



**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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77-219

Professor's Remarks  
Bring Hail of Protest

**RICHMOND (BP)**--A furor erupted here when Robert S. Alley, professor and chairman of the department of religion at the University of Richmond, was reported to have told an atheist group that Jesus "never claimed He was God."

A reporter for the Richmond News Leader, Mary Anne Pikrone, quoted Alley as saying after he addressed a group of self-proclaimed atheists in Richmond's First Unitarian Church that, "I see Jesus as really a Jew. I don't imagine for a minute that he would have had the audacity to claim the diety for himself. I think the (Bible) passages where He talks about the Son of God are later additions--what the church said about Him."

Those statements have brought a howl of protests from the Richmond area pastors, about 60 of which met with university president E. Bruce Heilman three days after Alley made his statements.

Heilman "apologized" to the pastors for the "bad judgment" and "mistake" in some of the remarks attributed to Alley. He said he shared their concern with the article in the newspaper "...which appears to disavow all that we believe and hold dear as Christians and tends to misrepresent anything that the University of Richmond has stood for."

Alley had introduced his 2½ hour lecture as one by "a Christian, a man of faith."

Heilman told the pastors' group he had many calls of question or protest, including one from E. Claiborne Robins, the Richmond industrialist who has given the university more than \$50 million.

Heilman said he also received a call from Robert Marsh, former rector of the university and chairman of the Richmond First Baptist Church endowment fund. "Mr. Marsh wonders if the endowment fund ought to support a university that has someone speaking for it in those terms," Heilman said.

According to the Richmond News Leader story, Alley said that he spoke as an individual and not for the university or for his colleagues in the religion department.

Alley said in a letter he wrote to the Richmond News Leader after his story appeared that "I spoke as an individual and I appreciate the resolution of the Baptist ministers of Richmond which affirms the principle of free speech, which is a Baptist tradition."

He also said that in the story by Pikrone, who was in attendance at the meeting, that he was misquoted, misunderstood and misinterpreted. He has since issued a two page statement correcting what he called misrepresentations in the story.

A statement, written after two hours of discussion by the Richmond area ministers, said that they regretted the thrust of Alley's remarks and that they disagreed with the "dominant tone of the message attributed to him in the newspaper report, in the conviction that he cannot avoid speaking as a professor of religion of the University of Richmond which is vitally related to the Baptist General Association of Virginia."

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Alley, who has been with the university since 1963, is a tenured professor. As a tenured professor, action against him would have legal implications.

Heilman told the group of pastors that "I cannot make the university over. I cannot make professors do things. I cannot muzzle them. I can have an influence and effect over a period of time and I think we have had an influence and effect."

"I need to apologize to you," Heilman said. "I need to apologize for Bob, and I do. I need to express my regret."

William Cumbie, former president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, and currently director of missions for the Mt. Vernon Baptist Association in Alexandria, said that Alley's "kind of stance embarrasses the university and it embarrasses Virginia Baptists."

Cumbie called Alley's statements "unbelief masquerading as scholarship."

Cumbie said he will continue to be a strong supporter of the university and said in what could be interpreted as a warning not to disown the school, that "Virginia Baptists need the university more than the university needs Virginia Baptists."

In a statement to the Religious Herald, official publication of the Virginia Southern Baptists, Alley said "If there is misunderstanding concerning a quotation attributed to me in regard to Jesus and His relationship to God, I would suggest that a relevant passage from my book, "Revolt against the Faithful" might prove helpful: 'Jesus was man as man was intended to be, man in complete and total communion with God (page 150).'

Alley describes himself as a "Christian humanist who believes in God."

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School Gets No HEW Funds  
Southeastern President Says

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WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)--Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary here has never received federal funds and there is no kind of discrimination at the school, according to seminary President W. Randall Lolley.

Responding to reports that Southeastern has been cut off from funds by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) for refusal to sign a non-sex discrimination statement, Lolley said, "It is puzzling to me for HEW to say that our funds have been withdrawn when we receive no monies whatsoever from them or any other federal agency."

Lolley said that as an "integrated auxiliary" of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention that received no tax revenues, the seminary is not subject to any federal agencies' regulations.

The term "integrated auxiliary" is used by the Internal Revenue Service to determine, for tax exemption, the relationship between basic purposes of parent religious bodies and their auxiliaries, such as schools, hospitals, publishing houses and social service agencies.

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Record 279 Southern Baptists  
Join Missionary Ranks In '77

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12/14/77

RICHMOND (BP)--Twenty-three missionaries were approved at the December meeting of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to bring the year's total to a record 279. That's 11 more than in record 1976.

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"As impressive as these numbers are, they represent only the beginning of a new level of response to missions which we are now seeing in Southern Baptist life," said R. Keith Parks, director of the board's mission support division.

Already, he noted, even larger numbers of places are opening up for service abroad. Missionaries and local Baptists in the 90 countries or territories where Southern Baptists have work have requested 1,406 new missionary personnel for the coming year.

News of the record number of appointments was coupled with a report by J. Winston Crawley, director of the overseas division, that the number of career missionaries resigning in 1977 was almost 20 percent lower than in 1976.

Eighty-six career missionaries resigned in 1977, Crawley said, but six of these were the result of three missionaries asked to join the board's staff in Richmond. One other couple resigned and was reappointed in the same year.

During the year 16 other former missionaries were reappointed, he explained, which further reduced the net loss to 62 (apart from those joining the Richmond staff), which he said was 2.67 percent of the total career missionary force at the beginning of 1977.

Crawley said the overall picture shows "really a remarkable tenacity of missionary commitment considering all the stresses and strains to which the missionary is subjected overseas."

For the first time since his Sept. 18 heart attack, Baker J. Cauthen, the board's executive director, was present for the monthly board meeting. Looking trim from his daily three-mile walks, Cauthen told board members he plans to return to his office on a limited schedule beginning the second week of January.

The resignation of W. L. (Wimpy) Smith, associate consultant on laymen overseas, also was announced at the meeting. Smith has accepted a new post as stewardship field consultant for Resource Services, Inc. in Dallas, Tex., a consulting firm serving churches and institutions in the western United States.

The board also approved a total of \$79,988 in hunger and relief projects in five countries. Of the total, \$3,800 from hunger funds will be used to aid people in the drought-stricken area of southwestern Oaxaca, Mexico.

The largest share of the relief money, \$47,500, was for work in the area of northwestern Argentina hit by a severe earthquake Nov. 23. Money will be used to repair three Baptist churches in the area, and to buy a concrete blockmaking machine to be used in repairs.

W. Eugene Grubbs, disaster response coordinator, said he anticipates additional funds will be needed for housing when missionaries, the Baptist convention, and local people find out what the government will permit to be built.

Other relief appropriations included approval of \$15,000 already spent on an emergency basis in the coastal provinces of India struck by a cyclone in November, \$3,688 for typhoon damage repairs in Taipei, Taiwan, and \$10,000 to finance refugee work in Thailand in the first quarter of 1978.

Career missionaries appointed at the board meeting were Mr. and Mrs. John L. Brackin of Texas and Kansas, respectively, assigned to the Philippines; Mr. and Mrs. Orvell Bryant Jr. of Louisiana and Arkansas, Windward Islands; Jacolyn Bursmeyer of Missouri, Chile.

Also, Mr. and Mrs. George M. Gera of New Jersey and Washington, D. C., French West Indies; Mr. and Mrs. Grant C. McDonald of Pennsylvania and Maryland, Colombia; Mr. and Mrs. Eddie R. Neese of Texas and Wyoming, Indonesia; and Mr. and Mrs. Aaron M. Remington of Arkansas and Missouri, Portugal.

Employed as missionary associates were Janie Ellis of North Carolina, Japan; Mr. and Mrs. Fred M. Gibson of Alabama and Tennessee, Malaysia/Singapore; Mr. and Mrs. Harry F. Hampsher of Pennsylvania, Portugal; Ruth (Mrs. Milton B.) Rexrode of Tennessee, Israel; Mr. and Mrs. John W. Smith of North Carolina, Tanzania; and Mr. and Mrs. Hilmon E. Young of Virginia, Ghana.

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Board Reimburses MK's  
For Items Lost in Fire

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RICHMOND (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted \$5,688 at its December meeting to reimburse seven MKs (children of missionaries) and their counselor for personal items lost in a fire during the annual Thanksgiving retreat sponsored by the board.

The appropriation will reimburse the college freshmen and the counselor for all losses not covered by the \$500 total insurance coverage provided by Camp Hanover, near Richmond, where the retreat was held.

The fire broke out during an evening session and destroyed the cabin in which the students were staying and all of the personal possessions they had with them.

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Seminary Student to Aid  
In Africa Famine Relief

Baptist Press  
12/14/77

RICHMOND (BP)--A Southern Baptist Theological Seminary student, William McCall (Mac) Bethea, will go to West Africa early in January to help with grain distribution as famine relief for the people of Upper Volta.

Bethea is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Ralph C. Bethea, who have served as Southern Baptist missionaries in Nairobi, Kenya.

The relief efforts in Upper Volta are being mounted as part of a relief feeding program to alleviate a famine developing on a wide scale in the Sahel Desert nations of West Africa. Food supplies in Upper Volta are now one-third below the minimum needed for survival.

In November the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board appropriated \$106,000 for relief work in Upper Volta and approved the search for a volunteer to serve in relief work.

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