thinking," he added. "If they are right we should throw out the court system in this country."

"What we must have are more truly converted people in Southern Baptist churches and institutions," said Carl E. Bates of Charlotte, outgoing SBC president.

"Don't you get tired of trying to make a fine omelet with 'rotten eggs?'" Bates asked in reference to church members who have not accepted the leadership of Christ.

"A casual or qualified commitment "will not accomplish anything in attempt to minister to the world."

James D. Williams, associate professor of adult education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, urged his listeners to conduct educational programs "which relate Christian faith to world problems."

"Religion is mobile and God wants it put on the road," he said.

Two workers with youth subcultures urged the religious educators to open up creative ministries to young people.

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"If you're going to lead them, you have to get out there with them," said Fenton Moorhead, minister to the generation gap at First Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, Fla.

Don Rhymes of the SBC Home Mission Board, who formerly directed ministries to youthful drug abusers in Atlanta and New York, said Christians must be willing to get involved with the drug abusers at all levels of their need.

A North Carolina pastor, John Lewis of First Baptist Church, Raleigh, compared the Bible to a microscope.

"A church should be a research laboratory where every human problem is brought and put under the microscope of the Scripture . . . to find God's truth."

"But a microscope is to be looked through--not looked at," he said. "Deliver us beyond the point of arguing about the Bible and let us learn how to use it."

Astronaut James Irwin of Houston said his recently announced retirement from both the U.S. Air Force and the space program will give him the "opportunity to get out and share a message of science and religion' with persons all over the world.

"My flight through life has been sustained by my knowledge of Jesus Christ," said the Apollo 15 astronaut. He accepted Christ in a Baptist revival at age 11.

The religious educators discussed educational problems in reaching children, youth and adults and confronted church staff relationships in several sessions on the two-day program.

The minister of education should not automatically resign when a new pastor comes to the church, but he should be willing to, said Luke Williams of San Antonio during a panel discussion.

But Robert Bingham of Atlanta said the church, not the pastor, should call the minister of education. Bingham, executive assistant for program services at the Home Mission Board, believes the trend is moving away from a pastor-called to a church-called staff.

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Sunday School Board Changes
"Doctrinal Reader" Assignment 6/7/72

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Southern Baptists lost a "doctrinal reader" but gained a "manuscript analyst" in an amiable exchange during the report of the Sunday School Board to the Southern Baptist Convention here.

James L. Sullivan, executive secretary of the agency, told messengers that a doctrinal reader appointed almost two years ago would be renamed manuscript analyst.

The Sunday School Board named the doctrinal reader, Leo H. Eddleman, in October 1970 in the aftermath of a bitter controversy over what some SBC conservatives felt was liberalism in Volume I of the Broadman Bible Commentary. Volume I was the first of a 12-volume series to be published by Broadman Press, publishing arm of the Sunday School Board.

At the annual SBC meeting last year, Walter N. Stockburger of Norfolk, Va., moved for elimination of the doctrinal reader position. The motion was referred to the SBC Executive Committee and then to the Sunday School Board's trustees, who reaffirmed the appropriateness of the post.

Stockburger arose again Wednesday to rephrase his request, asking that Eddleman's title be changed because it "leaves the impression of censorship" and tends to "fit into the stifling atmosphere of the past two years and push us all into a conformity pattern.

"I resent this," Stockburger continued. "I believe in and support the Baptist Statement of Message and Faith but no two people here could agree on its interpretation."

Sullivan agreed that the doctrinal reader terminology was "perhaps an error" and noted that the Sunday School Board had had similar positions at vari ous points in its history, dating back to 1891.

"Eddleman has no authority to delete one word. He tries to catch errors in advance," Sullivan said.

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Before Stockburger's 1971 motion was referred to the Executive Committee under Bylaw 16, Sullivan said he had planned to change the name to more accurately reflect the position.

After that ruling, he said, the matter was out of his hands until it had gone through letter of the law of convention procedure.

"Now I am free to act," Sullivan said. "From now on the title will be manuscript analyst."

The convention subsequently received the Sunday School Board's 31-page report as printed in the Book of Reports. It required no vote because it had no recommendations.

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Pastors Devour "Banquet"
Elect Virginian as President

By Theo Sommerkamp

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--About 5,000 delegates to the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference here were fed a wide variety of specialties cooked up by evangelists and other ministers during a "Banquet of Preaching."

Speakers concentrated on the centrality of the Bible, the approach of the Second Coming, the reliance on the Holy Spirit, and the need to stay on the main road that has made Southern Baptists the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

Latter day soul food consisted of a vivid description of the Jesus Movement by an establishment pastor and a rousing revival message by the youth evangelist whose ministry last year helped lead 23,000 teen-agers to confession of faith in Christ.

A dash of spice was added by an evangelist who unexpectedly accused some professors, evidently in Baptist educational institutions, of using "academic freedom" to hide beliefs that run counter to Baptist doctrine. He predicted their ouster.

The "cooks" who served their special dishes ranged in age from the mid-20's to the mid-80's. If applause was the measuring stick, the audience found the meal to their liking.

Outgoing conference president, John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church, Houston, said he invited preachers and evangelists to speak and "turned them loose" with no assigned theme.

Conference participants showed approval of the fare by electing two speakers, Vander Warner and Frank D. Minton, as officers.

Warner, pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, succeeded Bisagno as president, and Minton, pastor of Tower Grove Baptist Church, St. Louis, was named vice president.

James L. Pleitz, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla., was elected secretary-treasurer.

Evangelist Jarry Autrey of Houston, during a discourse on the Bible as the seat of authority, unexpectedly launched into a brief assault on the professors.

Autrey is the son of C. E. Autrey, former Southern Baptist Convention director of evangelism and a former professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theolo ical Seminary, Ft. Worth.

Without naming people or institutions, Autrey said he didn't believe in academic freedom and accused some professors of using it to cover non-Baptist doctrines they espoused.

"Sometime we're going to find the way to remove people from our institutions who don't believe the Bible," he declared.

Charles D. Graves, pastor of Nichols Hills Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, said Baptist belief in the inspiration of the Bible is one reason Southern Baptists continue to prosper when many other denominations have declined.

James E. Coggin, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, said the Holy Spirit must

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empower those who preach. Minton said some of the old, mainline denominations failed when they departed from an evangelistic approach. He said Southern Baptists must not stray from the proven way of evangelistic preaching and personal, door-to-door witnessing.

Jess C. Moody, pastor of First Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, Fla., told fellow pastors they have to take the Jesus Movement seriously. Churches must guide it and help finance it "to keep it on a New Testament course," he said.

The youngest speaker, 25-year-old Richard Hogue of Houston, said America's youth generation has tried out everything at least once, including sex, Satan cults, and drugs.

"In this crazy generation, isn't it a miracle they're now trying Jesus?"

Final address of the one-day conference was brought by R. G. Lee of Memphis, Tenn., 86-year-old former SBC president.

Lee mapped the "highway to havoc" as lined with wickedness, criminality, abuse of sex, booze, materialism, godlessness, infidelity, modernism and neglect of the Bible.

He said, on the other hand, the highway to heaven has no roadside saloons, gambling casinos, X-rated movie theaters, burlesque shows, dance halls, red light districts and pornography book stores.

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Revival Coming Through Laity,
Speakers Tell Laymen's Meeting 6/7/72

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--The director of evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board led a parade of speakers at the Southern Baptist Laymen's Conference in predicting that spiritual renewal is coming in the churches through a more involved laity.

Kenneth Chafin of Atlanta said the numbers of lay people involved in personal soul winning is increasing rapidly through the stimulation of lay evangelism schools. The evangelism director said he already has 1,000 people trained to teach lay evangelism schools.

"I'm dreaming of the day when more than one million laymen will go out from churches each week to share what Jesus Christ means to them," he said.

Chafin took Southern Baptists to task for failing to minister adequately nearby.

"We're not beginning to make the dent in our communities that we should," he said.

Chafin listed four responsibilities of the churches in providing the environment for spiritual renewal in the church. They were regular specific opportunities for training in witnessing, dealing realistically with people's fear of opening themselves personally to others, learning to trust the people with the gospel, and defining evangelism in terms of sharing Jesus Christ.

Carl Bates, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, also majored on lay renewal, noting that there are no halfway Christians.

"You're either carnal or you're not. As long as there's anything between you and Him, He'll never take control," Bates said.

Bates, who is pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., told the men, "Give me 10 converted men and the Greek New Testament, and I'll build a church this side of hell...where people are pouring in by multiplied millions every day."

Dean McCord of Tulsa, Okla., who has served as an agricultural missionary in a number of foreign countries, said he had "prayed for power to win people to Christ, but I found the power belongs to Jesus."

C. D. Salley, a McGehee, Ark. farmer and banker, said, "You've got to become a zero to let Jesus come in and fill you. When man comes to the end of himself, that's where God starts."

C. E. Price, a layman who is president of the Pennsylvania-South Jersey Convention, emphasized that "the laity is the main strength for Christian work." "My duty as a layman is a calling as strong to me as any pastor called to his ministry." -30-

WMU Illuminates Missions;
Re-elects Mathis President

By Catherine Allen

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Southern Baptist women flashed a new light on world-wide Christian missions at the annual meeting of the Woman's Missionary Union here prior to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Speakers included Astronaut James Irwin, Quaker philosopher Elton Trueblood, former SBC President W. A. Criswell and a battery of missionaries.

The women elected Mrs. R. L. Mathis, Waco, Tex., to a fourth term as president. Mrs. Roy Snider, Camden, Ark., was re-elected secretary.

For the first time in its 84-year history, WMU not only considered missions at home and around the world, but also learned of the effect of moon exploration on missions.

Irwin, a Baptist layman from Houston related his encounter with God while on the moon as Apollo 15 lunar module pilot and his experiences since which have made him an apostle of missions.

Irwin will quit the space program August 1 to enter full time religious work.

"I now see my mission as one of sharing not only the scientific discoveries caused by space travel but the need for man to live on the spaceship called earth in peace. Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. He shows us the way to live. He is the only hope for peace in this weary land."

In his address on the opening night of the two-day meeting, Irwin gave a personal testimony of his moon flight.

"The thing that thrilled me most was that I could feel God's presence on the moon. When we faced unexpected problems, I prayed to him and the answer came.

"I came back stronger in my faith," he said in a second address. "I have been able to tell people that I felt the power of their prayers on the moon. I believe that prayer has a unifying effect upon all mankind. I have found that man's faith strengthens immeasurably as he witnesses to others."

Since his return, Irwin has distributed Bibles in communist countries, spoken in churches, led his parents to be baptized and participated in a number of special religious meetings.

Irwin presented the WMU a Christian flag which went to the moon on an Apollo flight in gratitude for the WMU's "great work of projecting the holy light throughout the world."

Theme for the WMU sessions was "Freedom's Holy Light." The first session drew a throng of 7,000.

Trueblood, of Richmond, Ind., singled out missions as the greatest Christian idea of the twentieth century.

He called the Southern Baptist denomination the most famous missionary force on this continent and urged the Baptists to go a step further.

"It is not enough to support missions," he said. "You have to be missionaries yourselves. The church should be a society of missionaries. If the Southern Baptist Convention, with its great heritage of missions, would take the next step--that of believing that all are called and all are involved in missions--we would bring in a new Christian era."

Missionary James F. McKinley Jr., who recently returned to the United States from Bangladesh, unraveled the ordeal of his family during the Bengali war for independence.

The McKinleys and their four children were among the Americans to weather the hostilities in Bangladesh. They were under fire for several months.

McKinley told of his children asking, "Daddy, are you afraid?" His reply was, "Yes, but I believe that God will take care of us."

Another missionary under fire who reported at the WMU meeting was a missionary doctor, Ray McGlamery of Gaza.

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Though a fellow missionary, Mavis Pate, was fatally shot recently as she passed through a terrorist area, McGlamery said Southern Baptists have no thoughts of pulling their medical ministries out of the Middle East.

Home missionaries fielded three panels of workers in northeast United States who are conducting a variety of innovative ministries.

James Wright, who works with street gangs in Waterbury, Conn., told the women, "the ghetto is the most open place to the gospel you can find today."

Robert Fling, Westchester, N.Y., drew a picture of multi-racial, multi-lingual congregations. His 68-member church conducts ministries to the deaf and teaches English to more than 40 Japanese.

Paul Glenn of Johnstown, Pa., told of rock bands and telephone-teletype communications networks for interpretation.

Samuel Simpson of the Bronx in New York described church-backed security patrols, sanitation campaigns, and efforts for urban renewal.

Eight other northeast missionaries also revealed approaches for reaching ethnic groups and for working with people of other faiths.

Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, urged Baptists to continue to shed "holy light" around the world by sending missionaries and by combating communism.

"Communism and Christianity are irrevocably, eternally incompatible and irreconcilable. The world is not big enough for both," Criswell declared in his keynote address.

Criswell said true freedom is an internal state which results from proper relationship with Jesus Christ and which cannot be amended by the state.

Mission action, the Southern Baptist program of Christian ministries to persons of special need and circumstances, drew much attention from speakers.

Warren Rawles of Atlanta, social ministries specialist from the Baptist Home Mission Board, begged for more involvement in mission action as a penetrative method of turning the rising tide of drug abuse.

Beverly Hammack, another special ministries specialist, told of mission action success in coping with hard-core poverty. Several home missionaries spoke of working in conjunction with mission action groups.

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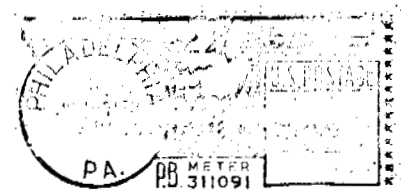

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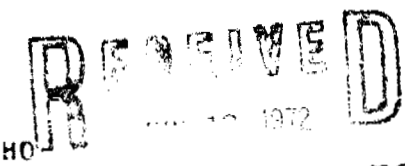

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