

127 Ninth Avenue, North

Nashville, Tennessee

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF  
DR. PORTER ROUTH, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION  
September 14, 1951

"Today, September <sup>13</sup>~~14~~, is an anniversary date in my life. It was on September <sup>13</sup>~~14~~, 1945, I arrived in Nashville to start work with the Department of Survey and Statistics of the Baptist Sunday School Board. It was on September <sup>13</sup>~~14~~, 1931, on the campus of Oklahoma Baptist University, I first met a pretty freshman girl who is now Mrs. Routh.

"Yesterday shall long be remembered as an eventful day by me. I was sincerely humbled by your expressions of confidence. But the warmth of your handclasp and the spirit of your action was more meaningful to me than the action you took in electing me as executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee.

"When I measure myself as a layman against the problems and the opportunities, against Austin Crouch and Duke K. McCall, I find cause for concern -- until I remember I am more than myself. I cannot forget a devout and wise mother and father. I remember helpful Sunday school teachers, like Ramsey Pollard, who overlooked the pranks of a mischievous Junior boy back in Cliff Temple Church in Dallas. I think of the pastors of churches where I have lived through the years: Wallace Bassett, T.V. Neal, Marshall Craig, J.W. Gillon, Rupert Naney, Chesterfield Turner, Finley Gibson, W.R. White, J. Howard Williams, and W.F. Powell. Their preaching and friendship have meant much to me. I owe a debt of gratitude to many Oklahoma friends who encouraged me as a young editor. I think especially now of John Wesley Raley, Andrew Potter, and J.W. Storer. My life has been enriched by my association with Dr. Holcomb and other colleagues at the Sunday School Board.

"These reflections give me confidence, but I want to say simply that I find my greatest help in turning to the Letter of James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him."

"Let me say frankly that I have no illusions about being elected to a 'high' office. I was elected to the only 'high' office Baptists have some thirty years ago. I do consider this an opportunity for service.

"Decisions are always hard to make. Ties are hard to cut. I did not know whether I could make a decision today or not, but the unanimous recommendation of the committee, and the unanimous election by the Executive Committee has made it much easier to see what I believe is the revealed will of God for my life. This conviction has been strengthened by the expressions of confidence by state secretaries, editors, secretaries of agencies, seminary presidents, representatives of the W.M.U., layman, and a host of others.

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"With the assurance of your continued prayers and co-operation, and looking forward to working with Merrill Moore and Albert McClellan, I want to assure you of my acceptance today. With the gracious agreement of Dr. Holcomb, and at the request of Dr. Crouch that he be relieved as soon as possible, I will date my acceptance as of September 24, with the understanding that I will continue to assist for two or three weeks in the Department of Survey and Statistics while the transition is being made there."

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. --(BP)-- Southern Baptists will be asked to adopt a five-year \$14,500,000 capital needs program at their convention in Miami, Florida, next May. The program was approved by the Executive Committee of the Convention at its semi-annual meeting here, following the recommendation of a special Capital Needs Resurvey Committee.

Dr. Porter Routh, secretary of survey, statistics and information for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, was elected executive secretary of the Executive Committee to succeed Dr. Duke K. McCall who has accepted the presidency of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

A Baptist layman, active in denominational work since 1934, Dr. Routh was born in Texas and grew up in Texas and Oklahoma where his father, Dr. E.C. Routh, was an active Baptist leader. Dr. Routh is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, having been awarded the honorary Doctor of Laws degree by that school this spring. Before beginning his work for the Sunday School Board, he was editor of the denominational paper of Oklahoma. Also a graduate of Southern Seminary in Louisville, he is listed in the 1950-51 volume of Who's Who In America.

If adopted by the convention, the capital needs program, which will be a part of the Southern Convention's regular budget, will provide improvements and additions to permanent properties of agencies supported by the convention.

Other actions of the Committee included the adoption of a resolution calling for stricter adherence to the Bible as "our only rule of faith and practice." The resolution also stressed a need for increased emphasis on doctrinal instruction in the churches.

A plan for a nation-wide Simultaneous Stewardship Week, October 18-25, 1953, and a new charter for the Historical Society, subject to adoption by the Convention, were also approved.

*Local leads to hometown papers of Exec. Comm. members - see dead copy file -*