



## **BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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### North Carolina Pastors Discuss SBC Concerns

ASHEBORO, N.C. (BP)--Some 35-37 pastors, described "as denominational loyalists" and "friends of missions," met at Caraway Conference Center in Asheboro to discuss their concerns about the future of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Cecil E. Sherman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Asheville, and president of the North Carolina Baptist Convention, called the meeting and was assisted by Frank Campbell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Statesville, first vice president of the N.C. convention, and Henry Crouch, pastor of Providence Baptist Church, Charlotte.

All three attended an earlier meeting, initiated by Sherman, of 16 pastors from six states in Gatlinburg, Tenn., to talk over similar concerns.

"Unless I completely misread it, we were of one mind," said Sherman, discussing the four-hour meeting of the North Carolina pastors in a telephone interview with the Biblical Recorder, journal of the North Carolina convention

He said there was broad agreement for participants to return home and urge attendance at the 1981 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Los Angeles. Similar action was taken at the Gatlinburg meeting and at one in Rock Hill, S.C., recently.

The meetings have been held in reaction to a group of persons who reportedly are "going for the jugular" in an attempt to control SBC institutions and dictate a specific interpretation of the Bible.

Sherman claimed leaders of the inerrancy group—particularly Paul Pressler, a Houston appeals court judge, and Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas—are not true Southern Baptists.

"We see ourselves as the friends of missions. We see the leaders of this other group, not their followers, having strong independent inclinations. We are denominational loyalists," Sherman said.

"We are offended that there would be any creedal tests used that would exclude people like us from denominational service..."

Sherman will lead another session in November in Alabama, he reported.

## Missionaries Paint Mural of Missions

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--A mural of Southern Baptist home missions and ministries was painted for students at a Home Missions Experience at Samford University in Birmingham.

The missionaries used their testimonies to build word pictures of mission work being conducted in more than 70 languages, from inner city ghettos to mountain resorts, from the tip of Florida to the extremes of Alaska.

Sponsored jointly by the SBC Home Mission Board and Samford, the four-day event featured two mission worship services daily and ended with a commissioning service for six new career home missionaries.

"The mission to America is where you are," said Nelson Tilton, associate director of church extension at the board. "You don't have to go somewhere; you can start on this campus, in this city."

Added Bob Thrift, minister to young adults at University Baptist Church in Coral Gables, Fla., "We've grown past the day when we say mission work is just for preachers. It's for all of us.

"We've got to stop being comfortable in our Christianity. We must realize that maybe it's you and me who are being called to spread the gospel of Christ. We don't have to be pastors, but we must be involved, looking ahead to explode into the future."

Christians also should temper that spiritual preparation with an attitude of love, said Chris Elkins, a former "Moonie" and now a volunteer HMB interfaith witness consultant.

"Love is the key," Elkins explained. "I pray the next person who meets you will know they've met a Christian because they can see the love of Jesus in your life."

Students might want to give part of their time to volunteer mission work, said Jack Merritt and Ken Prickett, special mission ministries consultants for the board.

"Summer missionaries multiply the work of full-time missionaries far beyond the scope of what would normally be possible," Merritt said. "It's a wide open field; I can't think of an interest or talent a young person might possess that couldn't be put to use in volunteer missions."

At a commissioning service for six new home missionaries, board president William G. Tanner challenged the missionaries and students to "come down from the mountaintop experience" and "boldly walk in the valley where healing and miracles can take place once again."

During the Home Missions Experience students were given the opportunities for mission service as home missions personnel conducted 43 seminars covering the full range of missions work. They also were available for one-on-one conference sessions with students.

The Samford conference was the third annual Home Missions Experience held on the campus of different Southern Baptist-related colleges and universities.

**Hospital Blast Injures Two;  
Damage Limited to One Room**

BARRANQUILLA, Colombia (BP)--A patient and his wife were injured when a hand grenade exploded in their room at Baptist Hospital, Barranquilla, Colombia, at 2 a.m. Oct. 31.

The grenade, which was thrown into the second floor room from below, blew out the door and left a two-inch depression in the concrete floor, but did no detectable structural damage to adjoining rooms.

The patient and his wife were both in fair condition and are expected to recover. Jerrell Ballard, Southern Baptist missionary prosthetist at the hospital, said police believe the patient, and not the hospital, was the target of the grenade attack.

The patient was under police arrest and guard after being involved in a family gun battle in which his cousin was killed. The patient had lost an eye in the family fracas that required medical attention. Police are investigating a revenge motive. The guard assigned to the patient was in an adjoining room at the time of the explosion and was not injured.

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**Total Gifts Enjoy  
Big October Jump**

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11/3/80

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptists began their new fiscal year with significant increases in both the national Cooperative Program and in designated giving.

Gifts through the national Cooperative Program, to fund the missions and education enterprises of the Southern Baptist Convention, totaled \$5,850,867 during the first month of the new year, up 17.7 percent over October 1979.

Designated gifts, with contributions for world hunger accounting for much of the total, increased 138.8 percent over October 1979 to \$1.8 million.

Designated and undesignated gifts for October totaled \$7,658,193, an increase of 33.7 percent over last year.

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**Current Strife Devil's Assault  
On Work, Cothen Tells Ohioans**

By Theo Sommerkamp

Baptist Press  
11/3/80

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP)--The present controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention is "a planned assault by the devil himself to divert Southern Baptists" from their Bold Mission Thrust goals, Grady Cothen said.

Cothen, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn., delivered what some considered a bombshell as he addressed the annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio Oct. 29-31.

The main issue in the current controversy, Cothen said, is not the inerrancy and infallibility of the Scriptures, but power and control of the Southern Baptist Convention and its institutions.

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Cothen recounted a conversation he had recently with the president of the 13.4 million member denomination. "Bailey Smith and I talked the other day and I asked him if what he reportedly said was true, that the issue in all this is power and control? Cothen said Smith confirmed the accuracy of the reports.

Cothen, former president of Oklahoma Baptist University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and former executive secretary of the California Baptist convention, warned that creedalism is not "just creeping into our faith, it is rapidly developing."

This creedalism, he pointed out, demands "you've got to say it this way...or you're not a Southern Baptist. Words about the Bible never have been a test of faith in the SBC. The testament is our stand. We say the Bible is our platform, our sole rules. We will not fall for manmade statements on anything. There is no battle over the Bible among Southern Baptists."

Cothen noted the Baptist Faith and Message statement adopted in 1963 "is a good statement. I believe everything (in the statement). But I will not substitute it for the Word of God because men wrote it." He added: "If liberalism is taking over the SBC, it's the only liberalism that's trying to win the world to Christ. If we turn our denomination over to power groups, it is lost to Christ. If we spend years in controversy over this issue, the world will be just as lost as if we don't believe anything about the Bible," Cothen continued.

"We are letting Satan divert us in sideshow issues."

Cothen outlined ways Southern Baptists have been empowered by God to engage in Bold Mission Thrust, an effort to spread the gospel to the entire world by the year 2000.

"Never has any group had the affluence to support such a venture. Never has there been so many people in so many churches. Never has there been so many missionaries in so many countries. It is my fervent prayer for Southern Baptists that God won't have to pass us by."

The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio elected a veteran pastor, Charles Betts of First Baptist Church, Vandalia, as president and enthusiastically supported a plan to launch a new congregation on the average of once a week during 1981-82, called "104 Ohio Miracles."

Messengers adopted a budget of \$3.4 million with \$2 million to come from the churches. Ohio Baptists will send 38.5 percent, a half percent increase over last year, to support worldwide causes through the national Cooperative Program.

Next year's meeting will be in Warren, Oct. 28-30.

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Suspended Sentence Seen  
As an Answer to Prayer

Baptist Press  
11/3/80

BANGKOK, Thailand (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary Mack Burriss received a one-year suspended sentence and a \$100 fine Oct. 31 as a result of a traffic accident in which an 18-year-old Thai youth was killed.

But he considers the decision an answer to the prayers of the people of his church and those by friends and relatives in the United States who were aware of the court case. Charged with negligent homicide, Burriss could have received a four-year prison sentence.

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Burriss, pastor of the English-language Calvary Baptist Church in Bangkok, said the deacons of his church fasted on the day of the court hearing. In the weeks before the final decision, an Australian member of the international congregation shared the prayer concern with a men's prayer group in Australia, and other friends and family joined in the prayers.

"The Lord really lifted the burden," Burriss said. "I felt a calmness and peace and was able to concentrate on my work at the church."

Burriss and his 15-year-old son, Walter Mack Jr., were turning into the American Embassy July 7 when the accident occurred. As they were crossing the bus and truck lane nearest the curb on the busy Bangkok street, their vehicle was hit by a large water truck. The young man sitting on top of the truck fell to the pavement and was killed.

The missionary was charged in the case with failure to stop and look before crossing the bus and truck lane.

Missionary administrator Ron Hill accompanied Burriss as he went to the hearing Oct. 31 in the judge's private chambers. "The judge showed a lot of mercy," Burriss said. "He could have given me a four-year prison term."

Because Burriss had been judged at fault, the company insuring Southern Baptist missionaries in Thailand made settlement with the family of the accident victim and Burriss himself added to the amount to help care for the victim's survivors.

A 16-year missionary veteran from South Carolina, Burriss served in Singapore-Malaysia before transferring to Thailand about a year and a half ago.

Burriss urged Southern Baptists to pray specifically for their missionaries as they drive. A number of missionaries, faced with hazardous driving conditions in other countries, also have been involved in serious accidents. A missionary on another continent recently commented, "Driving is the most dangerous thing we do."