



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
480 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355

W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041

DALLAS Richard T. McCartney, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996

MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) _____, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2798

RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON Stan L. Hasteley, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

November 12, 1979

79-190

Ark. Sets Newspaper Trial, Challenges Messengers

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Arkansas Baptists challenged the requests of messengers from three churches to be seated and moved to put their state newspaper under a separate board during the annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Messengers also elected John Finn, director of missions for the North Arkansas Association, as president and moved to meet the timetable of when state budget receipts would be divided evenly with the national Southern Baptist Cooperative Program-supported ministries.

The seating of messengers from Russellville First Baptist, Hot Springs First Baptist and Vanderbilt Avenue Baptist in West Memphis was challenged because of their alleged practices of open communion and accepting persons baptized by immersion in another denomination for church membership.

Messengers from Vanderbilt Avenue said their willingness to accept a couple baptized in another denomination was based on the grounds that the church of Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian Rogers did the same thing.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., said in an interview later that his church did in fact accept for membership "those who have been immersed in a church of like faith and practice." He said it happens rarely and the beliefs of each membership applicant is examined.

"I sometimes wonder that this is an issue among Southern Baptist churches, because of the autonomy of every Baptist church and because it is a subtlety of theological interpretation," Rogers said.

While the practice is not common in Southern Baptist churches, it is not a rare occurrence.

"Open communion" is, with baptism, the second of only two ordinances observed in Southern Baptist churches. A church which practices open communion administers the Lord's Supper to persons not necessarily members of that local church body but which have similar beliefs. Open communion is not an uncommon practice among Southern Baptist churches, except in areas strongly influenced by Landmarkism, which stresses localism in church life.

The three churches in question were all seated but were warned that continuation of such practices would likely mean they would not be seated at next year's convention.

Messengers adopted a budget of \$7,095,097, of which 42.7 percent, an increase of one-half percent, is to go to world missions causes through the national Cooperative Program. The executive board was given a year's extension to derive a plan that will divide convention receipts equally between state and national SBC causes by 1985.

-more-

Messengers also adopted executive board recommendations to proceed with plans for an adult leadership conference center planned on convention property at Paron, and to set up a three-year trial period for the Arkansas Baptist newsmagazine to function under a separate board.

In the current line of authority, the newsmagazine, with a weekly circulation of 72,000, is under the state's executive secretary. The messengers' action will establish a nine-member board consisting of at least one businessman, one attorney, one journalist, one woman and one preacher representing all eight districts with one at-large member. The trial begins Jan. 1, 1981.

Messengers also adopted resolutions to use Baptist assemblies and camps for the cause of Christ and that reaffirmed the convention's support of the Baptist position on inerrancy and commitment to "believing, teaching, living and preaching the Bible as the infallible word of God."

The resolution on Baptist camps and assemblies came as a result of the use of the Baptist Conference Center in Glorieta, N.M., this summer by a group known as the Seventh Day Church of God.

The 1980 convention will be Nov. 18-20 at Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock.

-30-

Analysis and Wrapup

Louisville Confrontation
Widens 'Circle of Love'

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
11/12/79

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Blunt words, mixed with good humor and a spirit of love and forgiveness, transformed cordiality-coated hostility into communication and conciliation at the three-day Heart of America Bible Conference at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The conference, third in a series of 20 organized by evangelist James Robison and pastor W. A. Criswell to call for spiritual revival and reliance on the Bible as inerrant (without error) and infallible, came to the Louisville seminary at the invitation of seminary president Duke McCall.

A lot of people said a lot of words in morning, evening and afternoon sessions about inerrancy, infallibility, revival and the need for the gospel of Jesus Christ in a needy world, but the essence of the conference boiled down to the confrontation between two men--McCall and Robison.

Robison, who has lashed out at "liberalism" at the seminary, spoke sharply and then tried to soften it by speaking of his love for the seminary community and declaring that God had called him to speak an unpopular word.

McCall, in turn, spoke bluntly, saying that "we must draw a circle of love big enough to include those who would call us 'heretic.'" And that, he said, includes not only the ones planning the conference but also those attending. No one used the word "heretic" during the conference. But much has been said about "liberal" professors before, during and after the recent meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston in which a group politicked for election of an SBC president committed to inerrancy of the Bible's original autographs (manuscripts.)

-more-

The "circle of love" had several opportunities to expand during the conference in Louisville--and did so each time--as visitors and members of the seminary community dealt pointedly in private and in public about matters of doctrine and theology.

But all the problems have not been solved. And all the pain hasn't been erased on several sides of an issue so complex that equally genuine believers have puzzled unsuccessfully over the murky line between inerrant fact and interpretation ever since the Bible has existed.

McCall, a 26-year-veteran of the seminary presidency, vented the subsurface hostility early in the conference, calling for the circle of love and combining good humor with the straightforward approach. The conference planners responded in the same vein.

Introducing SBC President Adrian Rogers, elected in Houston in June, McCall said: "I told Adrian in his office two years ago: 'Someday you'll be SBC president'...I didn't vote for you, Adrian, but now I wish I had." Turning to the audience he said: "I count him as a friend. He is one of God's most gifted servants. I believe God brought him to the kingdom for just such an hour."

Rogers, who later said he was genuinely moved by McCall's remarks, then preached a sermon which brought a standing ovation and good evaluation from his listeners, a pattern which has been consistent since his election. It was one of two he preached. Both were well received. "Dr. Rogers get an A+," one professor declared.

"These guys have preached to us, and I'm glad they have," McCall said of the battery of speakers in his closing address. "I haven't agreed with everything they've said, but I've been edified and stirred and deeply moved by many things they have said."

"I'm glad they're here and I hope that someday they're going to ask a team of our professors to come and lecture on the Bible where they are. I suppose if they do they're going to get a couple of nutty, kooky statements out of the faculty members and that'll balance things out generally," he said.

"Now, if I've loused up the spirit of the occasion then God forgive me. I'm dead wrong," McCall continued. "I'm trying to talk just like I am. I've said what I think. I do think some of the statements made here have been pretty kooky and far from the mark, but God help me, I've listened to faculty members do that and, worse than that, I've listened to tapes of me...Some of the things I've said..."

Earlier, Robison said, "If revival comes to Southern Seminary there will be some men who will walk back in their class and say, 'Some of the emphases that I have made have been improper'...If you're ashamed of what you're saying in your classroom, change your lecture. If you're proud of it put it in print and back it. And if you sign something that says you're going to teach what Baptists believe and then you write and teach to the contrary, then learn something about the lesson of integrity and quit signing papers you won't live up to and go teach somewhere else."

Afterward, in a face-to-face encounter in the hall, McCall told Robison emphatically that people with the same beliefs often express themselves very differently but should be able to get along with each other. Then the two men embraced. McCall has also said seminary professors have a responsibility to communicate clearly and be open to examination.

In an address on the Bible, which drew a thunderous ovation from the overflow crowd in the 1,600-seat seminary chapel, which was full during the conference, McCall echoed a refrain others had touched on about the hollowness of academics without God's leadership.

"You can read the Bible with all the skill and genius and IQ you have, and I wouldn't give you a plugged nickel for the result unless you read it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit," he said.

Then he went into high gear. "Oh, I want to put that down so deep for there is rationalism abroad in the land. There's liberal rationalism and there's fundamental rationalism whereby we begin to assume the authority of God's word with the stuff up here (pointing to the head)."

"And the authority of God's word has nothing to do with the manuscripts," he said. "The accuracy of the copies of the Bible available to us are not where the slippage comes. The slippage comes between the words of the book and my understanding. For what is here (in the Bible) is not in error. But when God's spirit ministers the words of this book, now you can talk about truth.

"And if it helps you to put another adjective or two in front of it, it's OK by me. You can call it inerrant and infallible and anything else you want, but I've said all that when I say that when God's spirit ministers this book to your heart and life, the result is truth. And I stake my life on that."

"Sometimes we preachers hold that Bible up as if to say to the people, 'If you hear me you hear what God is saying,'" McCall declared. "I'm afraid they hear what I have appropriated of God's word, and God forgive me if that is ever different or inadequate in terms of the whole truth of Scripture."

McCall's address, on the closing day, was the only one from a Southern Seminary representative. Others came from Rogers; Robison; Russell Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Institute for Biblical Studies, Dallas, Texas; Jerry Vines, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.; SBC Pastors' Conference President James Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas; W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas; and Homer Lindsay Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

In one session, led by Robison, 400 persons from an overflow audience made up of visitors and members of the seminary community came forward to kneel around the pulpit as Robison urged them to let the power of God's Holy Spirit work in their lives.

Criswell, who preached twice, spoke reverently of the love for the Bible he learned at Southern Seminary, where he earned a Ph.D. in 1937, and declared that preaching the Bible as the word of God will work miracles. He said that when he dies he wants an open Bible placed in his hands "as a last testimony to the word of God." That "may be bibliolatry (worship of the Bible)," he said, "but I learned it here. I spent hours in exegesis here."

Patterson gave two addresses on the validity of biblical inerrancy and closed with this comment: "I'd rather be chastised for believing too much than too little."

The conference blew some stereotypes. "My stereotypes of Duke McCall were certainly shattered," said a member of Robison's evangelistic team, thinking back on the week and especially McCall's sermon.

"My stereotypes were broken of them," a doctoral student said of the Heart of America planners. "I wonder if they gave up their stereotypes of me. I've realized that Robison, who said he hasn't attended seminary, must have felt nervous coming here to a seminary he has criticized. I've been praying for him."

Indiana Baptists
Re-Elect Officers

NEW ALBANY, Ind. (BP)--Indiana Southern Baptists re-elected their entire slate of officers, with one exception, and adopted a \$1,668,738 budget during their annual meeting.

Bob Nall, an Evansville pastor, was re-elected president in a near clean sweep return of officers. The only change was assistant recording secretary and the person holding that position last year was unable to attend.

The budget anticipates income from Indiana Baptist churches of \$1,216,000. Of that, \$96,000 is a "victory doubling advance," toward the goal of doubling convention receipts by 1982. Of the remaining \$1.12 million, 31.5 percent is designated for world missions causes through the national Cooperative Program.

The 263 messengers adopted resolutions including one to commend the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, and staffer Harry Hollis in particular, for their stand against "Flesh and Blood" and other "immoral programming on television and in the theater."

Other resolutions urged Indiana Baptists to conserve on their Thanksgiving dinners and give the difference in cost to the suffering in Southeast Asia; and one saying "we believe in the infallible, inerrant word of God and believe it to be the power of God unto salvation unto all who believe."

The question of alien immersion--acceptance of members who have been baptized by immersion by a non-Southern Baptist church--was not raised as had been anticipated because messengers from two Southern Baptist churches which had been refused seating at the Southwest Baptist Association annual meeting did not attempt to be seated at the state convention. Indiana's constitution isn't typical in that it requires churches to be in good standing in their association to be eligible for seating at the state convention.

The 1980 convention will be Nov. 11-13 at Ross Baptist Church in Gary.

-30-

Wrapup

Brotherhood Installs Smith,
Plans Regional Conferences

Baptist Press
11/12/79

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission installed James H. Smith as executive director, agreed to staff 10 Bold Mission Thrust conferences, and asked their officers to serve another year.

Other actions of the three-day meeting included requests for the staff to consider computerized services and a development program and to work with the two Southern Baptist mission boards to establish a Southern Baptist task force which can respond on short notice to emergency needs in the United States and overseas.

While asking for a study of the agency's constitution and bylaws, the trustees also voted to continue the election of local members as they rotate off the board and to elect members beyond the basic representation of one trustee from each of 26 cooperating states to the basis of one trustee for each 30,000 Brotherhood members in a state.

-more-

This action would require additional approval by the trustees next year and by messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting before it could be implemented.

At the installation service, which attracted almost 200 persons, Albert McClellan, associate executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee, told Smith that Southern Baptist laymen are waiting for authentic spiritual leadership which will lay hold of their hearts.

"You have impressed a lot of people as a spiritual-minded leader," McClellan said.

McClellan urged Smith "to look, pray and find a program for a man in the denomination that's fully dynamic."

In response, Smith said his three priorities are to develop a clear, sharp purpose for the agency, involve more men in Christian ministries, and to emphasize the value of deepening the spiritual quality of men.

The decision to organize and staff 10 regional conferences to challenge laymen to become involved in sharing the gospel with the world by the year 2000 was in response to a request of the SBC Executive Committee.

Smith said the conferences will be designed to elicit the suggestions from creative, aggressive laymen during the next six months. A report summarizing all of the suggestions from the 10 conferences will be prepared for the SBC Executive Committee.

Jack Deligans, engineer from Livermore, Calif., was elected without opposition to a second one-year term as chairman.

-30-

Medical-Dental Fellowship
Shares Mission Chances

Baptist Press
11/12/79

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (BP)--Waves of missions opportunities provided a spiritual transfusion to the third annual meeting of the Southern Baptist medical-dental fellowship at Disneyworld.

Almost 200 physicians, dentists, nurses and students of these professions were challenged by films and a quartet of speakers at the three-day meeting to respond to the mushrooming opportunities for missions service around the world.

Dr. Franklin Fowler, medical consultant for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board at Richmond, Va., called the growth of the independent, spiritually oriented, professional organization from 50 to almost 300 members in three years "a dream of mine that's come to fruition."

The foreign missions leader lauded the members of the healing arts for their response during the last 12 months in which 300 physicians and dentists interrupted their practices to become involved in world missions in short-term volunteer service ranging from two weeks to one year.

Cited specifically was the almost instant response of the physicians to medical needs in the Dominican Republic following Hurricane David. "Within 48 hours we had a medical team of 12 physicians on their way to the Caribbean," Fowler said. "The team got there so quickly they welcomed the Red Cross on their arrival."

-more-

Another team of seven Southern Baptist physicians left for Thailand Nov. 7 to minister to Cambodian refugees.

Medical personnel are still needed on the foreign mission field in increasing numbers. "We need your help in recruiting missionaries," Fowler said. "We need 110 new medical missionaries during the next 10 years just to stay where we are."

The foreign missions consultant said 186 medical personnel are among the foreign mission force of 3,000 staffing 21 hospitals and 94 clinics and treating 1,057,000 patients in 1978.

Dr. John Taylor of Honea Path, S.C., a physician, told his peers they were missing an opportunity if they weren't witnessing to their patients.

Clutching a battered New Testament held together by a big rubber band, Taylor confessed: "I treated patients for 25 years but really couldn't help them because I had no Christian witness. In 1973 when I became a Christian, I started a practice of witnessing to every person in my office who would listen."

Russell Kaufman, director of Christian social ministries for Florida Baptists, urged the healing arts group to become involved in their own states in ministries to migrants and other seasonal workers.

Since Florida Baptists began providing a mobile clinic eight years ago, about 150 to 200 physicians and dentists have staffed the van, treating more than 3,000 persons annually, Kaufman explained.

David Haney, a Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission liaison to the medical-dental fellowship, attributed the increasing activity of the healing arts personnel to a growing interest among Southern Baptists in practicing the theological concept of the priesthood of the believer. He called it a concept whose time has come for the laity.

Foreign missions representatives unveiled a new motion picture aimed at recruiting healing arts personnel and offered it for use in schools for physicians, dentists and nurses. They also showed a film on Baptist medical missions activities in Yemen.

In a business session, the fellowship voted to contribute \$2,000 to the medical missions development fund for continuing education for foreign medical missionaries. The fund is administered by the Foreign Mission Board.

Dr. David J. Van Landingham of Jackson, Miss., was chosen fellowship president for 1980.

-30-

Former Cambodian Refugee
To Join Medical Team

Baptist Press
11/12/79

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A Cambodian refugee now living in Richmond, Va., is scheduled to join a team of Southern Baptist medical volunteers ministering among the Cambodian refugees in Thailand.

Savooun Nuon, a member of Derbyshire Baptist Church, which sponsored him and his family in 1975, was scheduled to leave the week of Nov. 11 to serve with the medical team as interpreter and helper. The team left the United States Nov. 6 for a six-week stay in Thailand.

-more-

Nuon is a biologist at a Richmond-based pharmaceutical firm which has allowed him a six-week leave of absence with pay. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board provided travel expenses.

-30-

New Mexico Officials Respond to Missions

HOBBS, N.M. (BP)--Chester O'Brien, executive director of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico, and Theodore Roberts, convention business manager, both made public acknowledgments of a call to foreign missions service at the 67th annual meeting of the convention.

O'Brien, 55, explained that because he must wear a hearing aid he could only assume the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board could not approve him for work as an associate, but that he was offering himself if he could be used during his three-week vacation period each year until his retirement. He indicated he would not be resigning as executive director.

Roberts, 59, said he and his wife had felt since a foreign missions conference in August that they had a need for greater involvement in Bold Mission Thrust, the Baptist plan to present the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000. He said that should they receive an invitation to accept appointment on any basis he would resign and devote the rest of his life to mission activities.

Louis Cobbs, director of missionary personnel at the Foreign Mission Board, said the board has appointed persons with hearing deficiencies before. He indicated age would be more a limiting factor in the case of O'Brien and Roberts, who are at or near the 59 age limit for appointment as associates.

Mission Service Corps and extended service volunteer positions are available for qualified persons after age 59.

Messengers re-elected Don Cartwright, pastor of First Baptist Church, Carlsbad, to a second term as president.

They also adopted a budget of \$2,981,563, including an anticipated \$1,504,011 income from New Mexico churches. Twenty-nine percent of the local income will be designated to world mission causes through the national Cooperative Program.

While that percentage has not been raised, gifts will increase by about \$80,000 because the new budget eliminated some items previously exempt from the percentage division.

Messengers adopted a resolution urging each Southern Baptist to combat world hunger and provide disaster relief through Southern Baptist Convention agencies which will deliver 100 percent of such designated funds to the areas of need.

The 1980 convention will be Nov. 11-13 at First Baptist Church, Farmington.

-30-