



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 18, 1974

Home Missionaries, New
Staffer Named by Board

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's trustees elected a new staff member and appointed 15 career missionaries and 12 missionary associates at the board's February meeting here.

Forrest H. (Woody) Watkins was named director of associational and metropolitan evangelism ministries. His responsibilities will include channeling all the programs and materials of the board's division of evangelism to the churches and producing strategies and materials for evangelism in metropolitan areas.

The 51-year-old Albany, Ga., native has served at the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, since 1967, as consultant for new church member orientation in the church training department. He has been pastor of churches in Florida and is a graduate of Mississippi College, Clinton, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Tom and Nancy Biles were appointed by the board's division of associational services. He will serve as superintendent of missions of the Southern New England Association. He is a native of Louisville and she is a native of Edinburg, Tex.

Larry and Judith Carter, both Illinois natives, were named career missionaries for the department of national Baptists. He will serve as a regional missionary in Illinois.

Jim and Connite Markham were among 10 Christian social ministries appointees. A native of Kentucky, he works in weekday ministries in Jellico, Tenn. His wife is a native of North Carolina.

Delores Palmer, an Atlanta native, will work in Charleston, W. Va., in weekday ministries.

William and Judy Smith were promoted to missionary status. A native of Henderson, Ky., Smith was a missionary associate in San Francisco. He was appointed as area director of Christian social ministries in Washington, D. C. She is a native of Sugarland, Tex.

A native of Floydada, Tex., and former US-2er, Don Johnston was appointed as a student intern at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Harry and Robin Hearn, natives of St. Augustine, Fla., were appointed as missionary associates. Hearn will act as Christian social ministries consultant in Washington.

Also appointed as a missionary associate student intern was Lamar Crocker, an Alabama native and student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Carlos and Nilda Sue Cobos were also promoted to missionary status. A native of El Paso, Tex., he is a Spanish language missionary in Milwaukee, Wisc. She is a native of Miami, Fla.

Also serving as language missionary associates are Lionel and Kathy Melendez. A native of Roswell, N.M., Melendez is a fulltime student at the University of New Mexico and Spanish pastor at Cebolla Parkview Mission in northern New Mexico. She is a native of Lindsay, Okla.

Three couples, all natives of Korea, were appointed to language missions as missionary associates in California. Phi and Hyung Soon Won Seo will serve in San Jose as Korean language missionaries.

Paul and Velina Wooke Park will serve in San Diego, where he is pastor of the Korean church.

John and Sun Ok Park will serve in Long Beach, where he is pastor of the Long Beach Korean Baptist Church.

Two couples, William and Erma Faye Fritts and Delane and Nancy Ryals, were appointed to serve in church extension.

The Fritts will serve in the quad cities area of Illinois, where he is director of church extension. He is a native of Knoxville, Tenn., and she is a native of Edwards County, Illinois.

The Ryals were appointed missionary associates. A native of Oklahoma, he is director of church extension in New York. She is a native of Baltimore, Md.

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Open Communication Urged For Southern Baptist Growth

2/18/74

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Five Baptist leaders here urged open communication among Southern Baptists, and one urged "face-to-face" dialogue to curb what he called "disturbing trends" that could be divisive in Baptist life.

Joe T. Odle, editor of the Baptist Record, state Baptist paper in the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, sounded his view of "disturbing trends" among Southern Baptists in an address before the Southern Baptist Press Association meeting here.

The largest problem and/or issue among Southern Baptists, in Odle's view, is differences over "inspiration and authority" of the scriptures, which he said are disturbing to "conservatives" across the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Another problem, he noted, involves Southern Baptist unity, which "is coming more and more to be based on a program rather than on a doctrinal position."

In contrast to Odle's note of alarm, Leonard E. Hill, managing editor of the Baptist Program, published by the SBC Executive Committee, said that "not all trends in the SBC are downhill." Certain problems, which may or may not be trends, "magnify the importance of state Baptist papers," Hill said.

"We're about as united as we've ever been but are just finding out more about each other," Hill noted in a forum following Odle's address.

On a different note, Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Florida Baptist State Convention, urged open communication between executive secretaries and editors in the various Baptist state conventions.

Bennett stressed, "There should exist a 'statement of relationships' between Baptist state papers and all other organizations concerned with our Baptist life. . . Relationships exist between persons more than organizational structures."

The Florida Baptist executive said he is willing to join in an effort to help editors resist any effort to make the papers little more than promotional agencies for denominational leaders, "but not to the extent that a state program leader finds it difficult or impossible to get promotional items in the state paper."

Speaking to other issues among Southern Baptists were Jesse C. Fletcher, director of the mission support division of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, and Jack Harwell, editor of the Georgia convention's state Baptist paper, the Christian Index.

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Fletcher discussed world missions of the present and future and said he saw one doctrinal priority for Southern Baptists--that of the need for "salvation for men. Man is lost without Jesus Christ. Without that, we cannot have a real missionary impetus."

He added, the greatest single factor in Southern Baptists coming together and staying together is a "sense of purpose" based on the belief in salvation for men through Jesus Christ.

Harwell reemphasized the need for cooperation among Southern Baptists, urging greater dissemination of information concerning the Cooperative Program (unified budget) of Southern Baptists.

"Each of us bears some measure of responsibility for the sliding percentage of Cooperative Program gifts as per designations," he told the editors. "If that percentage is to change, we must get on the stick."

"We can promote and be prophetic at the same time, if we are close enough to our people, for them to know us and believe in us," he said.

Odle said he believes the "time has come when those making some charges of 'liberalism' in theology and those being charged, should get together in dialogue."

"Those who are raising issues charge that there is liberalism in our seminaries, and in some other institutions and agencies." The way to find the truth, Odle said, is in dialogue--"face-to-face confrontation."

He cited a debate on the "inspiration and authority" of the Bible among some Southern Baptists in the past few years as proof the problem exists. He acknowledged that the last two Southern Baptist Convention annual sessions have been quieter, but said that the issue isn't dead.

A second proof of the problem's existence, he said, was the appearance of new independent seminaries, and "the growth of some older ones."

These institutions are not officially Southern Baptist Convention agencies but were established by Southern Baptist individuals or churches with Southern Baptist faculty, students and support, Odle said.

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Texas Church Elects Three Women Deacons

2/18/74

AUSTIN, Tex. (BP)--University Baptist Church here has become the first known church in the Baptist General Convention of Texas, largest state convention among Southern Baptists, to ordain women deacons.

John Halton, assistant to the pastor at University Baptist Church, said Mrs. Donna Van Hoove, Mrs. Irene Cochran and Dr. Helen Williamson were elected, along with six men, at a Wednesday evening meeting to serve as deacons.

All three, he said, are professional women in their late 40's. Mrs. Van Hoove is the daughter of the late J. M. Dawson, Baptist statesman and first executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

"We think it's time the church recognized segregation of society along sexual lines is a religious issue just as segregation along racial lines is a religious issue," said the pastor, Gerald Mann.

"While there are biblical statements indicating inferiority of women to men," he continued, "I could understand these passages as vestiges of first century culture."

No exact statistics exist on the number of Southern Baptist churches with women serving as deacons, but scattered churches in at least nine Southern Baptist state conventions and the District of Columbia are known to have ordained women as deacons.

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Scholar Warns Against
Adulterating of Scripture

FORT WORTH (BP)--A Princeton Theological Seminary scholar warned students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here not to mix human tradition with the "inspired oracles of God."

Bruce Manning Metzger, this year's Day-Higginbotham lecturer at Southwestern, said, "We in our preaching must never be guilty of adulterating the word of God."

He gave this admonition after tracing the way that traditions have grown up through the centuries to supplement the Scriptures.

"The 'itch' to elaborate on the New Testament has existed down through the ages," he said. One of the most common ways has been to "name" the people who are left unidentified by the text.

Tradition, he illustrated, has given names to the Wise Men and even decided there were three of them because of the three different gifts brought to Jesus.

It also has supplied names for the shepherds to whom the good tidings of Jesus' birth were proclaimed, for the 70 disciples sent out by Jesus, for the soldier who pierced his side with a spear and for the wife of Pilate, among others.

These give evidence of the "fertility of pious imagination" that has refused to respect the silence of the Scriptures, he said.

In his opening lecture, Metzger traced the emergence and recognition of the New Testament canon (the official list of authoritative books of the New Testament).

Some critics, he noted, are disturbed by the apparently "random, higgledy-piggledy fashion" in which the books of the New Testament were preserved and recognized as divinely inspired.

But Metzger, who has written 10 books on the New Testament and served on numerous editorial boards of translation groups, says the whole process of preservation and recognition can be "rightly diagnosed as superintended by the Divine Guidance."

About 10 years ago, he said, there was some discussion of seeking a briefer, more unified version of the New Testament.

But because of the way in which the text emerged and the way that God has spoken through it, there is no significant opinion today that seeks a revision, he added.

Many other writings existed among the early churches, he noted, but the remarkable thing was the degree of unanimity that was attained in the first two centuries A.D.

"It was a clear case of survival of the fittest," he said.

"The religious minds of the early church were able to recognize the authenticity of the New Testament books, he explained, and any attempt now to delete one or more books from the New Testament would cut off important historical roots and would result in the impoverishment of the church universal.

Wrapup

Editor Urges Freedom;
Bayless Named President

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The editor of a Southern Baptist state newspaper warned the Southern Baptist Press Association at the closing session of its three-day annual meeting here of what he sees as dangers to editorial freedom in the country and the denomination.

R. Gene Puckett, editor of the Maryland Baptist, cited "the national mood of frustration, indifference, cynicism, suspicion and outright hostility."

In other action, the association, made up of Southern Baptist editors and Baptist Press personnel, elected officers and heard series of speakers.

O. L. Bayless, editor of the Rocky Mountain Baptist, Denver, Colo., succeeded L. H. Moore, editor of the Ohio Baptist Messenger, as president. C. Eugene Whitlow, editor of the Baptist New Mexican, was named president-elect and Puckett succeeded Alvin C. Shackelford, editor of the Indiana Baptist, as secretary-treasurer.

"We are in a crisis of confidence up to our ears," Puckett said. "And there must be someone to blame. What better choice is there than the press and the electronic media and its high visibility. Since we don't like the message," most people blame the messenger, Puckett said.

"Whatever the true facts are, the hostility and search for a scapegoat in our nation constitute a serious threat to editorial freedom," he continued. "The national mood, which will filter down to the Christian community much quicker than we wish," he said, "is compounded in Southern Baptist life by a rapid move toward institutionalism." He called this trend the "General Motors Syndrome."

Cautioning against "bigness" in the denomination, "which demands tight controls if there is a high level of efficiency," Puckett said, "Note, I did not say 'effectiveness.'"

Applying the "danger" of tight controls to state Baptist papers, Puckett said that no paper is truly free when it does not control its own operation within the limits set by the parent convention.

Puckett added that he believes the relationship of the editor should be such that he would be neither subordinate to nor equal to executive secretaries in individual state conventions.

In other presentations five Baptist leaders urged open communication among Southern Baptists, and one urged "face-to-face" dialogue to curb what he called "disturbing trends" that could be divisive in Baptist life.

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"Those who are raising the issues charge that there is liberalism in our seminaries, and some other institutions and agencies. The way to find the truth, Odle said, is in dialogue-- "face-to-face confrontation."

A Baptist legislator, State Rep. E. L. (Bubba) Henry, speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives, challenged the Baptist communicators to encourage Christians to become involved in government and politics.

He urged that the church-state separation concept, which he said he believes is a good concept, "not be used as a shield to hide behind when church people are too lazy or too scared to participate."

Henry admitted that politicians have often failed the people who elected them and must "clean up our own house." But he also told the Baptist editors, "You, as opinion makers, have failed to fulfill your responsibilities."

"We can't survive as a democracy unless Christian people are genuinely concerned and will get involved at every level of government," Henry said. "May we have the grace of Christ to spread our love abroad."

Jesse C. Fletcher, director of the mission support division of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, discussed world missions of the present and the future and said he saw one doctrinal priority for Southern Baptists--that of the need for "salvation for men. Man is lost without Jesus Christ. Without that, we cannot have a real missionary impetus."

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(BP) Photo mailed to state Baptist editors.

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Southern Baptists Now
Number 12.3 Million

2/18/74

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists in 1973 numbered 12.3 million members, contributed 1.2 billion dollars in total receipts and reported the fourth highest number of baptisms in Southern Baptist Convention history.

Compiled from reports of all 34,665 churches in the SBC, the 1973 denominational statistics indicate increases in church membership, Sunday School enrolment, church music enrolment, mission expenditures, Brotherhood enrolment and total financial receipts.

Churches reported a decrease from 1972 levels in the number of baptisms, Training Union enrolment and Woman's Missionary Union enrolment.

For several years church membership has been increasing at approximately two per cent each year, and 1973 was no different.

Church membership for the nation's largest evangelical body increased nearly a quarter of a million persons (230,062) over the 1972 membership.

The 1973 total membership was 12,297,346, an increase of 1.9 per cent.

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Although the number of baptisms decreased in 1973 to a total of 413,990, that figure is the fourth highest ever recorded. The number of 1973 baptisms ranks behind the record number of baptisms in 1972 (445,725), the 1959 figure of 429,063 and the 416,867 figure of 1955.

In 1972 the denomination's total receipts surpassed the one billion dollar figure for the first time in SBC history. The new statistics indicate a 12.5 per cent increase over the 1972 figure, resulting in a total of \$1,205,330,781 for 1973. This is an increase of nearly \$134 million dollars.

Mission gifts continued to increase in 1973, gaining almost \$19 million dollars (10.7 per cent) for a total of \$193,549,922.

Sunday School enrolment increased 4,899 members in 1973 for a total of 7,182,550. The previous year Sunday School enrolment experienced its first gain since 1964.

Church music enrolment gained 79,624 members in 1973, setting the total church music membership at 1,252,628. This figure includes handbell ringers and vocal and instrumental ensemble enrolment which account for approximately 90 per cent of the net change. Handbell ringers and ensembles were not included in the 1972 enrolment.

The Brotherhood (men's and boys' missions education organization) recorded an enrolment of 461,080 members in 1973, an increase of 6,808.

Training Union enrolment totaled 1,949,640, dropping by 94,805 members from the 1972 figure.

Enrolment reported for Woman's Missionary Union (women and girls' missions education organization) decreased 23,209 to a total of 1,102,432.

These figures were compiled by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's research services department by computing the reports of 34,665 SBC churches (an increase of 131 churches) and comparing them with the 1972 denominational figures.

The report was presented here to the semi-annual meeting of the SBC Executive Committee.

Summary of 1973 Southern Baptist Convention Statistics

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>Numerical Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Churches	34,665	34,534	+131	+0.4
Baptisms	413,990	445,725	-31,735	-7.1
Church Membership	12,297,346	12,067,284	+230,062	+1.9
Ongoing Sunday School Enrolment	7,182,550	7,177,651	+4,899	+0.1
Ongoing Brotherhood Enrolment	461,080	454,272	+6,808	+1.5
Ongoing WMU Enrolment	1,102,432	1,125,641	-23,209	-2.1
Ongoing Church Music Enrolment	1,252,628	1,173,004	+79,624	+6.8
Ongoing Training Union Enrolment	1,949,640	2,044,445	-94,805	-4.6
Total Receipts	\$1,205,330,781	\$1,071,512,302	+\$133,818,479	+12.5
Total Mission Gifts	\$193,549,922	\$174,772,885	+\$18,777,037	+10.7

Executive Committee Adds
\$3 Million Challenge Figure

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee in its opening session here approved a proposal to add \$3 million dollars in challenge funds to the previously proposed \$37 million 1974-75 SBC Cooperative Program budget.

Any part of the \$3 million received after the \$37 million figure is reached will be divided proportionately to SBC agencies for their operating budgets.

The regular budget divides \$36 million among SBC agencies and sets aside \$1 million for capital needs of the agencies.

In the opening session, H. Franklin Paschall, former SBC president and member of the Executive Committee, urged Southern Baptists, who are in a period of financial and numerical growth, not to major on externals at the expense of spiritual dimensions of the gospel.

Quoting the Apostle Paul, Paschall, pastor of First Baptist Church, Nashville, said, "The letter of the law kills but the spirit gives life. Any external can kill if it has our primary attention. With our imposing externals, we must not forget to give attention to the primacy of God."

Paschall also urged that Baptists not forget to give "priority to people above such things as programs " and to always uphold "the centrality of the local church."

He said, "A lot of good things are happening outside the church, but if the job is not done in the local church, everything we're doing denominationally will come to naught."

A breakdown of the 1974-75 SBC Cooperative Program budget allots \$18 million to the Foreign Mission Board (plus \$1.5 million from the proposed challenge budget); \$6,750,000 for the Home Mission Board (plus \$562,500 challenge); \$7,560,000 for the six SBC seminaries (plus \$630,000 challenge);

Also, \$200,000 for the SBC Annuity Board (plus \$16,500 challenge); \$95,000 for the Southern Baptist Foundation (plus \$7,800 challenge); \$100,000 for the American Baptist Theological Seminary Commission (plus \$8,400 challenge); \$360,000 for the Brotherhood Commission (plus \$30,000 challenge); \$245,000 for the Christian Life Commission (plus \$20,400 challenge);

Also, \$165,000 for the Education Commission (plus \$13,800 challenge); \$140,000 for the Historical Commission (plus \$11,700 challenge); \$1,700,000 for the Radio and Television Commission (plus \$141,600 challenge);

Also, \$176,000 for the Stewardship Commission (plus \$14,700 challenge); \$150,000 for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs (plus \$12,600 challenge); and \$359,000 to the SBC Operating Budget (plus \$30,000 challenge).

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Crouch Named President
Of Baptist Executives

2/18/74

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Perry Crouch, general secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, was named president of the State Executive Secretaries Association of the Southern Baptist Convention at the group's annual meeting here.

R. Y. Bradford, executive director-treasurer of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico, was named vice-president, and Richard M. Stephenson, executive secretary of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, was elected secretary.

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(BP) Photo mailed to state Baptist paper editors