

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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74-104

**Integrity Crisis Ranks
As Top 1974 BP Story**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptist Press reporting of the nation's integrity crisis was voted the top news of 1974, according to a poll released here.

The poll was conducted by Baptist Press (BP), the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) news service, among 33 state Baptist newspapers and six BP bureaus around the nation and BP's national office in Nashville.

Based on a system of awarding 10 points for every first place vote down through one point for a 10th place vote, the integrity crisis finished with 219 points on 30 ballots returned out of a possible 42.

The number one story marked a change from the past four years, which have seen stories related to internal Southern Baptist controversy take the number one spot.

Southern Baptist disaster response to hurricanes, tornados and hunger around the world drew a second place, collecting 182 points. It barely edged out reporting of leadership turnovers of number one executives, in at least six SBC agencies and several state convention posts which collected 178 points.

Final report of the much discussed Committee of 15, which conducted a four-year study of Southern Baptist agencies, and Southern Baptist actions on women rounded out the top five, collecting 146 and 140 points respectively.

Voting dropped off noticeably after the sixth spot, which showed 125 points for the charismatic movement among Southern Baptists, and the seventh spot, which showed 121 points for continued Southern Baptist increases in the face of spiraling inflation.

Developments surrounding study of a possible name change for the Southern Baptist Convention ranked eighth, with 92 points, four points ahead of developments in black-white Baptist relations, which included election of a black SBC second vice president, first black SBC officer in the convention's 129-year history.

After close balloting, 10th place went to an action by the SBC annual meeting in Dallas to name a committee to study the convention's missionary outreach, at home and abroad, over the last 25 years of this century. That study committee represented a compromise which resulted from Committee of 15 recommendations.

Other developments related to mission outreach showed growth on SBC foreign mission fields outstripping growth at home and a prediction the SBC may lose 500 churches in crisis communities during the next decade.

Tabling of a motion at the SBC in Dallas to establish a separate Commission on Evangelism, in order to allow the SBC Home Mission Board to study the status of evangelism in the board's structure, finished 17 points out of the 10th spot.

That action ranked only six points ahead of the latest developments on 1973's number one story, which centered around alleged mismanagement of funds and convention affairs in the Missouri Baptist Convention.

The 1974 version of the Missouri story, which drew 46 points for a 12th place finish, reported a harmonious reorganization of the Missouri Convention to solve the difficulties.

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Only one editor wrote in a story on his ballot, giving a first place vote to a continued trend toward conservatism in the SBC.

Developments surrounding the integrity crisis included the Watergate tragedy, Nixon's resignation, Ford's inauguration and call for public morality and prayer, Ford's pardon of Nixon, Ford's address to Southern Baptists at a Brotherhood Commission-sponsored breakfast in Dallas, and reactions of religious leaders to all these events.

Wide ranging Southern Baptist response to disaster included not only response to tornados in the States, Bangladesh and Honduras, but also a growing recognition and response to the world hunger crisis.

The Committee of 15 study and final report--which drew strong, and often heated responses from SBC agencies--referred "areas of concern," which the committee explored during its four years, to the agencies.

Only two items from the Committee of 15, a subcommittee of the SBC Executive Committee, were brought to the 1974 convention--the mission study committee proposal and a proposal to appoint another committee to study the Executive Committee itself. That other committee was, additionally, given the responsibility of studying an SBC name change. Both items were approved.

In previous years, the SBC soundly defeated another recommendation, which the Executive Committee brought to the convention's annual session from the Committee of 15. That involved a proposal to abolish the SBC Stewardship Commission and put its work under the Executive Committee.

The developments surrounding women in the SBC involved a mixed bag. The SBC in Dallas, responding to Mrs. Richard Sappington of Houston for the second straight year, voted down a statement on freedom of women and a proposal to have a quota of women on SBC boards and agencies. The Oklahoma convention went on record in opposition to ordination of women.

But several Southern Baptist churches ordained women to the ministry and the District of Columbia Convention called for ordination of women on an equal basis with men.

In other actions, the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools called for equal rights for women in Southern Baptist schools, the Virginia Convention voted to give women equal pay for equal work, a woman succeeded to the Florida Convention presidency and a Southern Baptist woman educator called for a task force on women.

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Weber says SBC Has Elasticity
To Deal With Charismatics

12/30/74

By Toby Druin

WASHINGTON (BP)--Denying he ever said "charismatics should get right or get out," Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president Jaroy Weber said here that he believed the denomination has enough "elasticity" to include persons who differ in some of the teachings of the Word of God.

Speaking to the annual meeting of state directors of evangelism, sponsored by the SBC Home Mission Board's division of evangelism, Weber noted that many churches, associations and some state conventions have begun speaking about the tongues-speaking aspect of the Neo-Pentecostal Movement. Some have declared that any Baptists or church which promotes such practices cannot be a part of their fellowship.

"We need to face it and speak a biblical word that will assure our people of a sound doctrinal position", said the Lubbock, Tex., pastor.

He said the controversy has arisen because too many people are ignorant of the Bible and ministry of the Holy Spirit and spiritual "gifts".

It has also occurred, he said, because "we haven't done much preaching about it" and because of cold, apathetic, indifferent worship services that prompted people to look elsewhere for "aliveness."

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Weber said a reporter had asked him before the annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, which was to consider a motion on the issue, if he believed people who practiced glossolalia (speaking in tongues) should get out of the denomination.

"I told him that I believed that within our structure there is enough elasticity for people who differ in some of the teachings of the word of God," Weber said.

"But I said that any pastor, priest or rabbi who had any individual or group of individuals who created disharmony, division or killed the spirit of evangelism in his church would wish that person or group would get out. The article came out stating that I suggested that charismatics get right or get out. I was misquoted."

Good and bad things are happening in the Neo-Pentecostal Movement the SBC president said.

"For the first time many people are hearing of the Holy Spirit and his Word and being convicted and saved," he said. "And some lukewarm Christians have been filled and have a new joy--they have taken on new excitement. Wherever this is happening this is good.

"But many are misinterpreting their experiences. Some who are being saved say they are being baptized (with the Holy Spirit). Many do not understand what they are experiencing in their lives and seek to impose it on others and make every other individual have like experiences."

Weber said Southern Baptists have had so much denominational success that they have come to depend on their own promotional genius and intellect and have neglected preaching and teaching about the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

"We are ignorant of the Holy Spirit because we are ignorant about the Bible," he charged. "We need to instruct our people on the meaning of baptism and the filling of the Spirit. When a person is converted, he is baptized into the body of Christ, baptized of the Holy Spirit. We are put into him, it is a once and for all experience.

"As we develop we have filling experiences as often as we surrender. It is not a matter of praying God's Spirit down but a willingness to become aware of his evident presence and a willingness to let him control our lives."

The SBC president said that the Holy Spirit "'gifts us' with gifts he wanted us to have." And he said it is one of the main roles of the leadership of the church to help persons discover these gifts and channel them properly.

Charismatics expressions of Holy Spirit gifts have caused several Baptist associations and three state conventions to express grave concern over the charismatic movement and divisiveness in tongues speaking. Reports indicate that an association in Florida recently ejected two churches involved in charismatic activity.

The overall charismatic controversy was voted the number six story in the 1974 Top 10 ballot conducted by Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist Convention news service, among editors of state Baptist newspapers and Baptist Press bureau and national office personnel.

Weber said he knew there were differing opinions of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but he said, "We ought to be able to speak out on what seems to us to be biblical truth without condemnation from others."

Such speaking out on basic doctrinal issues would give depth to evangelism, he said.

"I don't think we should be afraid to confront it--go against anything erroneous"-- he said. "Sometimes it seems we are afraid if we speak we are going to be speaking against God.

"It is strange how many of our people think the minorities have the particular right to speak, but the majority is unChristian and maybe unscriptural if it speaks out.

"So the genius is to develop a basic love, so we speak with love and concern and compassion and indoctrinate our people so that when they confront this particular issue they are standing firm on the solid ground of the word of God." -30-

Baptists Urged to Lead In Combating Liberalism

WASHINGTON (BP)--Francis Schaeffer, an internationally known evangelical conservative, declared here that "standing against liberalism is part of sharing the holiness of God and the love of God" and said he was praying that Southern Baptists would "do something about it."

"Baptists throughout the world are watching you," he told the annual meeting of state directors of evangelism sponsored by the SBC Home Mission Board. "You are known as Bible believers."

"I would urge you to take the lead" in taking a stand "for the clarity of the Word of God without error everywhere it speaks," Schaeffer said in one of three addresses. "I believe you stand in a place of historic response."

The bearded Presbyterian now operates a retreat center, the L'Abri Fellowship of Cheslenes, Switzerland, which he founded. And he is widely known through his book, "Charted Theological Development through the Centuries," among others. He said discussions through the theological world in the next few years would center around the authenticity of the Scriptures.

Schaeffer said this was the basis of the recent ruptures within the Presbyterian church and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod fellowships.

He urged the evangelism directors to be concerned about what is being taught in seminaries. "If you are interested in evangelism you must be interested in what the seminaries teach the pastors," he said.

Asked if he saw any traces of Neo-Orthodoxy, of which he said liberalism was a part, in Southern Baptist seminaries, Schaeffer replied: "I think so, but I don't know. I'm not that familiar with those in the States." He said later in an interview that he believed Southern Baptists could overcome the liberalism issue if they didn't refuse to raise the issues.

When asked to define liberalism--of which he considers Neo-Orthodoxy a part--Schaeffer said, "The real issue is if one believes the Bible gives us factual truth from God; or whether the Bible grew up as a cultural expression of the writer's day."

"Does the Bible give truth downward from God--or is it the feeling of man upward during his own time and culture."

Schaeffer said he sees evangelicalism moving particularly toward a focused debate on the "historical nature of the first half of the book of Genesis."

"This time the debate will be among those claiming the Evangelical name. Before it was primarily between evangelicals and those not of the Evangelical stance."

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A "Cool Breeze" Blows Among Baptists in Togo

Baptist Press

SOKODE, TOGO (BP)--Several years ago when the population of Sokode, Togo, was almost totally Muslim, Southern Baptist missionary Morris G. Fruit asked the mayor if he could begin Baptist work. The mayor said, "Why not?" and today, the percentage of Christian believers has risen sharply.

Fruit reported that during a six-month period in 1974, more than 165 people were baptized while another 150 to 160 made professions of faith.

"One thing that is really exciting is that we do not always have to be stirring up some activity, holding a meeting, showing a movie or something similar to save the people," Fruit explained. "We just turned our lives over to the Holy Spirit and let the 'cool breeze' blow."

Fruit said the "cool breeze" was "a great spiritual refreshment from God."

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Pruit believes the revival in Sokode began in March when two young men, both Muslims, began visiting him.

"They had participated in the opening service of our mission in January 1972, and had given thought to becoming Christians from time to time since then," he said. "Evidently, God dealt strongly with them. After two weeks of coming to see me and hearing about Jesus, they took a firm stand and were baptized."

Mr. and Mrs. Pruit are not the only ones involved in their missionary effort. The three Pruit boys do their share also. Pruit told of an occasion when a 13-year-old boy was led to Jesus Christ by the Pruit's eldest son, James. Then, a short time later, the boy's sister was led to Christ also.

Although Pruit admits that the number of baptisms has dropped off slightly, he says the job is not nearly completed.

"The big job now is the training and development of these that the Lord has already saved."

The tools for training include various Baptist correspondence courses, education by extension programs and personal witnessing.

In conclusion, Pruit said, "the work here is still in an infant stage. It is weak. It is only the beginning, but among those who have recently been saved there are those who are already bearing fruit and showing great promise as future leaders."

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CORRECTION:

In graph 5 of Baptist Press story mailed Dec. 26, 1974, entitled 'Young People Urge Action On Hunger; Help Lonely Man', the date should be Dec. 31, 1975 instead of Dec. 21, 1975.

Thanks
Baptist Press