



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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June 12, 1980

80-98

Most Important Work
Is In Church, Olford Said

First of two mailings today

By Jim Lowry

ST. LOUIS (BP)--"The most important work on earth tonight is being done in the local church," evangelist Stephen Olford told Southern Baptist Convention messengers in Cervantes Convention Center.

"You may not have electric churches and vast auditoriums, but if you have a flock, that is where the action is," the Wheaton, Ill., preacher said.

"The most wonderful picture we have of God is the church," he continued. "Pastor friends, the church is still his body and the consuming passion of the heart of God."

Olford, who was born in West Africa to missionary parents, said he saw mighty warriors flee from the church because God was dealing with them, and a warrior never cries in public.

"I long to see that conviction fall on the membership of Southern Baptist churches, calling sin, sin and exposing the corruption of the human heart," he said.

"The message that we need to preach is to repent, first in the church and then for the world. I think the reason for much of the misunderstanding of the Holy Spirit is the failure to preach the full Gospel.

"My biggest burden for Southern Baptist churches is a return to biblical preaching. It's the word of God that speaks."

Olford said that for churches to experience revival, they also need to continue the gathering of the saints.

"I find as I travel across this country people listening to the Gospel on radio and television, but there is no substitute for the congregation of the church.

"People share, and something happens in a congregation gathered around a preacher," he continued. "The church is a supernatural organism, and supernatural things should be happening every single week.

"That calls for daring action," Olford said, "seeing beyond structures and programs of the church to take opportunities to move into the unsaved world. There also must be caring action and sharing action.

"Evangelism is the gift of God to the church and witnessing is a lifestyle unto the Holy Spirit," he suggested. "Witnessing is the whole work of the whole church for the whole age.

"I want men to go from the convention committed to expository preaching," Olford said. "They need to get back to the Word and let the Word speak.

"The ministry of the church in revival is the ministry of daily action," he added. "Our problem with biblical inerrancy is the humanistic problem.

"And, inerrancy is irrelevant if Jesus Christ isn't Lord. I'm concerned about inerrancy in terms of behavior and lifestyles," Olford said.

"The lordship of Christ is the message of the Bible," he concluded. Jesus Christ is Lord of all and Lord forever."

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Evangelists Hold Rousing
Session in St. Louis

By Rex Hammock

Baptist Press
6/12/80

ST. LOUIS (BP)--"Amen" rang through the historic Third Baptist Church here as about 500 participants in the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists heard rousing singing and sermons from eight of their colleagues.

Meeting in conjunction with the 123rd session of the Southern Baptist Convention, the pastors and evangelists were challenged to "stop asking God to raise up a Billy Graham, Adrian Rogers or James Robison" to help straighten out the world.

"He might be wanting to use some of us peons," joked Henry Linginfelter, evangelist from Alcoa, Tenn.

The sermons of Linginfelter and three other preachers were punctuated by the songs of a showcase of music evangelists during the four-hour meeting.

"God has a deadline for America," Linginfelter told the conference participants. While the country has "more good preaching, more Bibles, more churches and more gospel tracts" than any country in history, there is still no revival," he lamented.

America should stop "putting trust in treaties and alliances" and start "repenting and getting right with God," Linginfelter advised.

In another sermon, evangelist Ed Stalnecker of Jacksonville, Fla., appealed to his colleagues to "not just talk about Jesus, but be like Jesus."

Stalnecker chided those in the SBC who are "shouting about biblical inerrancy" but not having the "active love" which the Bible teaches.

Turning his good-natured needling to the "lack of humility" among some preachers, he joked that some of his fellow evangelists "believe their own publicity."

"Be sure it's not you that you are lifting up (in your preaching) but him (God)," he said. "I've heard people brag about Jesus when they were really bragging about themselves."

Evangelist Rick Ingle of Denton, Texas, urged the conference participants to "never let the hand of God depart from your life."

He also challenged the evangelists to "be personal with your soul winning. I know I get more joy out of sitting down with one lost sinner and leading him to Christ than seeing 20 people walking down the aisle."

Hyman Applemen of Kansas City, Mo., an evangelist for 46 years and president of the conference, answered critics of "full-time" professional evangelists.

"I refuse to do anything other than what God has called me to do," the Russian immigrant proclaimed to loud applause.

Earlier during a business meeting, the conference elected new officers. They were Clyde Chiles of St. Louis, Mo., president; Leon Westerhouse of Birmingham, Ala.; vice president; Bill Sky-Eagle of Dallas, music director; Chuck Kennedy of St. Louis, assistant music director; Lonnie Parsons of San Antonio, Texas, parliamentarian; and Jim Williams of Tulsa, Okla., pastor-advisor. Don Womack of Memphis, Tenn., serves as director of the conference.

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Wester Emphasizes
Baptist Cooperation

By Bonita Sparrow

ST. LOUIS (BP)--"When somebody talks to me about independent Baptists, I tell them I'm a member of an independent Baptist church," announced the outgoing chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's 66-member Executive Committee.

But then Brooks Wester, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, Miss., qualifies that statement.

"Let me tell you, there's nothing more independent than a Southern Baptist. I tell people I'm a member of an independent Baptist church, voluntarily cooperating with other independent Baptist churches to do the work of Christ around the world."

Wester has seen a lot of cooperation in his term on the Executive Committee, has learned a lot of things about his fellow Baptists, and is in a good position to give advice to J. Howard Cobble, pastor of Avondale Estates Baptist Church, Atlanta, the committee's new chairman.

Cobble was elected Wester's successor. Other new officers include John T. Dunaway, pastor of First Baptist Church, Corbin, Ky., vice chairman, and Don Gent of Evansville, Ind., a hospital administrator, recording secretary.

And even that advice is second-hand.

"It's the only advice my preacher father gave me when I told him I was going into the pastorate," Wester said. "He told me, 'Son, if you want to mean the most you can for the cause of Christ, just love the brethren and attend the meetings.' I never had better advice and that's what I'm telling people."

In his nine years on the committee (he was appointed to serve an unexpired term, then served two four-year terms) Wester has seen much of the leadership of the denomination's agencies change.

While he had no role in individual agency search committee activities, he was named chairman of the search committee that nominated Harold Bennett to replace the retiring Porter Routh, executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee.

"Then I was elected chairman of the Executive Committee itself," he said. "I'll tell you, there hasn't been a day, especially in the last two years, when I haven't prayed for the members of the Executive Committee by name and when I haven't spent some portion of my time involved in Executive Committee work."

He said his church, a thriving 2,000-member congregation in his state's third largest city, has been particularly understanding of his denomination's responsibilities.

"Since I've been involved with the Executive Committee, our church gifts to the Cooperative Program have more than doubled. I've been there 13 years and our church gifts to missions alone last year were more than the total budget when I went there in 1967."

Other things Wester had reinforced during his time on the Executive Committee include the sure knowledge that "Southern Baptists are a people who work best with the total light on any given problem or subject. Tell Baptists the truth and Baptists will come to the right conclusions, because this whole denomination is based on trust and confidence in each other.

"I have also learned there are ultimate talents among the laity--both men and women--and the pastors of the Southern Baptist Convention. We have some of the finest people, who at real sacrifice serve on the Executive Committee.

While he can recount high moments from his Executive Committee experience, Wester also describes some heartaches.

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In an apparent reference to the inerrancy controversy, he said, "One of the heartaches I have at this particular time is the attempts that have been made to discredit people within the Baptist family. The erosion of trust is going to backfire on any who sow seeds of mistrust."

Wester wishes there were some things the Executive Committee could change. "I wish the Executive Committee could do more to inspire Southern Baptists to even more dedicated support of the work of all our agencies in achieving our goal of Bold Mission Thrust."

He also is concerned about things that fractionalize Baptists. "I think such things as the inerrancy issue, last year's messenger registration, and such things that come up from year to year have attracted our attention but have not, as yet, detracted us from our main goal of missions."

"But we must be constantly on the alert not to have our attention directed away from missions. I know 99 and 44/100 percent of our Southern Baptists are solid Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Bible-living people. We are all imperfect, yes, but that goal of missions is still before us."

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Seminary Students
Study the SBC

By Rex Hammock

Baptist Press
6/12/80

ST. LOUIS (BP)--The vast 17,000-seat meeting hall of the Cervantes Convention Center here may not be an intimate classroom, but a dozen seminarians found it a perfect setting for a course in church polity.

The students are enrolled in the course "The Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting" being offered for the first time by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. As part of the three-week course, the students are attending each session of the SBC meeting this week.

Attending the convention is a "way to look at how Southern Baptists make decisions; do their work," explained Daniel Aleshire, assistant professor of church and denominational ministry.

Aleshire and church history professor Walter Shurden are leading the students in discussions after each of the sessions. The students also attended pre-convention meetings of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference and the SBC Executive Committee.

"I've really enjoyed the class so far," third year student Rickey Lee White, a messenger from the First Southern Baptist Church, Freetown, Ind., said.

Attending his first SBC meeting, White said it was especially helpful having a "group to discuss what's going on." Most of the other students are church pastors who are serving as convention messengers.

"The students are slowly learning how the SBC really functions by seeing the nitty gritty of how it is set up," said Aleshire. After the students return to Louisville, they will spend two more weeks in the three-hour credit June-term course.

The course was set up to introduce the students to how the denomination works "not only in theory but in practice," Shurden said.

As other messengers emptied from the hall after an afternoon session during which Bailey Smith of Del City, Okla., was elected president, the seminary students moved toward floor microphone nine where their class meets. There they took notes as Shurden spoke.

"You could see that it's not only important who is nominated but also who does the nominating," he said. Shurden explained that a dynamic nomination speech insures more votes for a candidate. Smith was nominated by Jimmy Draper, outgoing president of the Pastors' Conference.

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Shurden also pointed out that the students had seen "something new with the nomination speech for Jimmy Stroud made by David Lay, both of Knoxville, Tenn. He said the speech was used to surface underlying issues concerning convention politics.

"So remember, if you want three minutes before the convention, just find someone who will let you nominate them for president," he joked.

Turning to the resolutions introduced during the session, Shurden told the students that they had fallen into "four categories: ethical issues, theological issues, denominational issues and convention constitutional issues." Nodding their heads, the students directed questions to the professor concerning the resolution process.

"There has been a heightened sense of denominational awareness among seminary students which came out of (last year's meeting of the SBC in) Houston," Shurden said later. At that meeting the Baptist seminaries came under criticism by a group which campaigned for the election of a president committed to biblical inerrancy.

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SBC Messengers Urged
To Reach Nation's Cities

Baptist Press
6/12/80

ST. LOUIS (BP)--A challenge to reach the nation's cities and a call to boost Sunday School enrollment were issued to messengers here by the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board and Sunday School Board.

Listing some of the moral and human problems in America's cities, HMB Executive Director William Tanner of Atlanta encouraged messengers to "go to the cities where the action is.

"Let us be drawn to the cities by a new birth compassion," he added, pointing out that as Christians, Southern Baptists are required to be evangelistic.

Harry Piland, director of the Sunday School department of the Sunday School Board, Nashville, called on Southern Baptists to have 8.5 million persons enrolled in Sunday School by 1985, an increase of one million persons.

Piland said Sunday School enrollment had doubled in each 20-year period since 1900 except the period of 1958-78. Enrollment in 1958 was 7.9 million. The 1978 enrollment was 7.3 million.

Joshua S. Vang, national ethnic consultant on Laotians for the mission board, thanked Southern Baptists for their help in resettlement of Laotian refugees and for the evangelism efforts among Laotians.

"The foreign mission field is here in your midst," he told the messengers, referring to the 70 languages which Southern Baptists speak every Sunday.

Grady Cothen, president of the Sunday School Board, reported on a resolution referred to the board from last year's convention concerning the need for materials supporting family worship in homes.

Cothen listed several of the board's publications which have special emphasis on family worship and told of plans for workshops, special materials on family worship to be produced by the board's church training and family ministries departments, and a three-year project to enlist families in daily Bible study and worship at home.

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June 12, 1980

80-99

Disagreements Split
BFMF, Leaders Confirm

By Dan Martin

Second of two mailings today

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Disagreement over future direction has split the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, the leaders of the group confirmed here.

The split developed after a 9 to 7 vote to relieve Russell Kaemmerling, 31, pastor of First Baptist Church of West Columbia, S. C., as editor of the organization's publication, Southern Baptist Journal, after a six-month tenure.

In the fallout from the vote, Kaemmerling; M. O. Owens, Jr. of Gastonia, N. C., president and chairman of the board of BFMF; and at least four other directors resigned.

"It is a split," Owens confirmed.

Owens, pastor of Parkwood Baptist Church, was one of the founders of the seven-year-old organization, which has in the past said it was dedicated to ferreting out so-called theological "liberals" within the 13.4-million member denomination.

The current dispute began in December, when William A. (Bill) Powell, of Buchanan, Ga., executive vice president of the organization, was replaced as editor.

"We have had some difficulty in working with Bill Powell all along," Owens said. He has a martyr complex and sort of seems to welcome attacks to discredit him. We have had problems all along the way."

Owen, however, did say Powell made the motion at the December meeting that Kaemmerling be named to the editorship, after the suggestion was raised by Harold Lindsell, of Wheaton, Ill., then BFMF president and editor emeritus of Christianity Today.

The action was taken "because we felt Southern Baptist Journal needed a new image, needed to take a new tack," Owens explained.

However, Owens said, trouble became apparent when the board of directors met in St. Louis, June 9.

"Bill was not happy because he was no longer the voice, the cynosure. I realized something was not right with Bill."

The North Carolina pastor, however, said the discussion over the future of the publication and the organization was not bitter.

"There was no ugliness at all. We discussed the matter back and forth. I realized we were facing division when the motion was made that Russ (Kaemmerling) was to be relieved as editor."

The vote was nine to relieve Kaemmerling and seven to retain him.

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"When that happened, Russ said he would not be able to work under the circumstances. I also feel that way. I informed them I could not continue as a board member or as a member of BFMF under the circumstances," Owens said.

Kaemmerling, in a statement, said his "own individual credibility and integrity" would not permit him to "participate in character assassination and spurious issues."

Owens said at least four of the directors present for the June 9 meeting indicated they will resign from the organization. He named Gene Russell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Angleton, Texas; Leroy Cooper, pastor in Cedartown, Ga., and Laverne Butler, pastor of Ninth and O Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., as indicating their decision to leave the organization.

"All of us have been dissatisfied with Southern Baptist Journal," Owens said. "First, is that in 1979, only three issues of Journal went out. It was supposed to go out every month."

He noted the "primary objective" of the fellowship when it began just before the 1973 SBC in Portland, Ore., was to provide a publication "through which conservatives could be informed or encouraged and made aware of the issues," Owens said. He distributed a conservative newsletter at the Portland convention which was the predecessor of the Journal.

Despite the split, Owens said no one involved has changed his conservative stance.

"There is no intention on the part of any of us to change our conservative position," he said.

The differences of opinion, he added, were on approach and spirit, rather than philosophy.

"We felt that through the Journal we should build credibility. If we did not have credibility, we would not accomplish anything. We also believe you have to be sweet-spirited and Christian in attitude if you are to receive any semblance of acceptability.

"We felt this had not been done, and that is why we asked Russ to become editor. I don't believe in being part of any effort to destroy anybody. There are times you must call names, but I do not believe in destroying anyone."

Kaemmerling said he does not believe the "conservative cause is helped by having a National Enquirer type of publication," but preferred to deal with trends and issues rather than personalities.

"They did not see it that way. They did not think the battle should be waged on that level. They would rather go after seminary professors..." Kaemmerling said.

He added he believes Southern Baptist Journal should deal with issues other than inerrancy, and mentioned "others equally destructive which should be dealt with."

Among them is the lack of emphasis on Sunday Schools as an outreach arm, the need to promote positive church growth, and a greater emphasis on missions and evangelism.

"These are issues of interest to conservative thinkers."

Kaemmerling said it was his "intention to upgrade the image of Journal so people could hear what the conservatives are saying. They are speaking, that was shown by the election of two SBC presidents on the first ballot."

Of the publication, he said he was striving for excellence, "trying to improve the wrapping, but not backing up from the issues."

He charged some members of the group "wanted radical, immediate surgery," and, led by Powell, wanted to return to radical journalism.

Owens said he does not know what will happen to Southern Baptist Journal or to BFMF. "I do know Bill (Powell) has an amazing ability to generate support on a short-term basis."

He added if Powell does continue to publish the Journal, "I assume it will follow the pattern he has followed before," and that the pattern probably will include attacks on persons and institutions.

As for himself, and the group he is now aligned with, Owens said "there is no congealing at this moment of those of us still in this thing. I feel fairly confident because of the necessity of it (a publication) that there will be one of some sort."

He said he has "doubts about the feasibility" of Southern Baptist Journal continuing, although he "is sure some effort will be made."

Powell, who left the convention in St. Louis early, was contacted at his home in Buchanan.

"This is not a crisis at all," he said, adding he is "glad" to be editor again.

At first he denied that editorial policy and the editorship were discussed by directors, or that he was aware Kaemmerling resigned as editor.

He did agree, however, there had been disagreements about content and format.

"I feel that the Bible is still the issue; does it contain errors or does it not. I believe it (Journal) should help expose teachers in schools who deny part of the Bible," Powell said in the telephone interview.

He added he has disagreed with the amount of space given the various articles in the Journal, and said:

"My position is that this is the Battle for the Bible. I believe we should help Baptist people be aware of the schools and teachers and individuals in the schools who deny portions of the Bible and the efforts being taken to combat this.

"Because of the 'Baptist Watergate' -- the conspiracy by Baptist editors and Baptist Press against conservatives -- I think we should use the space we have to keep our readers informed about the battle for the Bible," he told Baptist Press.

Powell said he currently is preparing the next issue of the publication, which will shift from a magazine to a tabloid format, a shift he said Kaemmerling also opposed.

Powell said he has "no unkind words for M. O. (Owens)" and is "thankful to him for the effort he has made in helping with this Battle for the Bible."

Powell echoed sentiments made by Kaemmerling that "little alternative papers" should be established in every state to promote the conservative cause.

Powell said he plans to call a meeting of directors "this summer" to elect new directors and officers. In the meantime, he said, Walt Fowler, pastor of Oak Level Baptist Church in Winter Garden, Fla., will continue as chairman of the BFMF executive committee.

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Senate Committee Acts
On Talmadge Amendment

Baptist Press
6/12/80

ST. LOUIS (BP)--U. S. Senate Finance Committee action on the "Talmadge church plan amendment" was welcomed as a major victory against a "growing anticlericalism in our country" by Darold H. Morgan, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board, during the final day of the annual SBC meeting in St. Louis.

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However, a recent Internal Revenue Service ruling that the Annuity Board is not a "church, an integrated auxiliary of a church or a convention or association of churches" is just another example of the anticlericalism's "flood of federal government regulations," Morgan said.

The Talmadge amendment, attached to the 1974 Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) was "marked up" by the Senate Finance Committee on June 12 and will now be referred to the Senate floor for further action, Morgan explained. It is sponsored by Sen. Herman Talmadge, D-Ga.

"This marks a significant moment," Morgan said. "It is a victory for our attempts to get the federal government to understand the basic reason for the need to amend the federal pension law."

The law would drastically affect church pension plans by Jan. 1, 1983, unless "corrective legislation such as the Talmadge amendment is passed by Congress," Morgan continued. The amendment is an addendum to the "multiemployer" pension bill S.1076 which encompasses the objectives of the Annuity Board and the Church Alliance for Clarification of ERISA (composed of representatives of 27 mainline religious denominations in the U.S.).

Among those who could lose the right to continued participation in church retirement plans are employees of Southern Baptist agencies, hospitals, schools, children's homes and practically all other denominational workers outside local church ministries, Morgan explained.

In regard to the IRS wanting to place the Annuity Board outside the category of church auxiliary, Morgan declared the move was "a violation of church and state for the federal government to say we're not yours (the SBC's)." He warned that if the IRS question is not settled in the favor of the Annuity Board, "next will come the Executive Committee, the foundations and the boards (of the SBC)."

Morgan also announced that the board's assets grew by a record \$100 million for the year ending May 31 and announced a \$25 million endowment drive named Project Partnership which will run through 1989. Current assets are \$680 million.

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Wrapup

SBC Takes Sharp
Right Turn in St. Louis

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
6/12/80

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Messengers to the 123rd annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention continued their march toward the theological right in three days of singing, preaching, fellowship, business and inspiration.

Along the route, they approved a \$90 million budget to fund world-wide missions enterprises, elected Bailey Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., as president of the 13.4 million member denomination, and proposed an unprecedented 46 resolutions which ranged from prayer to pornography, world hunger to homosexuality and abortion to doctrinal integrity.

Only 13,808 messengers registered for the meeting in Cervantes Convention Center, an unexpectedly light turnout, compared with 18,000 anticipated to register and the record of 22,872 messengers at the 1978 convention in Atlanta.

The strong conservative bent of the messengers was demonstrated in their first ballot election of Smith, an avowed believer in the inerrancy (without error) of the Scriptures, the dramatic alteration of the denomination's position on abortion, rejection of the Equal Rights Amendment and tightening the position of doctrinal integrity.

The matter of doctrinal integrity--or the inerrancy of the Scriptures--was a constant presence at the convention, seldom mentioned but always apparent.

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Smith's election marked the second time in as many years a conservative supporter of inerrancy was elected on the first ballot. Smith, 41, swamped five opponents in his sweep to victory.

In his first meeting with the news media, Smith took a strong stand on inerrancy and said his appointments to key Southern Baptist posts will "lean toward those who believe the Bible is the inerrant word of God."

He also said he believes the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement is adequate but "might need to be enforced more."

Named to serve with Smith were Jack Taylor, a Fort Worth author and evangelist, as first vice president, and C. Wade Freeman of Dallas, retired director of the evangelism department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, second vice president.

A total of 25 persons were nominated for the three elective posts; six for president, seven for first vice president and 12 for second vice president.

The race for the presidency became necessary when Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, unexpectedly announced he would not seek the traditional second term.

Rogers, in his annual convention sermon, exhorted Southern Baptists to reach every person on earth with the gospel of Jesus Christ, but said the denomination must continue as "people of the Book," in order to accomplish the task.

He also urged unity: "Don't talk to me about your orthodoxy or denominational loyalty if your heart is headquarters for hate. Whatever problems Southern Baptists have will be settled in a context of love or they will not be settled. The Bible is a good sword, but a poor club," he said.

Messengers heard reports from 20 agencies supported by the Southern Baptist Convention and adopted a 15-recommendation report from the SBC Executive Committee. One of the recommendations spells out new rules for how convention messengers are accredited.

The new rules, precipitated by charges of voting irregularities at the 1979 Houston convention, call for each messenger to register in person, and disallow voting by proxy.

The Executive Committee also named J. Howard Cobble, pastor of Avondale Estates Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga., as chairman.

Messengers rejected two constitutional amendments overwhelmingly. One would have denied messenger status to most employees of SBC agencies, institutions and state conventions. The other would have changed the meetings of the SBC from an annual basis to a quadrennial (every four years) meeting.

It was the resolutions debate which generated the most interest. The unprecedented number of resolutions harried the 10-member resolutions committee, chaired by Wayne Allen, a Memphis pastor, which reported out 27.

The most protracted debate came on the question of abortion, but in the end, a large majority of messengers decisively beat back all efforts to alter the statement brought by the resolutions committee, which called for legislation and/or constitutional amendment forbidding abortion except "to save the life of the mother."

Anti-ERA language was added orally to the printed version of a much broader statement on women by Allen, chairman of the resolutions committee. By making the addition, the committee transformed what had appeared to be a pro-women's rights statement into an explicit denunciation of a major goal of the woman's movement, the ERA ratification.

The doctrinal integrity resolution differed from the denomination's 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement by urging trustees of seminaries and other institutions to employ and continue in employment only faculty members and professional staff subscribing to the divine inspiration of the whole Bible, the infallibility of the original manuscripts and that the Bible is truth without any error.

The statement specifies it is "not an official creed carrying a mandatory authority." The resolution, however, says messengers "acknowledge not only the right but the responsibility of this convention to give explicit guidelines to governing bodies of various institutions," and exhorts "trustees of seminaries and other institutions...to faithfully discharge their responsibility to carefully preserve the doctrinal integrity of our institutions...."

Surprisingly, an effort to reverse the convention's position on prayer in public schools failed overwhelmingly. A resolution was adopted in which the convention records "its opposition to attempts, either by law or other means, to circumvent the Supreme Court's decisions forbidding government-authored or sponsored religious exercises in public schools.

Messengers condemned in resolutions the practice of providing contraceptives to minors without parental consent, the children's rights movement, homosexuality, pornography, and a Time-Life Publications book, Early Man, which asserts that most people today dismiss the literal teachings of the Bible on creation, heaven and hell.

The convention also passed resolutions affirming the White House Conference on the Family, Christian citizenship, taxation of church-owned businesses, while commending Baylor University president Abner V. McCall for his highly publicized stance against Baylor women students posing nude for Playboy magazine.

The messengers also urged Southern Baptists to "wage peace in the world," expressed concern for the American hostages in Iran, for the wife of murdered Liberian president and former Baptist World Alliance president William O. Tolbert, and called on "Christian Americans" to minister to Cuban refugees.

A dozen proposals failed to make it to the convention floor, including one which condemned "political bias" on the part of the editors of the state Baptist newspapers.

In the final business session, messengers disqualified two messengers from Louisville, Ky., a state representative and her administrative assistant husband. Claudia Riner and her husband, Tom, members of Logos Baptist Church, were disqualified unanimously after the credentials committee contended their church was not a cooperating Southern Baptist congregation.

In the area of inspiration and instruction, conventioners heard at least five sermons, seven theme interpretations and numerous choirs and soloists.

In the convention sermon, J. Edwin Young told messengers: "It breaks my heart to say so, but Southern Baptists are on far, far too many side streets. We need to look at ourselves, put down the guns and get back to fishing. Basically we have stopped being an evangelical body."

Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, called on the churches to give first priority to prayer and preaching.

"When we in our churches get our priorities right . . . no longer will there be mild mannered sermons delivered by mild-mannered preachers to mild-mannered congregations on how to be mild-mannered."

Evangelist Stephen Olford of Wheaton, Ill., told conventioners "the most important work on earth is being done in the local churches," and called on them to repent and return to biblical preaching.

The 1981 convention will be in Los Angeles, Calif., June 9-11. Convention preacher will be James Monroe, former second vice president of the SBC, and pastor of First Baptist Church of Fort Walton Beach, Fla. Alternate will be William Cumbie, director of associational missions in Alexandria, Va.

Christian Participation Resolution Resurfaces

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Despite the fact that Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian Rogers earlier had ruled a controversial resolution on Christian participation in the political arena out of order, major portions of the statement appeared in the resolutions committee proposal adopted by messengers attending the annual SBC meeting here.

Another controversial resolution on women put the convention on record as opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment despite the absence of such a proposal in the version of the statement printed in the convention's daily bulletin.

The anti-ERA addition was made after intense lobbying by messengers between the morning and afternoon sessions on the final day, according to resolutions committee member Larry Lewis, pastor of Tower Grove Baptist Church, St. Louis.

A number of persons, including a "delegation" of women, expressed the view that the resolution on women printed in the daily bulletin implied support for ERA, Lewis said.

Lewis added that the committee concurred and decided to propose the addition "for the sake of clarity."

On the political participation proposal, Lewis said the committee decided to use large chunks of conservative political activist Ed McAteer's language because the committee "has the right to initiate any resolution it wishes." McAteer's earlier resolution was ruled out of order because he was not a registered messenger.

McAteer, national field director for the nation's largest right-wing political organization, Conservative Caucus, is presently engaged in a nationwide effort to enlist ministers into conservative political caucuses through his Religious Roundtable.

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SBC Disqualifies Two Messengers

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
6/12/80

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Two Louisville, Ky. messengers to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention here were disqualified, when it was discovered they were "not in friendly cooperation or sympathetic with the purposes" of the denomination as required in the body's bylaws.

The pair's status as messengers was challenged before the convention's credentials committee by C. R. Daley, editor of the Kentucky Baptist state newspaper, Western Recorder.

Daley said in an interview that Logos Baptist Church, to which Tom and Claudia Riner belong, "has never participated in, asked for membership in, or in any way cooperated" with either the Long Run Baptist Association (greater Louisville) or the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

A resolution urging the convention to support efforts of a group she leads to post a copy of the Ten Commandments in every public school classroom in the nation was introduced by Claudia Riner. The resolution, although receiving the approval from the resolutions committee, was disallowed when messengers unanimously disqualified the Riners as messengers.

Daley said that in his appearance before the credentials committee to challenge the Riners' credentials, he learned that the couple did not bring registration cards to the convention, telling registration officials they had forgotten them.

On a special application card for such individuals, the Riners indicated their church qualified for the maximum 10-messenger delegation and that Logos Baptist Church had contributed more than \$2,300 to convention causes in 1979. The Kentucky Baptist Convention has no record of the contribution, Daley said.

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The credentials committee also learned, Daley went on, that six other messengers were registered from the church and that all eight cards were signed by Claudia Riner on the line marked "church moderator or clerk."

Daley said the credentials committee also learned that two other Louisville messengers, registered from the Christ Is King Baptist Church, also had their messenger cards signed by Claudia Riner.

Mrs. Riner did not make a requested appearance before the credentials committee and the panel was unsuccessful in locating either of the Riners at the hotel where they had indicated on registration cards they were staying while in St. Louis. Hotel personnel said they had checked out.

A member of Kentucky's House of Representatives, Claudia Riner lists her husband Tom as her administrative assistant. Her Ten Commandments resolution was written on state legislature stationery.

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RESOLUTIONS SHOW SBC
SWING TO THE RIGHT

By Stan Hastey

Baptist Press
6/12/80

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Southern Baptists took a sharp turn to the right in the adoption of resolutions during their convention's annual meeting at Cervantes Convention Center here, June 10-12.

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention dramatically altered the 13.4 million member denomination's position on abortion and tightened up its definition of "doctrinal integrity."

At the same time, however, the convention refused to alter its support of the U.S. Supreme Court's 1962 and 1963 decisions forbidding state written and sponsored prayer in public schools.

Emotional and protracted debate came on the explosive question of abortion. But in the end, a large majority of messengers decisively beat back all efforts to weaken the statement brought to the floor by their resolutions committee by calling for legislation and/or a constitutional amendment forbidding abortion except "to save the life of the mother."

Although anti-abortion forces within the denomination have repeatedly sought the constitutional amendment stance, they had always failed before.

Since 1976 the SBC position, while strongly condemning "selfish" non-therapeutic abortions, had recognized women's privacy rights in seeking "the full range of medical services" in the abortion decision.

As adopted, the statement also condemns the use of public funds for non-therapeutic abortion, thereby putting the convention on record as favoring the controversial Hyde Amendment expected to be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court before its current term adjourns.

The resolution on doctrinal integrity differs from the denomination's 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement by urging seminary boards of trustees to employ and continue in employment only faculty members subscribing to the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible.

A dramatic moment during the debate came when Herschel H. Hobbs, chairman of the committee which drafted the 1963 statement, asked defeat of the new call to "exhort" trustees of seminaries and other institutions affiliated with or supported by the SBC "to faithfully discharge their responsibility to carefully preserve the doctrinal integrity of our institutions."

Hobbs also objected to what he saw as a threat to Baptists' traditional support for freedom of individual conscience.

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The 1963 statement "guarantees" such freedom in its prologue, he emphasized, warning that if it is ignored, "then the rest becomes a creed which Southern Baptists never had and I'm sure never will.

Messenger Willard Brown, pastor of Wake Forest, N.C. Baptist Church, also objected to the resolution, saying it evidenced a "spirit of creeping creedalism" in Southern Baptist life."

Somewhat surprisingly, an effort to reverse the convention's position on prayer in public schools failed overwhelmingly. Twice previously, in 1964 and 1971, the convention expressed support for the Supreme Court's views on the subject. This year's annual meeting was expected by many as offering the best chance in recent years to condemn the high court's decisions.

But the resolutions committee, made up of conservative appointees of outgoing SBC president Adrian Rogers, recommended the convention "record its opposition to attempts, either by law or other means, to circumvent the Supreme Court's decisions forbidding government-authored or sponsored religious exercises in public schools."

The convention went on record as opposing the Equal Rights Amendment currently languishing in 15 state legislatures which so far have refused to ratify ERA as the 27th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. Two years ago, the SBC protested an extension of time on ERA giving its proponents until mid-1982 to push it through the required two-thirds of the state legislatures. While 35 states have ratified the measure, 38 are required.

The anti-ERA language was added orally to the printed version of a much broader statement on women by resolutions committee chairman Wayne Allen, a Memphis, Tenn., pastor. By making the addition, the committee transformed what had appeared to be a pro-women's rights statement into an explicit denunciation of the primary goal of the women's movement, ERA ratification.

Another portion of the resolution declares that women who work outside the home ought to be treated fairly in "compensation, advancement, and opportunities for improvement."

A resolution on the White House Conference on the Family easily survived floor allegations that the troubled series of three meetings this summer is dominated by homosexuals and pro-abortionists. The statement noted approvingly that the first of the three, held last week in Baltimore, Md., "made some positive recommendations," including support for programs fighting alcohol and drug abuse.

At the same time, the resolution declared that "the only adequate definition" of the family is that provided in the Bible and asked the denomination's Christian Life Commission to keep Southern Baptists informed about "movements" such as the White House conference "and equip us with the tools with which to deal with these kinds of movements."

A resolution on permissiveness and family planning condemned the practice of providing contraceptives to minors without parental consent. The statement went on to decry denial of funding to local governmental units refusing to comply with federal government regulations allegedly requiring the practice.

Messengers also gave overwhelming approval to a denunciation of what another resolution called the "children's rights movement," declaring that children are incapable of coping with "judgments and far-reaching decisions which are difficult for even the most mature adult."

Specifically attached was a resolution pending in Congress (H. Con. Res. 109) calling for state and federal laws implementing children's rights "equivalent to the rights now possessed by adults."

Also coming under attack were homosexuality, gay activists, and "liberal humanistic politicians" seeking local ordinances to protect civil rights of homosexuals. Such laws, the convention declared, "have the effect of giving public approval to the homosexual lifestyle, making it equally acceptable to the biblical heterosexual family lifestyle."

Pornography was also assailed as destructive of "the moral fiber of man" and the denomination's Christian Life Commission was asked to prepare materials on the subject for distribution to churches.

Messengers also condemned a Time-Life Publications book, Early Man, which asserts that most people today dismiss the literal teaching of the Bible on creation, heaven, and hell.

On the subject of Christian citizenship, messengers overturned a call by the resolutions committee to define separation of church and state as "reliance on a sovereign, righteous, loving and wise God in the affairs of state as may be dictated by individual conscience." The convention adopted instead an amendment recognizing that church-state separation "should not be interpreted to mean . . . the separation of God from government."

The convention also adopted a statement condemning tax exemption for business owned by churches. Although the Tax Reform Act of 1969 forbade the practice, actually implemented by the Internal Revenue Service seven years later, the resolution asserted that "some churches and religious organizations still engage in unrelated business enterprises . . . in competition with private commercial businesses" and ought to be taxed.

The convention commended Baylor University president Abner V. McCall for his highly publicized stance against Baylor women students' posing nude for Playboy magazine and expressed concern for the wife of murdered Liberian president and former Baptist World Alliance president William O. Tolbert.

Two taxation matters, the overseas earned income tax and a "marriage tax" were subjects of resolutions. Messengers voted to support the convention's Foreign Mission Board's lobbying effort in Washington to pressure Congress to pass legislation restoring a \$20,000 and under exemption from personal income taxes for missionaries and workers representing other non-profit groups overseas.

The marriage tax resolution asked Congress to rectify what messengers saw as an unjust penalty in present tax law against married, as opposed to unmarried couples.

Twelve proposals failed to make it through the committee, including one which condemned "political bias" by editors of state Baptist newspapers. The committee told messengers it declined to present the statement "because it would be inappropriate" for the SBC "to pass judgment on state convention editors."

Other resolutions causing little or no debate included world hunger, Cambodia, world peace, Cuban refugees, and the American hostages in Iran.