

**(BP)****-- BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 21, 1980

80-65

Patterson Group Seeks
Long Range Control of SBC

By Toby Druin

DALLAS (BP)--The organization that last year pushed the inerrancy question at the Southern Baptist Convention is active again, this time seeking lay participation from every association and state convention.

Its goal is to determine who is elected SBC president for at least four consecutive years and maybe as many as 10, and, through presidential committee appointments, try to control nomination of trustees of SBC agencies.

Lay involvement is being sought because "many pastors lack the courage to deal with the problem," it was charged, and because lay church members control the money going to denominational agencies and can ultimately determine the paths those agencies follow.

Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, revealed the plan and made the charges in a meeting April 3 seeking lay volunteers to organize the effort. He reiterated them in an interview with the Baptist Standard, Texas Baptist state newspaper, on April 14.

A year ago Patterson and Houston appeals court judge Paul Pressler were the key figures in a plan to elect an SBC president committed to biblical inerrancy and to ending an alleged drift toward "liberalism." They organized meetings in most state conventions and then supported Adrian P. Rogers for president. The Memphis pastor was elected on the first ballot.

This year, it was revealed at the meeting April 3 at the Spurgeon-Harris Building which houses the Criswell Center in Dallas, that Pressler has organizations in all state conventions. He is attempting to enlist laymen in every association.

Dallas attorney Edward J. Drake, a former chairman of deacons at First Baptist Church, Dallas, presided over the April 3 meeting, explaining that Pressler had requested he serve as North Texas organizer, responsible for seven Texas counties. Drake also has been named to the SBC committee on resolutions by Rogers, who disavowed knowledge of current political plans.

Two other Dallas men, attorney August Boto and accountant J. Keet Lewis, were presented at the meeting as being responsible for organizing laymen in Dallas Association. Fourteen attended, including three pastors, although at least 50 "concerned laymen" had been invited.

The object is to enlist laymen from each Southern Baptist church, encouraging them to become more involved in their associations, state conventions and the SBC, especially attending the upcoming meeting of the SBC in St. Louis. The organization is offering assistance in getting rooms at Ramada Inn South or at Concordia Seminary, Patterson said.

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Drake said the object was to enlist laymen to help stem, as he charged, the drift away from the Bible which had resulted in the evangelistic ineffectiveness of other denominations.

Patterson, principal speaker at the meeting, said, "The issue still is truth--is the Bible in fact totally and completely true? Are we really in substance reduplicating the faith of our founding fathers--are we true to the Anabaptist vision? Do we believe today what Hubmaier, Marpeck, Helwys, Smith, Richard Furman, Judge R.E.B. Baylor, B.H. Carroll, J.B. Tidwell... believed?"

"I am of the persuasion that most Baptists do" still hold such beliefs, he said in his office at the Criswell Center. "But I am also of the persuasion that a very large contingency in significant denominational posts do not in fact believe that any longer."

In the interview he declined to identify those "in significant denominational posts" or any of the seminary or college professors he charges are not teaching according to his "historic" Baptist beliefs.

"Our objective has never been to get anybody fired," he said. But he acknowledged that has happened in the past when similar charges have been made.

Their "preference" is twofold, he said--first to see genuine revival sweep all SBC agencies so the "historical" beliefs that have characterized Southern Baptists could "manifest" themselves and second that those who hold views contrary to those beliefs voluntarily go elsewhere.

For now, he said, the matter is in the hands of the trustees of the SBC institutions and agencies.

He quoted B.H. Carroll, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, who before his death in 1914, Patterson said, told his successor, L.R. Scarborough, that Southwestern was the "last bastion of orthodoxy left."

"He told Scarborough he was to keep Southwestern in its orthodox position and he said, 'If liberalism develops on the faculty take it to the faculty. If the faculty won't hear you, then take it to the trustees. If the trustees won't hear you, take it to the convention that appointed them. And if the convention that appointed them won't hear you, then take it to the people--the people will always hear you.'"

Even though "a number of months have gone by" since his organization first leveled its charges, Patterson said, "We do not feel we have given sufficient time yet to various boards of trustees involved to go beyond that and take it to the convention itself or again beyond that to the people themselves."

But the effort to determine election of the SBC president is aimed at ensuring future boards of trustees agree with the Patterson position. The SBC president appoints not only the committee on resolutions but also the committee on committees which names the committee on boards, which nominates trustees. The trustees then are elected by the convention.

Patterson told the April 3 meeting that they could depend on Adrian Rogers naming a committee on committees sympathetic to their views. Explaining that statement in the April 14 interview, he said he was referring to Rogers' reply to a reporter shortly after his election that he would not knowingly appoint anybody to any committee who was not completely solid in his confidence in the Scriptures, the infallibility of the Bible.

He said he had not seen Rogers' nominations and has tried to avoid discussing convention matters with him, because he didn't want to place an "albatross around his neck in me and whatever I was doing."

Rogers, contacted in Memphis, said he knew nothing of the current political moves, dissociated himself with them, and said he was "amazed and mildly disappointed" at the news.

He said he was almost through with his committee nominations, and that he would always try to name persons to committees who believed in the integrity of the Scriptures. "That is where I have been all my life, Paige Patterson notwithstanding. And I don't think anybody would want me to be otherwise," he added.

He said he was unaware of Drake's involvement with the organization effort, that his only knowledge of him was that he was a member of First Baptist Church, Dallas, was a former chairman of deacons there and "loved the Lord."

Patterson also told the April 3 meeting that Harold C. Bennett, SBC Executive Committee executive secretary-treasurer, could "be depended on." He explained he had met with Bennett to explain what they were doing, seeking whatever advice or warning Bennett might have.

"By 'he could be depended on,' I meant he could be depended on theologically," Patterson said later. "Dr. Bennett has reaffirmed not only to me personally but also on television and elsewhere his total confidence in the Scriptures. He is a man of absolute and undying integrity. I have never seen anything in him that would give any reason to suspect anything other than total integrity."

It would be erroneous to imply Bennett had encouraged him or his efforts, he said. "He was very neutral, as a good executive probably should have been."

Bennett confirmed he had met on March 6 with Patterson in Bennett's office in Nashville. It was his understanding that Patterson had meant his group intended to elect an SBC president for five consecutive two-year terms, he said, but he said he tried to be neutral in the matter, giving neither encouragement nor warning.

"I have tried to listen to whoever calls and wants to talk to me," he said.

Patterson said he would favor no change in the 1963 statement of Baptist Faith and Message and knew of no movement among his friends or followers to accomplish it.

"I wouldn't change the 1963 statement myself," he said. "I am perfectly happy with it because, as you know, it says the Bible contains truth without mixture of error."

"Whether you say inerrant or truth without mixture of error for its matter is inconsequential. In fact, our whole deal is not the necessity for changing the statement of faith. Our whole concern is to not continue to make a mockery of it. Let's admit what it means, which, of course, was done by both Herschel Hobbs and Wayne Dehoney at the Houston convention. They said what was meant by the writers."

Hobbs, chairman of the committee that drafted the statement, and Dehoney, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., both stated in Houston they felt the writers of the statement held to the inerrancy of the original autographs--the actual writings of the prophets and apostles--when they drafted the "truth without any mixture of error for its matter" portion of the statement on Scriptures.

At that time, Hobbs and Dehoney said the Bible was "without error doctrinally, historically, scientifically and philosophically." That wording was not officially adopted by the convention, and some are saying an effort will take place in St. Louis to make it official.

Patterson said his definition of inerrancy would be that there was no mistake in the original autographs of the Scriptures. There are grammatical mistakes and "transcribal inadvertencies or whatever you want to call them" in Bibles today, he said, but "we can now arrive at a 98 percent accurate text." The remaining two percent in question are "scribal problems that can be worked out gradually," he said.

The current controversy is not new, he insisted, citing others in the past, and saying the present move was brought on "as much as anything else by the unwillingness of certain groups to really deal with the Broadman Commentary issue."

The commentary issue erupted at the SBC meeting in Denver in 1970 over interpretation of Genesis. Volume I subsequently was revised in 1973.

Patterson said emphatically he felt what he is doing is not divisive and should not be branded as "politics."

Liberal tendencies have emasculated other previously orthodox denominations, he said, when they ignored warnings. "I think the real question is do you help anybody by pretending that serious disease is not present," he said.

"What we are doing is not politics," he said, responding to the mention of the convention action last year decrying overt political activity.

"And I just wonder how some other people feel about it who are on the other side. It is no secret Jimmy Allen publicly politicked for the office of president. He called a meeting in St. Louis (before his election in 1977) and one of our St. Louis brethren was at a microphone in Houston asking for permission to speak to remind the president of that fact and that he was at the meeting. But he was not recognized.

"That is one of the great injustices. We were labeled with politicking and calling meetings. Nobody else calls meetings? It's just not true."

Allen, contacted in Richmond where he was involved in a "Follow Christ Crusade," said he had spoken to a regular pastors' conference at the invitation of St. Louis pastor Cleveland Horne who said in introducing Allen that he would be nominated to succeed James L. Sullivan who had recently indicated he would not serve a second term. "There was a lot of discussion about the SBC there that day," Allen said, "but no political strategizing."

The big difference, Patterson said, was that his group did not have a candidate. "We do not have a candidate; we shall not have candidates. Our whole thing has been issue-oriented, not candidate-oriented."

Drake said, however, to the laymen April 3 that Judge Pressler would remain in contact before the convention with his association and state organizers and during the sessions in St. Louis, determining the issues and keeping them informed about them.

But Patterson, insisting "eternal vigilance" is the price of a "God-honoring denomination," said such maneuvers are not "politics." "I don't see any difference in that and in what B.H. Carroll instructed Lee Scarborough to do when he said he should be sure the people know what's going on.

"We are not running a candidate. We are concerned Baptists, and if that is politics then what state paper editors do when they write is also politics. Any time an editor editorializes he is in politics. He is giving his viewpoint and he has an entree to the people that even pastors don't have," Patterson said.

Of those pastors, he said at the April 3 meeting, "Let's face it, most lack the courage to deal with the problem."

In the interview later he said he probably should have said "many pastors" instead of "most pastors," however. "When you are talking to a group you don't always say exactly what you want to say," he explained.

But he said that his investigations over the last few months had led him to believe that in the eyes of many pastors the convention has become "big brother."

"And I would not hesitate to say that many pastors fall into one of two categories. Either they have not investigated for themselves and out of a false sort of loyalty refused to investigate, do not want to know or don't want to be bothered with it.

"Or they know it and understand it and have admitted to us they see it and understand and yet do not have the courage to stand up for it."

He doesn't find such problems among laymen, he said.

"We have found that when a layman has it put in front of him and he looks at it, he says, 'Oh, my goodness.' He is not trying to go to a new pastorate. He is going to be right where he is from now on," Patterson said.

The laymen also control the money, he noted, "And apparently that is the only thing some folks understand," implying laymen who support SBC programs, especially those who are big givers, can get things done when others cannot.

Patterson expressed his love for the convention and said he intends to stay with it.

"I love our Southern Baptist people and think we are--as far as I can tell--the best opportunity this old world has for hearing the gospel before Jesus comes.

"My commitment is to stay and to love it and work for it and I will do that whether or not I am accepted by leadership or rejected by leadership. It won't make any difference.

"I have done what I have done without antagonism and with love for everybody. And if God will help me I intend to keep it that way."

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Southern Picks New
Deans, Elects Faculty

Baptist Press
4/21/80

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Trustees of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary chose new deans for two of the seminary's schools and elected two new faculty members during their annual meeting on campus.

Walter B. Shurden, professor of church history at Southern Seminary since 1976 and acting dean of the School of Theology since last August, was elected dean of the school.

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Shurden succeeds Roy L. Honeycutt, who had held dual responsibility as provost of the seminary and dean for the last four years. Honeycutt will remain as provost, the chief academic officer of the seminary.

Jack H. McEwen, pastor of First Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn., since 1973, was chosen as dean of the School of Religious Education, succeeding Allen W. Graves, who retires July 31 after 25 years at the seminary.

Graves will continue to teach as a senior professor and will spend the next academic year at Southern Seminary's mission-field campus in Ogbomoso, Nigeria, where 400 students are enrolled.

Trustees enthusiastically accepted the final report on the seminary's "Resource for Excellence" effort to raise \$10 million in new endowment and capital funds, which began three years ago. The campaign topped its goal six months ahead of schedule. With gifts currently in negotiation yet to be counted, total receipts stand at more than \$10.6 million.

A new \$35 million, 10-year program of endowment and capital funds development was approved, with a first-phase goal of \$15 million by 1984-85, the year of the seminary's 125th anniversary, and a second-phase goal of another \$20 million by 1990. That program, unlike the one just concluded, will not be conducted as an organized public campaign.

In other action, the Southern Seminary board:

...elected Gerald L. Borchert, dean of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Ill., as professor of New Testament interpretation, with tenure, effective August 1, 1980.

...elected Ernest O. White, former pastor of Wyatt Park Baptist Church in St. Joseph, Mo., as professor of administration and leadership, with tenure, effective immediately.

...adopted a \$7,734,672 operating budget for the fiscal year beginning August 1, which includes a seven percent increase in salaries for faculty and staff, plus a new benefit package that provides for seminary contributions to the retirement funds of faculty and staff members.

...promoted Richard B. Cunningham to professor of Christian philosophy, W. Bryant Hicks to professor of Christian missions and world religions, Richard R. Lin to professor of church music, and R. Alan Culpepper to associate professor of New Testament interpretation.

...granted tenure to G. Douglas Smith, associate professor of church music.

...elected Forrest H. Heeren as senior professor of church music, effective upon his retirement as dean of the School of Church Music on July 31, 1981, and Clyde T. Francisco as senior professor of Old Testament interpretation, also effective on July 31, 1981.

...promoted Elisabeth E. Lambert to dean of students, and designated David C. Vaught and Elizabeth Allen each as assistant dean of students.

...re-elected T.T. Crabtree, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo., as chairman of the board.

Shurden, the new dean of the School of Theology, is a native of Greenwood, Miss., and is a graduate of Mississippi College. He received the master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and did post-doctoral study in higher education at the University of Tennessee.

He came to the faculty of Southern Seminary in 1976 from the chair of Southern Baptist studies at Carson-Newman College, where he had taught for seven years. Shurden was also visiting lecturer in church history at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, for the academic year 1965-66. He has been pastor of Baptist churches in Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana.

McEwen, the new dean of the School of Religious Education, is a native of Charleston, S.C., but was reared in Missouri. He holds a bachelor of science degree in history and dramatics and a master of education degree from the University of Chattanooga, a bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctor of education degree from the University of Tennessee. He has also studied at Baylor University and the University of Colorado.

He has been pastor of churches in Tennessee and Texas. He was dean of students at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, where he was assistant professor of education, 1968-73.

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Missionary William Bender
Dies Following Accident

Baptist Press
4/21/80

EKU, Nigeria (BP)--William D. Bender, Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria, died April 21 of injuries received in an automobile accident several days earlier in Nigeria.

Robert W. Sorrels, a Mission Service Corps volunteer paralyzed by the accident, was reported to have regained some movement in both arms. Nigerian Baptist leader Titus Oluwafemi was killed instantly in the head-on collision with a lorry (truck) on the road between Agbor and Owerri, Nigeria.

Funeral arrangements for Bender, 55, are incomplete. He was treasurer for the Nigeria Baptist mission (organization of missionaries) and consultant to churches in an association near Ibadan, where he lived.

Doctors at Baptist Hospital, Eku, had expected Bender to return to the United States by mid-week for further treatment until his condition worsened and he developed lung problems shortly before his death.

Sorrels' mother, Ruby Sorrels, and his sister, Elaine Bean, both of Norman, Okla., have joined him in Eku. They contacted relatives in the United States to tell them that his condition has improved and he was able to joke with visitors.

He must remain immobile for 8 to 12 weeks while his condition stabilizes before he can return to the States. His fourth vertebra was crushed in the accident. Dr. John Tarpley, a Southern Baptist missionary physician at Baptist Medical Centre, Ogbomoso, Nigeria, has gone to Eku to care for Sorrels and Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials are looking for two volunteer nurses to assist with his care in coming weeks.

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Bender was born in Newton, Kan., but also lived in several other places, including Clovis, N.M., while growing up. Before his appointment in 1955, he was pastor of Bon Air Baptist Church, Arlington, Va., for five years. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and was wounded in combat in Europe.

In Nigeria, Bender was first stationed in Okeho and then taught in Abeokuta, Oshogbo and Jos before moving to Ibadan. He also was adviser to 60 Baptist churches and missions in the area of Abeokuta, and he and his wife were houseparents for missionary children in Oshogbo.

He received the bachelor of science degree from Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas; the bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; and the master of arts and doctor of education degrees from University of Kentucky, Lexington.

Survivors include his wife, Novella Chism Bender, also a missionary to Nigeria; two daughters, Dr. Marcia Lynn Guzzardo of Louisville, Ky., and Angela Faye Smith, of Willowdale, Ontario, Canada; and a son, Philip Grant Bender of Lexington, Ky.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Midwestern Initiates
Music Program Plans

Baptist Press
4/21/80

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Trustees of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary initiated plans to begin a church music program, approved a record budget and elected new officers during their annual meeting on the seminary campus.

The music program, scheduled to begin during the fall of 1981 if additional funding is secured, would become a part of the religious education curriculum. Seminary President Milton Ferguson described the program as a "local church music ministry."

"The need in middle America is to train pastors with a sensitivity to the need for music ministry in the local church, to see music as an integral part of education and worship in the church and indispensable to healthy church growth," Ferguson said.

John Howell, academic dean, said the music emphasis will strengthen the present religious education program by equipping persons for a dual role in education and music.

Paul Batson, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Marion, S.C., was elected president of the board of trustees.

Trustees approved a record \$1,986,000 budget for 1980-81, a nine percent increase from the current year. Included are increases for faculty and staff ranging from 7.5 percent to 9.5 percent.

A progress report on the seminary's Child Development Center was presented to the group by C.W. Scudder, vice president for business and development. The building, which is 75 percent complete, is expected to be completed by August 1 and is scheduled to be in operation this fall. Scudder noted that an additional \$45,000 is needed to finish and furnish the building.

A report from Ferguson noted that 82 percent of Midwestern graduates during the '70s are currently serving in a church-related vocation.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Midwestern Seminary.