

August 31, 1954

127 Ninth Avenue, North — Nashville, Tennessee

STORE SUPERVISOR FOR
WESTERN AREA NAMED

NASHVILLE, Tenn.--(BP)--Mrs. Ford A. Burns, Kansas City, Mo., has been appointed Baptist Book Store supervisor in the western area of the Southern Baptist Convention territory, James L. Sullivan, executive secretary, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, announced.

Manager of the Baptist Book Store in Kansas City since June, 1946, Mrs. Burns is a native of Ardmore, Okla. Mrs. Burns, a former worker in the North Carolina Baptist Sunday school department, completed work in the school of religious education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex. She served as educational director in churches in Raleigh, N. C., Wichita Falls and Dallas, Tex.

Mrs. Burns will assume her duties September 1, and will be located in Kansas City, but will work directly with the Board's sales department.

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GREEN JOINS
BSSB STAFF

NASHVILLE, Tenn.--(BP)--Joseph F. Green, Jr., pastor, First Baptist Church, Alamosa, Colo., has been appointed assistant to the secretary in the book editorial department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville. Dr. William J. Fallis is secretary of the department.

Green, who will assume his duties September 1, is a graduate of Texas Wesleyan College, received the B.D. and Th.M. degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the M.A. degree from Baylor University. (MAT ENCLOSED)

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RIDGECREST BSU
RETREAT CHANGED

NASHVILLE, Tenn.--(BP)--The Baptist Student Retreat originally scheduled for Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly June 2-8, 1955, has been changed to June 9-15, according to G. Kearnie Keegan, secretary, Department of Student Work, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville. The Convention-wide Rural Church Conference scheduled for Ridgecrest June 9-15, will be June 2-8 instead.

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BAPTIST FEATURES

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August 31, 1954

HOW TO EXPAND AS A DENOMINATION WITHOUT BEING UNDEMOCRATIC IN POLITY

BY: Leon Macon

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fourth in a series of ten articles discussing some of the problems of Southern Baptist life. The opinions of Dr. Macon are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor.

Southern Baptists must continue to expand or they will enter a state of atrophy. Baptists, as a body, constitute a thing alive. It is a characteristic of life that if it is not growing it is retarding. We can't arrest life, it either remains young and advancing, or becomes old and decays. Life simply cannot be frozen into formulas and creeds to be used at our convenience. For this reason we greatly applaud our promotional forces on the Convention-wide and state-wide levels for the leadership given whereby we are constantly challenged to go forward. Without these challenging efforts we would possibly enter a period of old age and begin to die out as a denomination. As a growing and effective denomination we simply must continue to advance.

There is an attending danger in every organization of personalities, namely, a loss of our democratic processes. The polity of any body can come to mean only its constitution and organization and thus we would result in a vast institution without the vigors of life. The polity of our democracy must be preserved in our future march. We can avoid becoming undemocratic in our polity by constantly stressing our distinctives and message. In other words, we must keep our doctrines before us for herein our truth is preserved and our tenets and practices will remain free. People are flocking to us for we have certainty with freedom. We have something to believe without being bound into a totalitarian system. We must keep on expanding our program, but not neglect the scriptural teachings which inspire and create a great regard for individuality. We can keep our people informed and urge our pastors to take time to indoctrinate our people. Our program of instruction should be as strong for all of our distinctive beliefs as it is, say, in stewardship and missions.

We feel that the main threat to our democratic processes is not found in individual attitudes but found in the largeness of our size. We have grown so large in numbers that it is hard for deliberate actions to be held at our conventions. As a deliberative body becomes bigger it is guided more by its emotions than by its sense. We feel that our greatest danger lurks in our bigness and not

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in our purposes at all.

There are ways by which we can continue to expand as a great religious body without becoming undemocratic in our polity. Our committees could be made larger in order to be more representative, but not too large to carry on a business of deliberation. Our leaders must be careful to solicit the will of the people and invite constructive criticism about the things involved. Self-examination is often embarrassing but very essential to well-being. When we resent criticism we are afraid we are wrong. Baptists must criticize Baptists or the world will. If we do not criticize ourselves we will become set in the opinions and plans of a few. We must develop new and fresh leadership from the ranks. Strong personalities, however, democratic they are, are subject to egotism. New blood from the ranks of our people will aid greatly in guarding the rights and doctrines of all Baptists, thus preserving democracy.

The overlapping of leadership on boards should be avoided for this is not essential at all in that we have many able Baptists who are never heard from who can do the job just about as well as it is being done by others. Foolish leadership must be avoided. Our leaders should be great democrats and cosmopolitans. Above all let us not despise debate for there is no democracy without it. Debate is a mark of democracy preserved.

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Leon Macon is editor
of the Alabama Baptist

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....."Louisiana Baptists in Action," a new booklet edited by Robert L. Lee, outlining the work of the Louisiana Baptist Convention and its agencies and institutions, was released recently by the office of promotion and missions.

.....1954 will be the biggest year in the history of Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, reports Manager Willard K. Weeks. Registration already is well over the 25,000 mark, and registration for Music Week is expected to bring the total to 28,000.

....."Basic Belief," a 104-page book containing doctrinal messages, written by Richard N. Owen, editor of Tennessee Baptists' Baptist and Reflector, is expected off the press soon.

.....Jean Osborn, former pastor, First Baptist Church, Paris, Mo., is a new denominational worker for the Home Mission Board in Lemmon, S.D.

INTERSTATE PASTOR CHANGES

.....Fred McPherson from Southside Baptist Church, Lubbock, Tex., to First Baptist Church, Rio Dell, Calif.

.....Will Edd Langford, former pastor of Bayview Baptist Church, San Francisco, Calif., to the Baptist church in Erin, Tenn.

.....Ralph F. Powell from Buckhead Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga., to First Baptist Church, Union, Mo.

.....V. O. Baldwin from First Baptist Church, Eufaula, Okla., to First Baptist Church, Martinez, Calif.

.....M. Holt Sedeman, from First Baptist Church, Stonewall, Okla., to a pastorate in Clay-Platte Association, Mo.