



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 2, 1984

84-17

Elder Installed As President
Of Baptist Sunday School Board

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Lloyd Elder pledged at his installation as the seventh president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board the board will give top priority to assisting churches in winning a lost world to Jesus Christ.

"It is not the responsibility of local churches to serve the institutional needs of the board," said Elder. "It is rather the task of the board to serve the teaching, ministering, worshipping, evangelizing, discipling needs of the churches."

Elder, 50, was elected in February 1983 by the board's trustees to succeed Grady C. Cothen at his retirement in 1984. Elder began work at the board in April 1983 and completed 10 months of orientation as president-elect.

He reported he had conducted an intense study of the history of the board and talked with many Southern Baptists about the work of the institution.

Every element of the board's operation must first be committed to God, Elder emphasized. He added the work also encompasses the Southern Baptist Convention, the denomination, local churches and individual Southern Baptists.

The work of the board must be focused on the Bible, evangelism, Sunday school, developing leaders and meeting the diverse and changing needs of Southern Baptists, Elder outlined.

"Unapologetically the board continues to acknowledge its ownership by the convention," Elder said. "As we seek to fulfill our purpose, we will manage our affairs prudently, earn our support by our own endeavors and contribute to the support of our convention."

Noting the denomination includes 14 million members, 36,302 churches, 1,221 associations, 37 state convention and numerous boards, agencies, commissions and committees, Elder said: "Today we recommit ourselves to comradeship in the family of SBC agencies and state conventions. It is one of our hopes the board might seek to contribute to a spiritual and organizational renewal of the people called Southern Baptists."

He emphasized the Bible has been at the heart of the 93-year ministry of the board.

"We are now seeking to develop a far-reaching strategy for publication and national distribution of Holy Scripture so Southern Baptists will have still another effective way of telling the story of Christ to everyone in the world by the end of this century," he said.

To support the priority of evangelism, Elder said, "This board will seek to saturate its excellent teaching/training efforts with outreach, witness, growth and discipleship. There will be in our spirit and in our deeds a gospel appeal to the unsaved masses of our nation."

Elder said his goal is to lead the board "to give new life to the founding dreams and magnificent heritage of our forebearers; to be shaken to our bones by spiritual awakening and dynamic doctrinal confession; to reclaim the pattern of servant leadership practiced by our Lord, and to work together as God's people in such a way that Bold Mission Thrust leaps off the pages of our documents and is written down in history in the lifeblood of a people called Baptists."

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Cothen presented a Bible, a presidential medallion and scroll to Elder as symbols of the office. "I hope this office brings to you the great joy of Christian service it has brought to me," Cothen said.

"No man has held the office which you assume without a deep and abiding faith in the total reliability of the Word of God. You have that conviction. What the world needs now is what God can do," Cothen noted.

Earlier, charges and affirmations to Elder were given by persons representing associations and state conventions, SBC agencies, employees and trustees of the board.

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, urged Elder to emphasize spiritual ministry, helping churches and magnifying Jesus Christ. "Love your work, fellow staff members, the Southern Baptist Convention and members of the churches," Bennett said. "Remember the assignment is to bring people to a place where they can enter the presence of the kingdom of God."

Also, he challenged Elder to "serve as an example of faithfulness and acknowledge your own humanity by caring for your physical, spiritual and family life."

Ruby McMillin, a 42-year employee of the board who has worked under three former presidents, urged Elder "to continue to remember the ministry of concern for others and care about people as much as getting the job done."

Other speakers were James Landes, retired executive director, Baptist General Conv ntion of Texas, and John Bryan, chairman of the presidential search committee and a pathologist, Bluefield, W. Va.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press

Baker Says Senate Will
Consider Social Agenda

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
2/2/84

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Reagan's early-year push for legislation dealing with school prayer, tuition tax credits and abortion got a boost from Senate majority leader Howard H. Baker Jr. when the Tennessee Republican told reporters Jan. 30 all of these issues will come to the floor during this session of Congress.

On the heels of President Reagan's support of these issues in his State of the Union address, Baker told reporters the prayer amendment will be the first of a list of measures requested by the White House to be considered by the full Senate, probably late this spring. Abortion, tuition tax credits and line item veto measures asked for by Reagan also will come to the Senate floor, Baker indicated, but not in succession.

With two constitutional amendments on school prayer on the Senate calendar, it is unclear what shape that debate will take. Pending is a measure (S.J. Res. 73) pushed by President Reagan to allow state-sponsored oral prayer in public schools, along with a milder version (S.J. Res. 212) sponsored by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, permitting periods of silence and equal access for students wishing to meet voluntarily for religious purposes.

Both versions cleared the Senate Judiciary Committee last July in a compromise move which sent them to the floor without a recommendation from the panel.

The school prayer picture was further complicated when on Jan. 27 Baker introduced a third proposal (S.J. Res. 218). His measure would protect "the right of persons lawfully assembled, in any public building which is supported in whole or in part through the expenditure of public funds, to participate in nondenominational prayer."

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Baker said he had "no quarrel" with the Reagan or Hatch proposals and told the Senate one of them may be the "vehicle for the debate and the vehicle we send to the House." He added, "It is my hope one of these constitutional amendments will be passed by both bodies this year and submitted to the States to begin the ratification process."

Tuition tax credit and abortion proposals were considered by the Senate last year, but were strongly rejected. President Reagan's proposal on tuition tax credits was offered on the floor as a rider to a bill extending the nation's debt limit but was defeated 59-38. It remains on the Senate calendar as S.528.

Baker did not specify what abortion proposal will be considered this year. Last year, a constitutional amendment sponsored by Hatch declaring the right to abortion is not secured by the Constitution fell one vote shy of a simple majority and 18 votes short of the two-thirds majority necessary for passage.

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Disaster Relief Meeting
Focuses On Ministries

Baptist Press
2/2/84

DENTON, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptists have come a long way in just a few years in responding to disasters, relief leaders said at a workshop on disaster relief ministries.

More than 125 volunteers from 17 states attended a three-day workshop at Camp Copass to sharpen their ministry skills in disaster relief. It was the first convention-wide seminar of its kind and was attended by Baptist Men and their wives who donate time to help in disaster situations, said Brotherhood Commission Disaster Relief Coordinator Frank Black.

Four states displayed disaster relief units, which ranged from 18-wheel tractor-trailers to modified pick-up trucks and trailers capable of feeding hundreds of disaster victims. The purpose of the workshop was "to explore ways of having a vital ministry in the midst of a disaster," explained Baptist Men's Director, Douglas Beggs.

"Our past experience has shown Baptist Men can efficiently feed thousands of people who have temporarily or permanently lost use of their homes. We are now working to better coordinate those efforts to enhance that ministry even further," he added.

Baptists in 33 of the 50 states have some type of organized response to disasters, Black added, ranging from feeding homeless people to providing child care for disaster victims.

Participants at the workshop received training in communications, public relations, coordination of volunteers, child care and expanding relationships with other agencies such as the (Southern Baptist) Home and Foreign Mission Boards, Red Cross and Church World Service.

As the disaster relief program grows, Black explained, volunteers need a better relationship with fellow workers in neighboring states. The untapped potential for such cooperation was tested during the wide-scale response to aid victims of Hurricane Alicia in the Galveston area in late August.

Disaster relief mobile units and volunteers from seven Baptist state conventions joined forces to feed more than 100,000 meals to victims of the hurricane, which left thousands of people homeless. Black said it was the largest response of the disaster relief units to date.

The meals were distributed free by Baptist Men at a cost of \$11,000 or 11-cents per meal. Food was provided by the Red Cross and USDA while Baptists provided the manpower to prepare and distribute the meals.

Baptist Men have provided disaster assistance since Hurricane Carla ravaged Texas in 1961, Black pointed out. The Brotherhood Commission, along with state conventions and the Home Mission Board, has taken the lead in organizing Southern Baptists to respond with manpower, ministry and financial help during floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires and earthquakes.

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Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men, said Texas Baptists have gained a reputation as caring Christians with multitudes of people through the disaster relief efforts.

The big tractor-trailer rig with its field kitchens, auxiliary generator and communications has been used to feed more than 650,000 meals, Dixon added. It has traveled as far as Honduras to feed victims of Hurricane Fifi in 1974. As a result of that ministry, he added, there are now Baptist churches thriving where there had been none before.

Dixon, who said disaster relief is a ministry to the total person, explained the program is patterned after the Master's example of ministering personally to hungry, hurting people.

"It has given hundreds of volunteers the unique joy of using their talents in Christian ministry and has touched the lives of thousands of people in a redemptive way," he added.

Participants at the workshop ranged from retired machinist Al D. Wallraven of Oklahoma City, who came because he wanted to serve God with his talents, to former alcoholic Bob Young of Livingston, La., who hopes to organize a disaster relief program near Baton Rouge.

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Sunday School Trustees
Elect Williams, Godwin

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
2/2/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Trustees of the Baptist Sunday School Board have elected James D. Williams of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, to a newly created position as associate to the president, office of planning and research.

Williams, 49, is professor of adult education and associate dean for advanced studies in the seminary's school of religious education. He has taught at Southwestern since 1962 and will assume his new position in early summer.

During their annual meeting, trustees elected Johnnie C. Godwin to direct the Holman Bible publishing division. Godwin, 46, a 14-year veteran of the board, has managed the Broadman department since 1977. He succeeds E. Odell Crowe, who died in 1983.

Production of at-cost, inexpensive Scripture texts for mass distribution by churches and other groups was authorized by the trustees in approving the addition of a 17th program of work, Bible publishing, formerly part of the program of Broadman publishing. The board will continue to publish Bibles, Scripture portions and Bible reference books for distribution through retail outlets.

The new program must be approved by messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in June in Kansas City, Mo.

In other action, trustees authorized a five percent increase in church literature prices to become effective April 1985.

They also referred to the church programs and services committee a motion by Ned Mathews, pastor of Parkwood Baptist Church, Gastonia, N.C., requesting a discussion of the full board in August 1984 concerning treatment of eschatology (events relating to the Second Coming of Christ as discussed primarily in the book of Revelation) in Sunday school literature.

Earlier, James L. Holly, a physician from Beaumont, Texas, had requested a discussion by the full board and asked whether one line of the Sunday school curriculum might be assigned to reflect primarily the pre-millennial view. "The literature has traditionally not given that position a very good shake," said Holly.

Ralph McIntyre, director of the Bible teaching division, said editorial guidelines on eschatology currently under development specify "instructing editors and writers to deal with broad areas of common agreement and, when differences are held, we will seek to have those who hold the views share in the writing assignment."

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Joe Courson, pastor of Cinco Baptist Church, Fort Walton Beach, Fla., said referring the matter to the committee will allow trustees "not just time for an unplanned discussion, but we will have a committee report to act on."

As associate to the president, Williams will direct the office of planning and research, coordinate strategic planning throughout the board and relate strategic planning processes to annual budget planning. He also will serve as editorial secretary of the board and relate the board to other SBC agencies and state conventions.

With the creation of the new post, trustees authorized discontinuing two positions, special assistant to the executive office and director of the office of planning. Gomer Lesch and Richard Kay, who have held these positions, will be reassigned to other places of responsibility in the board.

Williams, a native of Harrisburg, Ill., holds the B.A. degree from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, and the M.R.E. and Ed.D degrees from Southwestern. He spent 11 years on local church staffs and has held numerous interim positions, presently serving as interim minister of education at North Richland Hills Baptist Church, Fort Worth.

Godwin, who came to the board in 1970, served as editor and coordinating editor of youth Sunday school materials and as supervisor of Broadman books and music before becoming manager of the Broadman products department. He worked closely with the American Bible Society in publishing the Broadman edition of the Good News Bible.

He is a native of Midland, Texas, and holds the B.A. degree from Baylor University, Waco, Texas, and the M.Div. degree from Southwestern seminary. He was pastor of three Texas churches before joining the board.

Elected as chairman of trustees was John J. Bryan, a pathologist from Bluefield, W. Va., who also chaired the presidential search committee which nominated Lloyd Elder as president. John David Laida, pastor of First Baptist Church, Clarksville, Tenn., was elected vice chairman and chairman of the executive committee, and Pat Landrum, pastor of Brighton Baptist Church, Brighton, Tenn., was elected secretary.

In his first address to trustees as president of the Sunday School Board, Elder outlined 10 areas of responsibility he will attempt to fulfill as chief executive.

"The president needs to spend his time with priorities and with dreaming--not for the people of the Sunday School Board but with them," said Elder. The mass Scripture distribution plan and expansion of language materials and services represent two early dreams in the implementation stages, he noted.

Other duties he cited included creating the basic value system and organizational structure of the board, allocating resources and evaluating the total enterprise.

Also, he noted, the president must create a board family environment. "I have not yet at the Baptist Sunday School Board met a 'hired hand,'" said Elder. "I have met scores and scores who believe God has called them here to be ministers." He said he had called upon the board's administrative staff to "join me in a common commitment to our place of leadership."

Helping lead Southern Baptists toward organizational renewal, focusing on the well-being of local churches and being true to himself were also emphasized by Elder.

"I want to be true to my biblical conservative perspective. I do not want to defend it. I see myself as one who is trying to build my life on biblical authority. I am going to be an unapologetic Southern Baptist," said Elder.

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