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81-90

Smith Re-Elected
To Head SBC

LOS ANGELES (BP)-Bailey E. Smith withstood challenge by Abner McCall of Waco, Texas, and was re-elected to a second one-year term as president of the 13.6 million member Southern Baptist Convention.

Smith, pastor of the 15,500 member First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., received 6,934 votes to 4,524 for McCall, chancellor of Baylor University.

A total of 11,511 votes were cast. Smith received 60.24 percent of the total, while McCall took 39.30 percent. Only 53 votes--0.46 percent--were rejected, due to improper marking of ballots.

Smith, a native of Dallas, has served churches in Texas, Arkansas and New Mexico. He was president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference in 1978 and president of the Oklahoma Baptist Convention in 1980.

Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, nominated Smith for the presidency, and said that in 1980, SBC messengers in St. Louis elected Smith because they knew he was a "warm-hearted, loving, evangelistic pastor," and that this year they should vote on "obvious evidence that he is a capable...leader among us."

Urging messengers to "Call Up McCall," Ralph Langley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Huntsville, Ala., said the issue of the vote was "leadership and statesmanship." And called McCall "a latter-day Lincoln that could unify this convention and bring us to the middle."

In his presidential sermon, given only hours before the election, Smith put to rest any questions about his support of the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement adopted by the SBC.

"I don't believe we can improve on our 1963 statement which adequately expresses that the Bible is truth," Smith told more than 12,000 messengers.

He brought the audience to its feet when he answered reporters' questions about the prospect of a split in the Southern Baptist Convention. "The only split will take place on Thursday evening at 9:15 when the convention adjourns. "On the Amen of the benediction Southern Baptists will 'split' and return to the 50 states and mission fields around the world to serve in churches, hospitals, schools, orphanages and wherever God has placed us united and loving one another and our Lord."

The SBC president concluded his message by predicting for the denomination "a great and joyful future fulfilling the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Evangelizing the world by the year 2000 is not a dream but a promise. Go from here in such a way that the historians will not record this meeting as a time when Baptists left debating parts of the Bible, but when Southern Baptists left loving one another and willing to serve Christ to the ends of the world."

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Bratcher 'Resigns'
From Bible Society

By Stan Hastey

LOS ANGELES (BP)--Robert G. Bratcher, a Bible translator whose remark on biblical inerrancy in April created a furor among Southern Baptists, has resigned as a research associate with the American Bible Society.

Bratcher, one of the main translators of "Good News For Modern Man," stirred controversy with remarks critical of a belief in biblical inerrancy, calling it either "willful ignorance" or "intellectual dishonesty."

In a prepared statement, the New York-based ABS called Bratcher's comments "ill considered and intemperate."

The statement continued: "The American Bible Society wishes to state that it completely disassociates itself from the remarks made by Dr. Bratcher on that occasion," adding that Bratcher's remarks "violated one of the Society's basic rules."

That rule, in effect "from the day of its founding 165 years ago to the present moment," dictates that the society will not "engage in theological debate nor make comment on the doctrinal positions of the churches and constituencies it seeks impartially to serve."

The statement said the society's sole purpose is "to promote the distribution of the Holy Scriptures without doctrinal note or comment."

The society reportedly has suffered severe financial losses since the Bratcher remarks, resulting among other measures in a hiring freeze at its New York headquarters.

Contacted at his Chapel Hill, N. C., home, Bratcher said he will make no comment on his resignation, a move he was reportedly pressured to make.

Although he has worked for the American Bible Society since 1957, Bratcher's entire background is Southern Baptist. He was reared in a missionary home in Brazil, where he later returned to teach from 1946 to 1956 in Baptists' Rio de Janeiro seminary.

During that time, he served as visiting professor of New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary during a one-year furlough. Bratcher holds two degrees, including a doctor of theology degree, from the Louisville, Ky., school. His undergraduate study was done at Georgetown (Ky.) College, also a Southern Baptist institution.

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McCall Asks Trustees
To Seek New President

Baptist Press

6/10/81

LOS ANGELES (BP)--Duke K. McCall, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1951, has asked the seminary trustees to seek his successor.

And Wayne Dehoney, chairman of the 62-member seminary board, announced that the trustees had named McCall the school's first chancellor, effective upon the election of a new president.

McCall will continue to serve until 1985 as president of the 30-million member Baptist World Alliance.

McCall's 30-year tenure as chief executive is the longest in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention's oldest institution. Of the seven presidents since the seminary's founding in 1859, only the 29-year service of E. Y. Mullins (1899-1928) approaches McCall's record.

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Vote Shows Protest
Abner McCall Says

By Marv Knox

LOS ANGELES (BP)—Defeated Southern Baptist presidential candidate Abner McCall of Waco, Texas, never expected to defeat incumbent Bailey Smith, but claimed his showing in the election reflects a strong protest to the current trend in SBC leadership.

Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., was re-elected president of the 13.6-million member denomination for a second one-year term.

McCall said he was surprised that he received 39.3 percent of votes cast, explaining that he originally thought if he "got 10 percent of the vote, that would be pretty good."

A self-described "standard bearer" for Baptists who oppose "narrow creedalism" and the leadership of ultraconservative, literal fundamentalists, McCall said Smith and his supporters should take note of the election results.

However, McCall said that he did not believe all the messengers who voted for him in protest of Smith totally agree with him. "In fact, I may be closer to Bailey Smith than I am to some of these people who voted for me," he said.

"What they protested was the move toward creedalism and putting people on the (selection) committees who would sort of give a test oath to people," saying, "'Do you believe the Bible is just right?'"

Smith must reconcile himself with people who lodged the protest for the good of the convention, McCall charged.

"For a Cooperative Program to exist, you have to have a pretty good scope of mutual trust, mutual love, mutual tolerance," he said. "We Baptists have agreed upon programs, not upon creed. Our programs hold us together."

McCall reported he agreed to run for the presidency because moderates couldn't get "someone else active and conspicuous" in Baptist life to oppose an incumbent president.

Next year when Smith will not be eligible to run, other moderates will step forward to pursue the post, he predicted. But, considering his recent retirement from the presidency of Baylor, his health and commitments to his wife, McCall said chances are "about 99 percent against" his agreement to run again.

McCall said he deplored politicking within the convention. "Baptists are not ready for it," he explained. "I still believe the job ought to seek the person, not the other way around."

Responding to charges that he might have been party to just such a movement, he said of his supporters, "If they tried to organize, they did a sorry job of it."

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SBC Not Headed For
Creedalism Smith Says

Baptist Press
6/10/81

LOS ANGELES (BP)—Bailey Smith says the 1963 statement of Baptist Faith and Message "is the strongest statement" Southern Baptist convention messengers need to make about the Bible.

In a news conference following his election to a second one-year term as SBC president, Smith, a Del City, Okla., pastor said he does not believe the SBC is headed toward creedalism as many have charged, and said the 1963 statement "is the strongest statement Southern need to make."

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Of his election, Smith said: "I don't see my election as a victory for any side. I don't believe we have sides."

Asked what he would do to assure election of a successor next year in New Orleans who is committed to his biblical interpretation, he responded flatly: "I'm not going to do anything regarding a successor."

Smith also commented on the strong showing of Abner McCall, his opponent. "I got 51 percent of the vote last year, and I got 61 percent this year. Abner McCall got the votes he got because he deserved them. Abner McCall is big league."

Asked if 40 percent of the messengers voting against him could be seen as a valid protest vote to the current SBC direction, he said he didn't think so and commented that as many Southern Baptists who voted for McCall believe in the word of God as do those who voted for him.

"Southern Baptists are unified because they believe we have more in common than we do in difference," he said. "We don't have to agree on everything, but we do have to believe that the hope of the world is Jesus Christ."

Smith reiterated comments made last year that he hopes to be a healer among Southern Baptists and declared, "I sense a healing coming."

In response to questions about his emphases for the coming year, Smith said he will continue to emphasize winning people to Christ as he has done in the past year when his church baptized over 2,000 persons, a Southern Baptist record.

But he also expressed concern that Southern Baptists escalate efforts to deal with the world hunger problem and "take a more aggressive role in helping blacks" and other racial minorities.

Smith also said: "The more I learn about the Southern Baptist Convention, the more appreciative I am and the more aware I am of its greatness. It's so massive that we don't communicate all we do to our people. This is a great body...I see a new commitment of Southern Baptists to those things which have made Southern Baptists great."

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Gregory Kim Win
SBC Vice Presidencies

Baptist Press
6/10/81

LOS ANGELES (BP) -- Mrs. Christine Gregory of Danville, Va., won a runoff election to become first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Mrs. Gregory, retiring president of Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention is the third woman to be elected a convention vice president. Mrs. Marie Mathis of Waco, Texas, a former WMU president, received the honor as did Mrs. Carl Bates of Charlotte N. C. However, Gregory is the first to be first vice president.

She won the post in a runoff election with Stan Coffey, pastor of First Baptist Church of Albuquerque, N. M.

Don Kim of Los Angeles survived a runoff election with James H. Morton of Livermore, Calif., to become second vice president.

Kim has been pastor of Berendo Street Baptist Church, the largest Korean congregation in the United States, for 24 years. The new second vice president was the first Korean language missionary appointed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and has been a trustee of California Baptist College. Morton is pastor of Trinity Baptist Church of Livermore.

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Conventioneers Enrich
Los Angeles Merchants

By Jim Lowry

LOS ANGELES (BP) -- The Southern Baptist Convention, the largest annual religious meeting in the country, leaves its mark on the host city in a big way dollar-wise and hopefully in spirit.

Tim Hedquist, assistant to the treasurer and director of financial planning for the SBC Executive Committee, Nashville, said the 124th annual meeting will cost approximately \$109,000 for facilities and preparation.

Even with increased costs for transportation and shipping, this year's SBC will cost less than the three previous ones because of smaller registration, Hedquist said.

The Los Angeles Convention and Tourist Bureau estimates Southern Baptist messengers will leave more than \$7 million in the local coffers. Helen Gorman, research director for the bureau, said the SBC is one of the top five conventions to come to Los Angeles this year in terms of money spent and the number of registrants.

Hedquist said Los Angeles is one of the more inexpensive cities to host the SBC, even though transportation costs were higher. He added that fewer family members are attending this year's meeting, probably because of transportation costs.

The \$109,000 cost to run this year's convention includes \$39,000 for use of the Los Angeles Convention Center, which is approximately equal to last year's expense in St. Louis.

For the record, the 1980 Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis cost \$112,780. The Houston convention in 1979 cost almost \$225,000 of which \$75,000 was for a meeting in the Astrodome. The convention in Atlanta in 1978 cost \$160,294.

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