



BAPTIST PRESS

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Draper, Sullivan
Reelected By SBC

PITTSBURGH. (BP)--Texas pastor James T. Draper Jr. was reelected president of the nation's largest Protestant denomination during the opening day of the 126th meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, was unopposed. He was nominated by O.S. Hawkins, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., who praised Draper as a leader who "has done what he said he would do, with openness, honesty and integrity."

First vice president John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, La., also was reelected without opposition. The nomination came from Warren Hultgren, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla., who nominated Sullivan at the 1982 convention.

Although not unprecedented, reelection as vice president is relatively rare within the Southern Baptist Convention.

Edward Price, a retired Pittsburgh business executive, was chosen s cond vice president in a run-off election.

Price, who retired last year as senior vice president at Westinghouse Corporation, defeated Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., 4,515 to 3,586.

Price, cochairman of the local arrangements committee for the three-day SBC meeting, is a member of Lakeside Baptist Church here. Wolfe was the outgoing president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference which end d a two-day meeting here Monday.

A third candidate, Mrs. Dorothy Sample of Flint, Mich., national president of Woman's Missionary Union, woman's auxiliary, was eliminat d on the first ballot.

The convention followed recent tradition by reelecting three other SBC officers: Martin B. Bradley of Nashville, Tenn., recording secretary; Le Port r of Nashville, registration secretary, and Harold C. Bennett of Nashville, the executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, as treasurer.

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Baptists 'Liked What
They Saw' Drap r Says

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PITTSBURGH (BP)--James T. Draper Jr. says his reelection as president of the Southern Baptist Convention indicates Southern Baptists

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"liked what they saw" in the past year and are ready "to see the same things again."

As a result, he said, he has no plans "to do anything different" during his second one-year term.

The 47-year-old pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, said he has concentrated on "magnifying our likenesses rather than our differences" in an effort to unify the nation's largest Protestant denomination. His reelection, he said, is evidence of "an easing of tensions" among differing groups.

"None of us have lessened our convictions," he added, "but we have opened new avenues of communication" through a "desire to build unity in the convention."

Draper acknowledged "distinct groups" still exist within the convention, although there has been "a lessening" of organizational activity.

"I think it's not as necessary as maybe it was viewed as being a few years ago. At least, I hope that's true."

Draper noted he deliberately avoided adjectives such as "inerrant" and "infallible" in references to scripture during his president's address. Yet, he added, Southern Baptists are "still going to have to work through what we mean by the authority of the Bible. It still needs some definition."

On his involvement in political affairs, Draper said the SBC president "should not become candidate-oriented, but principles-oriented. No (political) candidate has the answer for America; only Jesus Christ does."

Draper refused specifically to endorse an amendment to the U.S. Constitution on prayer in the public schools, though the proposed legislation has received the backing of the Reagan administration.

Draper said only that "clarification" of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on the constitutionality of classroom prayer is needed, because "the opposite of the court's intent is being carried out" in many local school districts. He added, however, that he does not favor "state composed and state-ordered prayer," and cautioned that "we must be very careful about amending the Constitution."

Neither would he declare a position on the role of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, which has publicly opposed such an amendment. Although he has "disagreed" at times with positions taken by the Washington-based agency, he said he believes the BJCPA has been "acting within their charter and their conscience" in response to "a very sensitive issue."

Draper was asked at one point whether he interpreted his reelection as a sign that Southern Baptists were "returning to the right" theologically.

"I think Southern Baptists are conservative. I still maintain that we always have been. I don't think we've 'turned back' from anything; I think we've just reminded ourselves of who we are."

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Theological parameters are necessary yet difficult to define rigidly, Draper said. When pressed about specific, non-negotiable beliefs, he added: "I don't see how you can be a good Southern Baptist and deny the virgin birth of Jesus or the deity of Christ."

Draper admitted he has "met some people who are still within the framework--particularly in the academic community--who would not give you a straight answer if you asked them if Jesus were virgin born.

But, he emphasized, "I have no accusations to make and I haven't asked that anybody be fired."

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Gunmen Force Missionaries
To Hand Over Automobile

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BARRANQUILLA, Colombia (BP)--Vic and Kathy Norman, Southern Baptist missionaries to Colombia, had a car stolen at gunpoint at their home in Barranquilla June 13.

The Normans, both Alabama natives, and their two children, Holly Jo, 7, and Luke, 5, were stopped by two gunmen and forced to give over the car as they returned home from a farewell party for another missionary family.

No one was injured in the incident.

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Oklahoma Pastor, Family
Attempt To Save Jumper

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NEW YORK (BP)--An Oklahoma pastor and his family, visiting New York enroute to the Southern Baptist Convention, made an unsuccessful attempt to save a young man who jumped from the Empire State Building.

Gary Richardson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Chelsea, Okla., his wife, Ruthie, and children, Mandy and Michael, were on the 86th floor observation deck when a young black man brushed by them.

They watched as the young man climbed past the barricades on the observation platform.

Richardson said he talked with the 20-year-old man for about three minutes, telling him he would help him solve his problems.

Richardson also said two guards tried to prevent the man from jumping.

"I just can't get over it," Richardson said. "He clung to the railing and looked me in the eye. Then he turned loose and fell...."

News accounts said the man plunged into a cab and died instantly.

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Ruby Davis Dies;
Missionary To Brazil

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Ruby Davis, a Southern Baptist missionary for nearly 30 years, died of cancer June 15 in Richmond, Va. She was 60.

Mrs. Davis and her husband, H. Victor Davis, served in Brazil, where she used her artistic talents to design Baptist publications, bookcovers, posters and illustrations. She also worked with local churches and Baptist women's groups.

A missionary colleague once described Mrs. Davis as a "modern woman who practices the 'old-time religion.'"

The Davises returned to the United States in 1980 for furlough and were unable to go back to the field. He joined the office of planning of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond.

The former Ruby Fletcher, Mrs. Davis was born in Zionsville, N.C. She graduated from Blanton Business College, Asheville, N.C., and studied at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and Woman's Missionary Union Training School (now merged with Southern Seminary). The Davises were appointed missionaries in 1953.

Mrs. Davis is survived by her husband and three children, Larry Davis of Atlanta, Ga., and Julie Garrich and Joel Davis of Richmond.

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Solid Rock Church
Busy Building Missions

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
6/15/83

ALTOONA, Pa. (BP)--While messengers were gathering for the Southern Baptist Convention, Steve Umholta and the congregation of Solid Rock Baptist Church in Altoona, Pa., were busy building churches.

Umholtz, pastor of the budding central Pennsylvania church, and church members joined at least 40 other Western Pennsylvania Southern Baptist churches in hosting Here's Hope Western Pennsylvania Crusades.

Shortly before messengers reached Pittsburgh, Umholtz and Solid Rock Baptist sponsored crusades in Somerset and Tyrone, Pa., where the church already sponsors two chapels.

The crusade resulted in 32 professions of faith in Altoona and Tyrone and 102 professions of faith in Somerset, Umholtz said.

"We had been told that trying to start a church in Tyrone would be like plowing a concrete field. But the Lord of the harvest had already plowed that field."

Services began June 11 in Tyrone with 49 people.

Southern Baptist groups from Tennessee, Arkansas and Florida assisted the Altoona church with its church planting projects, even helping Doug Simmons, the new pastor for the Tyrone congregation, move into a home.

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Umholtz and Solid Rock members plan to return to their community and follow up on persons who've made professions of faith or who expressed interest in studying the Bible.

Only 11 months ago, Umholtz was called as pastor of the Solid Rock congregation, a small chapel. In 10 months the church has added 28 members constituted itself as a church and undertaken the responsibility to sponsor the two missions.

Still, Umholtz is committed to staying in Altoona and building strong churches.

We're there on mission and we're committed to doing missions. I'll work to put myself out of a job in starting new missions."