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June 16, 1982

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Young Resigns
Colorado Editorship

By Jim Newton

DENVER (BP)--James Lee Young, 39, resigned effective June 25 as editor of the Rocky Mountain Baptist, saying he can no longer effectively function under the Colorado Baptist Convention Executive Board because of what he termed "censorship."

"The issue of censorship is not negotiable with me," he said in a statement read to Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention. "I will not compromise my convictions and principles and will not allow a paper of which I am editor to be censored by anyone."

Young claimed that following the convention's administrative committee meeting on June 9, he was ordered not to print any advance story on plans for a "closed" session of the Executive Board, or any story concerning a special committee study of the relationship between the Executive Board and the convention's Foundation/Church Loan Corp., without first clearing it with the chairman of the Executive Board, Davis Cooper.

Cooper, pastor of University Hills Baptist Church, Denver, and chairman of both the Executive Board and administrative committee, was on a cruise ship leading a conference for singles, and was not available for comment.

Glen E. Braswell, executive director-treasurer of the convention, said censorship is not the issue involved, and denied censorship has taken place. "It may seem to be censorship to me, but I have had no conflict with Jim Young."

Braswell said Young's resignation is a side issue, and that the real issue is a conflict between the bylaws and articles of incorporation of the Foundation/Church Loans Corp. and those of the convention and its Executive Board.

"This is a very complex, involved issue," Braswell said, adding that the administrative committee had simply asked Young to check any story he might write about this with the chairman of the Executive Board "for accuracy." He added: "We don't want to censor any story; we just want to make sure it is accurate."

Dale Witt, president of the convention and pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Loveland, Col., confirmed Braswell's position, saying he hopes Young will reconsider and not resign until the administrative committee could meet with him on Tuesday, June 22, as planned to discuss the matter. Young said he did not plan to attend such a meeting.

In a letter of resignation dated June 11, Young told Braswell and Cooper he had concluded that a meeting with the administrative committee to discuss the matter "will serve no useful purpose," and that he was resigning effective in two weeks, June 25, 1982.

"If they have the right, as the chairman of the Executive Board and other committee members are maintaining, to say the editor can or can not run something in the paper, I have the right and obligation to take a stand, to refuse to accept the order and resign," Young said in his statement. "That is the direction I have chosen."

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Young said Cooper, in a meeting with him June 10, had told him the Rocky Mountain Baptist could not print any story announcing plans for a closed session of the Executive Board scheduled June 29 but said he could cover the meeting.

Young said Cooper made a distinction between "checking the story for accuracy" and "clearing the story," a distinction Young said is "crucial." Young said he had never objected to "checking" a story for accuracy, only being told he could not print a story.

Braswell said he saw no value in announcing plans for a special "closed" session of the Executive Board in advance, but he did see the need for complete coverage "after the meeting."

Witt compared it to the publication of internal matters discussed by a local church nominating committee, saying as a pastor, he does not allow the church paper editor to publish something of a complex and confidential nature.

Witt said he felt Young was "overreacting" and said he wished Young would not suddenly resign without discussing it with the committee. "Jim is an excellent editor," Witt said. "No one on the committee has had anything but praise for his work."

Braswell said the relationships between the Foundation/Church Loan Corp. and the convention came to a head when the Foundation employed E.L. Gibbs, an attorney from Waco, Texas, as vice president, without Executive Board election, and elected employees as members of their board of directors.

Young said the situation in Colorado points to the need for a separate board of directors for Baptist state papers to give the editor freedom, yet accountability to an elected board, rather than to a convention's executive board and executive director.

Young came to the Rocky Mountain Baptist five years ago after four years as feature editor for Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention. Previously he was director of news and information services for Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, where he earned the master of religious education degree. Young is a former reporter for the San Diego Tribune and Navy photo journalist in Viet Nam.

Young did not immediately announce plans for the future, saying he is considering "several options" in business and journalism.

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Some Missionaries Make
Plans To Leave Lebanon

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6/16/82

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)—Some of Southern Baptists' 16 missionaries in Beirut, Lebanon, have made plans to leave the country, but they do not know when or how.

They will be able to leave, according to Isam Ballenger, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board director for Europe and the Middle East.

Missionaries reported by telephone June 15 that the situation in Beirut was "very precarious" but did not elaborate. Lebanon has been the scene of fierce aerial and ground battles since Israeli troops invaded the country June 4.

Missionaries were not sure how or when they would be able to leave Lebanon since virtually all overland exits from Beirut are blocked and the international airport is closed.

A few missionaries hoped to stay to continue their current assignments or assist in relief work among the thousands of refugees who have been pouring into the city since Israel launched the invasion.

Some of those leaving will return to the United States and begin previously scheduled furloughs and personal leave. Others may consider temporary relocation in other countries, Ballenger said.

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The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, acting at the request of the Lebanon Baptist Mission (the organization of missionaries in Lebanon), released \$15,000 in hunger relief funds for Lebanon on June 15.

Fighting and subsequent injuries, disruption of daily life because of heavy shelling and bombardment, and the influx of refugees have caused hospitals to overflow and medical and food supplies to dwindle, particularly in the embattled Palestinian section of west Beirut.

A medical clinic has been set up in Beirut Baptist School in west Beirut. It continues to offer medical assistance and shelter to many of the injured and homeless who have no place to go in the Palestinian sector but the sidewalks.

One missionary helped open the clinic. Two others assisted at the American University of Beirut hospital, also in west Beirut.

Missionaries said electricity had been severely rationed in Beirut and many of the telephone lines were dead.

Southern Baptist missionaries are all safe, they reported. One Baptist church in the village of Ain Dara, in the mountains near Beka'a, suffered a direct hit and was badly damaged as was the nearby home of the Baptist pastor. No one was injured.

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Latin Baptists Say U.S. Stand
Not Yet Hurting Relationships

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
6/16/82

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Four South American Baptist leaders visiting the United States say the U.S. government's pro-British position on the war in the south Atlantic has not divided South American Christians and North American missionaries working in the region.

But the leaders did not rule out the possibility of negative impact on mission work.

The visitors, representatives of Baptist churches and organizations in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, met with officials of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board just before the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans.

Roberto Modroff, a prominent pastor in Buenos Aires, and national Baptist leader, said that the Argentine Evangelical Baptist Convention sent personal letters to every North American Baptist missionary in Argentina, expressing love and support and urging them to stay and continue ministry.

The convention's position, Modroff said, "expresses very well the attitude of all Baptist people toward our missionary brethren." He added the cosmopolitan makeup of Argentine society would likely mute hostility directed toward missionaries from the general public, despite widespread anger over the U.S. government position. Large numbers of Americans, Britons and English-speaking Europeans live in Argentina.

But Modroff said some influential Argentines have depicted the battle between British and Argentine forces as a "conflict between Anglo-Saxon-British-American Protestantism and Latin Catholicism." That interpretation of the struggle, and its potential for awakening old Protestant-Catholic animosities, has "distressed us greatly," Modroff said.

He also cautioned Baptists of other countries "who do not understand the historical and legal aspects" of the conflict against making public statements for or against either side. A recent statement by former president Jimmy Carter identifying Argentina as the "aggressor" in the conflict, he related, resulted in banner headlines in a Buenos Aires newspaper reading, "Baptist Leader Carter Supports British Colonialism."

Daniel Kernke, a Baptist pastor and youth leader from Uruguay, said he had seen some signs of anti-Americanism in his country, primarily in the form of strong statements and displays of anger against pro-British actions of the Reagan administration.

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"Anything that smells a little bit of North America is not very popular right now," Kernke said. "What I don't know is how this will affect (North American missionary) work with the people." Baptists, he said, had held prayer meetings for a peaceful resolution to the war in support of missionary presence in Uruguay.

Biosnel Silva Armao, president of the Evangelical Baptist Convention of Paraguay, echoed Modroff and Kernke; "I can't begin to guess what governments will do, but all of us as Latin American Baptist leaders are praying that there will not be negative consequences (related to missionary work). "We desire an open door for good cooperation, good relations and effective work," Armao said.

Meanwhile before armed conflict ceased, some 15,000 Argentine evangelicals (including Baptists) attended a June 4 rally in Buenos Aires in support of the Argentine cause. They prayed for peace, but took up a collection for the patriotic front, the national fund supplying Argentine forces with food, medicine and other supplies.

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Missionaries Keep Low Profile
After South Atlantic Ceasefire

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
6/16/82

LA PLATA, Argentina (BP)—Southern Baptist missionaries in Argentina maintained a low profile after the ceasefire between British and Argentine forces in the South Atlantic, according to mission organization president Leon White.

"We're trying to stay as close to home as possible," White said of the more than 50 Southern Baptist missionaries in the country.

In a televised speech June 15, Argentine President Leopoldo Galtieri blamed Argentine losses on the United States, which had become the "enemy of Argentina and its people," he declared, for supporting the British cause.

Millions of Argentines share that belief, White said, which has fueled "more of an anti-American spirit, although at present I don't think it's turned into an anti-missionary reaction."

Nevertheless, with the country in a "state of shock" and demonstrations of frustration occurring in Buenos Aires, White said missionaries were curtailing some activities and travel. Several Argentine congregations, he added, had withdrawn invitations to missionaries to participate in evangelistic meetings and conferences. "They do not feel like it would be helpful right now for North Americans to be in their churches," White explained.

Even in far flung areas of the country, missionaries must face the consequences of the conflict. Missionaries David and Janene Ford of Missouri, who live and work in La Falda, some 600 miles northwest of Buenos Aires, wrote recently to friends and supporters saying that their reception in the community had cooled noticeably.

Though they enjoy the support of Baptists and "feel no physical danger whatsoever," they said, some acquaintances no longer speak to them, or give them "cold shoulders." They removed their American flag from an upstairs window, speak only Spanish in public and rarely buy publications printed in English, "because the vendors hate to sell them to us."

The Fords' two children, Julie and Jonathan, feel "an identity struggle" as they try to reconcile their love for Argentina and their own identity as North Americans. Their school director, a friend of the Fords, recently told Jonathan, "all of the children in the school love you, even though you are from North America."

"David and I are more aware of our "foreign-ness" than before," Mrs. Ford wrote.

Speaking for all the missionaries, White adds: "Tell Southern Baptists not to quit praying now. We need their prayers more than ever."

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Draper, Sullivan
Elected To SBC Posts

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--James T. Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, has been elected president of the 13.8 million member Southern Baptist Convention.

Draper defeated Duke K. McCall of Louisville, Ky., of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and president of the Baptist World Alliance, in a runoff. Draper collected 57 percent of the 14,623 votes cast (8,331), compared to 43 percent for McCall (6,292).

Two other candidates were eliminated on the first ballot.

Perry R. Sanders, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lafayette, La., received 9.8 percent of the vote (1,725) and John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, La., got 9.3 percent (1,625).

In that first ballot, Draper led all candidates with 46 percent of the vote (8,081). McCall had 35 percent (1,625).

Draper was nominated by Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, who cited the missions giving and growth of Draper's church. "Jimmy Draper is doing what we all want to do," he explained... "That is the kind of man we are looking for."

Grady C. Cothen, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn., placed McCall's name in nomination. Cothen claimed he had been "harangued, pressured and threatened" since announcing he would nominate McCall, and was, in fact, heckled several times during his short nomination speech.

Later, Sullivan was elected first vice president, defeating U.S. Representative Albert Lee Smith (R-Ala.) of Birmingham in a runoff election.

Sullivan received 68 percent of the 6,612 votes cast in the runoff (4,514). He was nominated by Warren Hultgren, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla.

Smith, who collected 32 percent of the runoff votes (2,098), was the Moral Majority-backed candidate who in 1980 defeated long-time Representative John Buchanan for his Alabama congressional seat.

Smith was nominated by Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., who himself was elected president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference Monday.

The two candidates were forced into a runoff when Sullivan fell three percentage points short of a majority on the first ballot. His 47.3 percent (4,580 votes) was followed by Smith's 36 percent (3,487).

John G. Alley, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria, La., placed third on the first ballot, pulling 14.6 percent of the votes (1,415). A fourth candidate, Brian Shoemaker of Louisville, Ky., collected two percent of the 9,686 votes cast. Shoemaker is a student at Southern Seminary.

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Draper Pledges To Get
Baptists 'Talking Together'

Baptist Press
6/16/82

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Jimmy Draper, new president of the Southern Baptist Convention, rejected implications of his alliance with a control-seeking faction of the 13.8 million member denomination and declared a goal of his presidency will be denominational unity.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, told reporters at his first news conference that he wants to "get Southern Baptists talking to each other instead of about each other."

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Asked if he would disavow any move to take over the convention by "stacking" boards and agencies with people who believe the Bible is literally true, Draper replied: "I don't have to disavow something I've never avowed. I have never embraced that (technique) as a philosophy."

Draper acknowledged the trustees are "influential" and that the boards, agencies and institutions need "constructive trustees." But he promised not to make belief in biblical inerrancy a sole criterion for appointments open to him. "We ought to (elect) people who love our denomination but first love the Lord and the purposes of the Southern Baptist Convention," he said.

Draper defined such people as those who participate in the work of Southern Baptist associations, state conventions and denominational agencies and who support the Cooperative Program both personally and financially.

In response to recent criticism of the Cooperative Program, he called the convention's method of funding its programs "the finest thing we've ever done," but said the program is not "the cow that gives us milk. We give it (milk)."

Draper said he has never been pastor of a church that did not annually increase its contribution to the Cooperative Program.

Last year, the Euless church gave \$200,000 in undesignated funds and another \$100,000 to Cooperative Program causes, 11 percent of the budget, Draper said.

Asked his views on three controversial church-state issues, Draper restated his support for a constitutional amendment on school prayer but avoided strong stands on tuition tax credits and the teaching of scientific creationism.

He emphasized that while the U.S. Supreme Court had not forbidden voluntary school prayer in its 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court rulings, those decisions had been interpreted in a way to prevent the practice.

Draper said what is necessary is for the judiciary to step in and declare that voluntary prayer is permitted for for a constitutional amendment accomplishing the same purpose.

Draper did not endorse any legislative proposals requiring the teaching of creationism in the public schools but did state his belief that vertical evolution is theory and that schools "ought to teach science" and not theory.

Concerning committee appointments Draper said he would "never appoint someone who denied portions of Scripture," but otherwise said he would name "people who are committed Southern Baptists and love the Lord."

During the news conference, Draper introduced John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, La., the newly-elected first vice president of the convention.

Convention bylaws dictate the president shall make his appointments in consultation with both vice presidents, but recent controversy has surrounded the extent to which the president should use the vice presidents in decision-making processes.

Draper said that while he understands "final decisions rest with me," he plans to work in very close consultation" with the vice presidents and make decisions "in conjunction with them."

Draper characterized himself as "a very open person. What you see is what you get."

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Proposed Constitutional
Change Effort Derailed

Baptist Press
6/16/82

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Messengers to the 125th meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention overwhelmingly referred five proposed changes in the denomination's constitution and bylaws to the body's Executive Committee.

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Three of the five proposals were being pushed by leaders of the so-called "moderate" faction within the denomination and reflected controversies prior to this year's sessions in the Superdome.

Referred to the Executive Committee for further study and recommendations at the annual SBC meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa., next year was a motion to require the committee on boards to make public its recommendations by publishing them in Baptist Press, the denomination's news service, at least 30 days before the annual meeting.

A separate proposal would likewise require the SBC president to disclose his appointments to the key committee on committees and committee on resolutions 30 days before the annual meeting.

Both motions resulted from the refusal of this year's committee on boards and current SBC President Bailey E. Smith of Del City, Okla., to disclose the information until Tuesday morning the first day of this year's meeting.

In a third move derailed by the action to refer, moderates sought to require the committee on boards not to nominate persons as trustees of denominational agencies who have not lived within the state they are to represent for at least one year before being nominated.

That proposal was clearly aimed at the committees on boards for the past two years, which have nominated several "inerrantists" who had only recently moved to other states.

The committee on boards is composed of two representatives from each of 26 state or regional conventions. Those persons in turn receive their nominations from the committee on committees, also composed of two representatives from each of the 26. The committee on committees is appointed by the president.

A fourth proposed bylaws change, apparently not part of the "moderate" agenda, would place responsibility for the committee on committees directly on the state conventions, requiring each unit to name its own pair of representatives.

All four proposed bylaws changes were referred after a motion by retired SBC executive secretary-treasurer Porter W. Routh of Nashville, Tenn.

Moderate leader Cecil Slemman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C., said after the referral action:

"This convention needs some bylaws that will require our committees and our president to inform us of their actions weeks in advance. We are in favor of the fullest information and its earliest possible disclosure."

If the Executive Committee were to approve any or all of the referred proposals, messengers to the next two annual meetings in Pittsburgh and Kansas City, Mo., would still have to approve them.