



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Southeastern Seminary Sets Conference on Biblical Authority

WAKE FOREST, N. C. (BP)--Trustees of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary voted to hold a Conference on Biblical Authority, elected Thomas Henry Graves of Lake Park, Fla., assistant professor of philosophy of religion, and promoted W. Robert Spinks to assistant to the president for financial development.

The Conference on Biblical Authority will be held on the seminary campus January 29-30, 1980. Featured speakers will include Herschel H. Hobbs, former pastor of the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Okla., and a past president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Hobbs chaired the convention's committee which drafted the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message Statement, which serves as a doctrinal guideline for all the convention's agencies and boards.

The conference will also include a presentation on biblical study by Donald E. Cook, professor of New Testament at Southeastern; an open dialogue session; and a closing sermon by W. Randall Lolley, president of the Southeastern Seminary.

Graves, currently pastor of First Baptist Church, Lake Park, Fla., is a native of Virginia. He is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and holds the master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and the master of sacred theology degree from Yale University. He has served as instructor at Bellarmine College and as assistant professor, Palm Beach Atlantic College.

Spinks, director of financial development since May 1978, is a graduate of Furman University and the University of Iowa.

In a related action, the trustees named Rodney V. Byard assistant to the president for communications. Byard had been responsible for the seminary's institutional development program since 1975.

In the president's report to the trustees, Lolley announced that the 29-year-old Southern Baptist Convention seminary had experienced its ninth consecutive year of increased enrollment which now stands at 1,215, up 8.5 percent from the previous year. He also reported that the school's three-year, \$3.5 million campaign had passed the \$1.2 million level in its first nine months, that all faculty vacancies have now been filled, and that 56 of 100 new student apartments will be completed by October 31.

In other action the trustees approved tenure for Glenn T. Miller, associate professor of church history, and re-elected E.T. Vinson, Greenville, N.C., as chairman.

McCartney Named
Oklahoma Editor

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. (BP)--Richard T. McCartney has been elected editor of the Baptist Messenger and director of communications for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, effective Dec. 1.

McCartney, 52, who succeeds Jack Gritz as editor of the state Baptist paper, served a previous period with Oklahoma Baptists, 1958-62, when he was director of public relations.

McCartney currently serves as assistant to the executive director and director of public relations for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, which he joined for a second time in 1977. He also directed public relations for Texas Baptists, 1962-68.

On both occasions in Texas he has served as chief of the Dallas bureau of Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The election of McCartney combines for the first time the roles of editor and communications director. For the past several years, the Oklahoma convention hasn't had a communications department as such. Although communications has been handled by a news writer under the convention's associate executive director, according to executive director Joe Ingram, who has served as interim editor since Gritz was retired by the convention's administrative committee, Sept. 11, after 30 years of service.

A native of Ozark, Ark., McCartney was pastor of churches in Texas, Oklahoma and Missouri and spent 12 years in radio and television news, management and sales before first joining Oklahoma Baptists.

Before he joined Texas Baptists for the second time in 1977, he was president of two public relations counseling firms in Oklahoma City--Arthur Davenport Associates, a religious firm, 1968-76; and McCartney & Associates, 1976-77.

McCartney holds the bachelor of arts degree and an honorary doctor of humane letters from John Brown University, Siloam Springs, Ark., and earned the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He is married to the former Barbara Anne Treadwell of Duncanville, Texas, and has three children.

Active in many professional organizations, McCartney is former national president of the Baptist Public Relations Association and former national board of governors member and former Dallas chapter president of the Religious Public Relations Council. He is accredited by the Public Relations Society of America and formerly chaired its national grievance board and served on its national board of directors.

During the past two and a half years, McCartney has led in developing dramatic radio and television spot announcements to support the Texas convention's ministries to strengthen family life. He has also launched a monthly magazine, entitled "Leadership," for church staff members.

Annuity Board Reports
Increased Benefits

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Decision to issue a "13th Check," approval of two percent good experience credit in certain "A" retirement plans and two organizational changes highlight action taken by the Southern Baptist Annuity Board trustees here.

For the 13th time since beginning the practice in 1967, the Annuity Board will mail a 13th Check (extra benefit) to annuitants who participate in plans that qualify for the additional payment.

The Annuity Board is the denominational agency which administers retirement and insurance programs for Southern Baptist ministers and church and institutional personnel.

This year's "bonus" 13th check amounts to 10 percent of an annuitant's total annual benefit, said Darold H. Morgan, board president. "The fact that we can send 10 percent extra to our annuitants indicates we performed well in investments during 1979," he said. "Our primary ministry is to provide the greatest benefits possible."

Besides the 13th Check, which the board gives in years when investment performance permits, the trustees approved the application of two percent good experience credit (credit in excess of assumed earnings for the board's Plan A) to accrued benefits in plans A10, A11 and A25.

Application of the credit takes effect January 1, 1980, if earnings for the rest of 1979 remain stable.

The organizational changes involve the development and operations divisions.

The trustees authorized the placement of the development division under the supervision of Executive Vice President Pat McDaniel. "Moving the development division under the executive vice president completes the organizational changes adopted by the trustees in 1970," Morgan said. "It will help improve coordination of all the work of the board."

Vice President Harvey Kennedy will head the operations division, which McDaniel previously directed along with his work as executive vice president. Kennedy has served as vice president and director of management systems, an area in the operations division.

In other action, the trustees approved a \$4,468,100 operational budget for 1980 and authorized a five percent cost of living increase effective November 1, for all personnel through the supervisory level.

The trustees were also told the board showed strong gains in investments. Through September 30, the board reported total assets of \$646,325,992, an increase of \$76,591,521 since January 1, 1979. The variable benefit fund reached a new high of \$2.34 per unit value.

Morgan said the Annuity Board will seek bids from national insurance companies on the total insurance program the board administers. The board will use the Wyatt Company as consultant to help develop specifications for submission to insurance companies as part of the bidding process, he said.

Peters Interim Director
In Northwest Convention

PORTLAND, Ore. (BP)--William K. Peters, missions director for the Northwest Baptist Convention, will serve as the convention's interim executive director until an eight-person search committee finds a successor for Dan C. Stringer.

Stringer resigned to accept the chief executive post with the Florida Baptist Convention.

The committee consists of a layman, six pastors and the Northwest Convention's Woman's Missionary Union president. Hugh Boring, a Boeing Aircraft executive from Bellevue, Wash., will chair the committee.

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Rogers and Bennett
On National TV Again

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10/29/79

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Two top Southern Baptist Convention executives will appear on national television for the second time in six weeks, Sunday, Nov. 11.

Adrian P. Rogers of Memphis, Tenn., president of the SBC, and Harold C. Bennett of Nashville, new executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC's Executive Committee, will participate in a half-hour conversation on ABC-TV's weekly public affairs presentation "Directions." The program will center on an examination of current ministries and future goals and aspirations of the Southern Baptist denomination.

Time shown on ABC affiliates will vary in different areas.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, was elected president of the SBC at the Houston meeting last June. Bennett succeeded the recently retired Porter W. Routh, Aug. 1, 1979.

The two executives appeared Sept. 23 on the NBC television special, "The Thrust Toward 2000," which, as is the Nov. 11 showing of "Directions," was produced in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

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Divided Congregation
Dismisses Trentham

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press
10/29/79

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Carter's pastor, Charles A. Trentham, was ousted by a vote of the congregation of First Baptist Church in Washington, Oct. 28.

By a vote of 166-140, the congregation accepted a recommendation from its deacons not to renew the contract of the 60-year-old pastor of the 1,000-member church when it expires February 15. The Carters were not present.

Charges against Trentham, first brought by the pastoral staff committee and adopted by the deacons Oct. 3, were aired in a raucous, sometimes angry two-hour debate.

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The deacon recommendation cited Trentham's two divorces, "one of them being from a previously twice divorced woman," his "failure to provide a positive role model for young people regarding commitment to marriage," and "what is believed to be poor judgment by becoming involved with a young woman of the congregation who is also divorced."

Trentham, currently completing his second three-year contract with the 177-year-old congregation, and the woman, 26-year-old Alice Gregg Bickerstaff, have been dating for more than a year. His detractors claimed the relationship started before Ms. Bickerstaff's divorce was final.

In a prepared statement released the next day, Trentham said the only damaging charge against him was that "I had been dating a woman with whom I was supposed to be counseling, or at least functioning in a pastoral role, before her divorce."

Trentham, who plans to remain at the church until the expiration of his unusual employment by contract, said papers that were available for the meeting support his contention that he was never Ms. Bickerstaff's counselor, that her divorce was final Oct. 23, 1978, before they began dating, and that she didn't become a member of the church until Jan. 10, 1979, several months after they "began keeping company."

Both Trentham and Ms. Bickerstaff were at the church meeting although neither was called on to clarify the questions surrounding their relationship. Trentham did speak for about 10 minutes at the beginning of the meeting.

Trentham, who has been accused of politicizing the pulpit, said the real issue, hidden by the "facade of personal attacks," was "the point where the moral impacts upon the political."

He said the two most important moral issues of our time are SALT II and the Equal Rights Amendment, which are more important than attempts to "pry and probe into the details of personal behavior."

Fred Gregg, the woman's father and President Carter's Sunday School teacher, first asked Trentham to stop seeing his daughter during the summer of 1978, according to Deacon Charles Morgan, who advocated the pastor's ouster. Until the involvement with Ms. Bickerstaff, Trentham and the Gregg family reportedly enjoyed a close relationship.

Deacon Vice Chairman Mary Sponseller, who brought the ouster recommendation when chairman and Trentham supporter William McBeath declined, declared the deacons had fully observed the rights of the pastor in their deliberations. She acknowledged that six "life deacons" played a key role in the drama which culminated in Trentham's dismissal.

She insisted, however, that the life deacons, who serve continually and not on a rotation basis as do the church's other 36 deacons, had supported Trentham even after his second divorce two years ago. She said the decision to air the matter before the full body of deacons came only after a series of broken promises in which Trentham first agreed to stop seeing Gregg's daughter and later to resign because he was unwilling to terminate the relationship.

Another Trentham opponent, Sunday School Director Paul Nelson, criticized the pastor for "turning against" the life deacons, for being critical of the inerrancy of scriptures stance of some new Southern Baptist Convention leaders, and of inserting social issues into his preaching.

"We should leave the affairs of state" to those chosen to discharge them, he said, "and leave Charles Trentham to his affairs."

Trentham supporter and former deacon chairman Milton Jones laid the blame for the controversy on Gregg, saying Gregg "got fiery mad" over Trentham's seeing his daughter. The dispute was a "purely private domestic matter" which should have been settled privately, he declared. When it wasn't, Jones said Trentham's opponents engaged in "innuendo, hearsay, and just plain gutter gossip in their effort to remove him."

Jones challenged Gregg "to come out of the woodwork" and act "like a man." "If he has any guts," Jones said, "he will follow me here to the podium." Gregg, however, took no part in the debate.

Paul Oyer, who along with Trentham organized a group called "Meeting of Peacemakers" last year to discuss issues relating to war and peace, warned that no minister "in his right mind" would agree to become pastor of the congregation if Trentham were dismissed.

Oyer, whose impassioned plea was audibly interrupted several times by detractors, ridiculed those who criticized Trentham's personal life, saying that "we might even find a virgin" to serve as pastor.

In a dramatic moment during the debate, Trentham's son, Bob, declared that his purpose in attending the meeting "is to stand with and by my father on a very important day in his life, just as he has stood by me."

He countered what he claimed were mistaken reports that members of Trentham's family by his first wife had turned against him.

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Missouri Convention Quiet,
Majors on Evangelism Thrust

RAYTOWN, Mo. (BP)--Despite predictions of a stormy annual convention, Missouri Baptists experienced one of their calmest sessions in years.

An upcoming evangelistic campaign entitled "Good News Missouri" dominated events at First Baptist Church in Raytown. The 1,662 messengers saw the premier television spot scheduled for use during the three-month evangelistic saturation scheduled for February through April.

Each cooperating church will sponsor a revival effort at the conclusion of the media blitz. Local churches are being provided "God Loves You" lapel pins and bumper stickers as well as a crusade banner to identify the church with the statewide campaign.

Elected messengers also adopted a \$9.4 million budget, including \$400,000 for Bold Mission Thrust Challenge funds to help the Southern Baptist effort to give everyone a chance to hear and respond to the gospel by the year 2000.

They increased the percentage of their gifts to be forwarded to world mission causes through the Cooperative Program by a half percent to 34.5 percent.

Messengers also adopted resolutions supporting Sunday-closing laws and opposing a United States constitutional convention. They elected Don Wideman, pastor of First Baptist Church in North Kansas City, as president. He was unopposed for the position.

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Prior to the convention, rumor circulated that efforts would be made to withhold funds from William Jewell College, one of four senior colleges affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention. Another rumor indicated that trustee nominations for William Jewell College would be challenged.

The expected confrontation concerned the doctrinal integrity of professors at William Jewell and other institutions. In 1978, the convention adopted a resolution "exhorting" the trustees of the various institutions to employ or continue the employment only of those persons who believe in the "inspiration of the whole Bible, the inerrancy of the original manuscripts, the existence of a personal devil and a literal hell, the actual existence of a primeval couple named Adam and Eve, the literal occurrence of the miracles as recorded in the Bible, the virgin birth, bodily resurrection and personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ."

During the Raytown convention, each college made a written report of its actions concerning the 1978 resolution. Hannibal-La Grange College added the resolution to its list of requirements for employment at that institution. Southwest Baptist College worked for a year drafting a new statement of purpose which included certain doctrinal affirmations. Missouri Baptist College and William Jewell College used a committee of trustees to interview religion faculty members based on the 1963 Southern Baptist Convention-adopted "Baptist Faith and Message" statement of faith.

Nelson Duke, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, and former president of the Missouri Baptist Convention, moved to commend the colleges for this response to the 1978 doctrinal integrity resolution and declare their responses "sufficient". The motion was adopted by better than a five to one margin.

Elton Johnson, a former dean of religious life at William Jewell College, who was fired in 1977, attempted to present charges against a William Jewell faculty member who he claimed did not believe in a personal devil. But he was ruled out of order because his charges were not appropriate to the issue before the body. Previously Johnson had mailed a 32-page packet of material to Missouri Baptist pastors and also distributed copies of his material to every messenger who arrived for the business session.

The messengers also adopted guidelines pertaining to institutional participation in public programs, saying no institution shall participate in government aid programs which infringe upon the institution's religious liberty to use religion as a criteria and employee selection or use of facilities.

Two years ago, similar guidelines were rejected by the convention because they dealt only with the convention related colleges. This report, applying to all Missouri convention institutions was adopted without debate and only a few dissenting votes.