



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041

DALLAS Thomas J. Brennan, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300

RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON Stan L. Hestey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

January 28, 1987

87-11

Bible To Be Focus Of Baptist
Biblical Inerrancy Conference

By Mark Wingfield

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—For the first time in their seven-year-old controversy, Southern Baptists will have a chance to talk together about the scholarly aspects of biblical inerrancy May 4-7.

Presidents of the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries are sponsoring the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in Ridgecrest, N.C. It is the first of three national conferences the seminary presidents will host in an attempt to resolve the denomination's ongoing political and theological controversy.

"This is the first time in the seven years of our debate that Southern Baptists will have an opportunity for a balanced, objective discussion of inerrancy apart from emotion," said Russell Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Milton Ferguson, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., said the presidents believe "it is time to move this issue from the arena of denominational politics to the arena of careful discussion and understanding."

The purpose of the conference is to "understand and evaluate biblical inerrancy as a way of affirming the inspiration and authority of the Bible," he said.

The conference will be "an opportunity to reaffirm our Southern Baptist commitment to a high view of Scripture and the authority of God's word," Dilday added.

Keynote speaker will be J.I. Packer, professor of historical and systematic theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. Packer is a charter member of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy and a noted author on the subject. His books include "Fundamentalism and the Word of God," "Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God" and "Knowing God."

Other scholars scheduled to speak include Kenneth Kantzer, dean of the Christianity Today Institute; Clark Pinnock, professor at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario; Millard Erickson, dean at Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.; Mark Noll, history professor at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill.; and Robert Preus of Concordia Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind.

The conference will include six general sessions of worship, with addresses by key speakers. In Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon sessions, participants will discuss specific topics in smaller groups.

Professors from the six SBC seminaries will lead these discussion sessions. Topics will include "The Relationship of the Bible to Natural Science," "The Strengths and Weaknesses of Fundamentalism," "The Relationship Between Views of the Bible and Missions" and "Biblical Teaching on Inspiration and Inerrancy."

The opening worship session will feature Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and vocalist Russell Newport of Springfield, Mo.

Dilday said the conference will allow ample time for informal discussion after the sessions. Lectures will be distributed in print, audio and video reproductions. Other writings of the major speakers will be available at the conference.

--more--

All Southern Baptists are invited to attend the conference, Dilday said. Pastors, church staff and lay leaders who are interested in a scholarly study of inerrancy will benefit, he noted.

The conference grew out of the presidents' "Glorieta Statement" made to the SBC Peace Committee Oct. 20. In that statement, the six presidents committed to help bring a resolution to the denomination's controversy.

Fundamental-conservatives and moderate-conservatives within the convention have been in disagreement since 1979. Much of that debate has centered on the six seminaries and the authority of the Bible.

Dilday said the presidents hope in the three conferences to foster serious discussion of the theological issues in the controversy. The other two conferences will be on biblical interpretation and biblical imperative.

Because the presidents expect a capacity crowd for this first conference, reservations should be made soon, Dilday said. Individual conference rates are \$148.75/single, \$110.50/double, \$101.80/triple, and \$97.45/four. Cost includes all lodging, meals and conference fees.

A deposit of \$12.75 should be sent to Conference on Biblical Inerrancy, Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, Box 128, Ridgecrest, N.C. 28770.

--30--

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY

May 4-7, 1987

Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center

May 4 -- Monday p.m.

Session I -- Russell Dilday, president, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, presiding
 7:00-8:00 Worship -- Russell Newport, music; Joel Gregory, sermon
 8:00-8:10 Program Overview and Purpose
 8:10-8:55 Address: Biblical Inerrancy in Historical Perspective -- Mark Noll, Department of History, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.
 8:55-9:40 Respondents

May 5 -- Tuesday a.m.

Session II -- Roy Honeycutt, president, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, presiding
 8:45-9:00 Music and Scripture
 9:00-9:45 Address: What is Biblical Inerrancy? -- Robert Preus, Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.
 9:45-10:30 Respondents
 10:30-11:00 Refreshment Recess
 11:00-11:45 Address: What is Biblical Inerrancy? -- Clark Pinnock, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
 11:45-12:30 Respondents

May 5 -- Tuesday Afternoon

Session III
 3:00-4:30 Seminars

May 5 -- Tuesday p.m.

Session IV -- Landrum Leavell, president, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, presiding
 6:45-7:00 Music and Scripture
 7:00-7:45 Address: Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy -- Clark Pinnock

--more--

7:45-8:30 Respondents
 8:30-8:45 Break
 8:45-9:30 Address: Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy -- Kenneth Kantzer, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Ill.
 9:30-10:15 Respondents

May 6 -- Wednesday a.m.

Session V -- Randall Lolley, president, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, presiding
 8:45-9:00 Music and Scripture
 9:00-9:45 Address: Inerrancy and the Divinity and the Humanity of the Bible -- James Packer, Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia
 9:45-10:30 Respondents
 10:30-11:00 Refreshment Recess
 11:00-11:45 Address: Inerrancy and the Divinity and the Humanity of the Bible -- Kenneth Kantzer
 11:45-12:30 Respondents

May 6 -- Wednesday Afternoon

Session VI
 3:00-4:30 Seminars

May 6 -- Wednesday p.m.

Session VII -- William Crews, president, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, presiding
 6:45-7:00 Music and Scripture
 7:00-7:45 Address: Problem Areas Related to Biblical Inerrancy -- Millard Erickson, Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.
 7:45-8:30 Respondents
 8:30-8:45 Break
 8:45-9:30 Address: Problem Areas Related to Biblical Inerrancy -- James Packer
 9:30-10:15 Respondents

May 7 -- Thursday a.m.

Session VIII -- Milton Ferguson, president, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, presiding
 8:45-9:00 Music and Scripture
 9:00-9:45 Address: Implications of Biblical Inerrancy for the Christian Mission -- Millard Erickson
 9:45-10:30 Respondents
 10:30-11:00 Refreshment Recess
 11:00-11:45 Address: Implications of Biblical Inerrancy for the Christian Mission -- James Packer
 11:45-12:30 Respondents
 12:30-12:45 Concluding Remarks

--30--

Supreme Court To Review
 'Moment Of Silence' Law

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press
 1/28/87

WASHINGTON (BP)--Acting in a closely watched case involving religious exercises in public schools, the Supreme Court announced Jan. 28 it will review a New Jersey law requiring a daily "moment of silence" in the state's public school classrooms at the beginning of each school day.

The law, enacted by the New Jersey legislature in 1982, states, "Principals and teachers in each public elementary and secondary school ... shall permit students to observe a one-minute period of silence to be used solely at the discretion of the individual student, before opening exercises of each school day for quiet and private contemplation and introspection."

--more--

Two years ago, the high court struck down an Alabama law that required a one-minute period for silent meditation or prayer. But in that 6-3 decision, at least two justices voting with the majority indicated they might approve a law that did not specifically require silent prayer. More than two dozen states have passed laws calling for moments of silence without any specific mention of prayer.

When it hears the case next term, the high court will review decisions of two lower federal tribunals that struck down the New Jersey statute. A U.S. district court rejected state legislators' claim that the purpose of the law was secular, not religious, holding the claim was an after-the-fact rationalization and a pretext.

In addition, the district court held the law violated two other standards used by the Supreme Court since 1971 in that it had the primary effect of advancing religion and would foster excessive governmental entanglement with religion.

A second panel consisting of three judges of the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia agreed with the district court, 2-1, that the purpose of the New Jersey law was religious. But all three judges disagreed with the lower panel on the other standards. The state then appealed to the Supreme Court.

Because the high court already has scheduled arguments in all cases it is able to hear during the current term, the New Jersey case will be held over for the 1987-88 term. A decision in the case might not come down until the spring of 1988. (85-1551, Karcher v. May)

--30--

Race Relations Are Major Agenda
For New Louisville Congregation

By Susan Shaw

Baptist Press
1/28/87

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—"Shalom." The Hebrew word for peace signifies spiritual, political, moral and economic harmony. And for a new church in Louisville, Ky., shalom symbolizes its commitment to racial reconciliation.

Shalom Baptist Church, although constituted only in May of 1986, has a long history of ministry through race relations.

Shalom's history began with Twenty-third and Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville. Twenty-third and Broadway was located in a middle-class urban community, but when many affluent residents moved to newer housing in the suburbs, a socio-economic and racial transition began.

Still the church was determined to stay in the community and minister to its needs. In 1968 it voted to integrate racially. As its pastors worked for civil rights, the church won respect among members of the black community and became truly integrated.

In the 1980s, the church's financial situation worsened, and members eventually decided to disband in 1985.

A group of members, however, still was interested in pressing on. The group met at nearby Baptist Tabernacle and asked Steve Fox, who had been interim pastor of Twenty-third and Broadway as it disbanded, to continue as pastor.

The group chose the name "shalom" because it represented the type of church members wanted to be. Asby Scott, now pastoral assistant at the church, says he stayed because "I believed in what the church was trying to do -- to have an integrated church."

Fox resigned at the end of 1985, and for the next three months Scott and Ken Casey preached. In March of 1986, Wes Lites, a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary student from Pine Bluff, Ark., was called as pastor.

In May the church formulated its constitution, and in June it moved from the chapel at Baptist Tabernacle to a house on Louisville's South First Street. Later that summer Jane Lites, also a seminary student, was called as associate pastor.

--more--

Rene Shuler, a Southern Seminary social work student from Bonneau, S.C., joined the staff as minister of social work in the fall. Two other seminary students will join the staff as interns this spring: Keith Merkey of Bedford, Va., will be minister of the arts, and Blake Gooch of Jasper, Ga., will work in outreach to the community.

The church is working to build its ministries on the gifts of its members. Wes Lites explains: "We see all persons as ministers. Each person is free to exercise his or her gifts."

The church, which now has 16 members and around 20 to 25 people in attendance on Sunday mornings, continues to be distinctive in its focus on maintaining diversity of race, education and socio-economic levels. Wes Lites notes members of Shalom have "heard the word that the gospel breaks down barriers and distinctives. No longer is color noticeable; it's the normal thing."

Out of the tradition of blacks and whites, "the gospel is enriched by dimensions and aspects of both," he adds, explaining, a strength of the church is the diversity among members. "In persons not like ourselves, we discover who we are," he insists.

The goals of the church are to be a strong center for human rights, to be an open house for all persons, to strengthen families and to respond to the crisis in community families, especially black families, and to develop a model for Southern Baptist churches for using the arts in community outreach.

The church particularly is interested in establishing relationships with people in the immediate community around the church, Wes Lites says. He lists several specific target needs for ministry: crisis counseling, alcoholics, runaways at the nearby Shelter House, University of Louisville students and senior adult homes in Old Louisville.

The church's members are its resources, its pastor stresses, adding, "The people who choose to be members here carry the load." Because of the church's financial situation, much of the group's ministry will be as a brokers to connect needs with resources already available through other agencies.

Tiny Houston, a Louisville high school senior who began coming to the church only a few months ago, sums up her feelings about the church: "There is love and warmth here. They don't turn anybody down. You can tell their faith is strong. I feel welcome and wanted here."

"We're not doing anything abnormal here," Wes Lites explains. "We're just doing the gospel as best we understand it."

—30—

Reagan Renews Plea
For School Prayer

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press
1/28/87

WASHINGTON (BP)—President Reagan, delivering his sixth State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress, renewed his oft-repeated plea that lawmakers amend the Constitution to provide for "voluntary prayer" in public school classrooms.

But missing from the chief executive's list of legislative priorities for the new 100th Congress was any mention of two other key planks in Reagan's social agenda, aid to parents who send their children to sectarian schools and a constitutional amendment to ban abortion.

Reagan made his pitch for school prayer toward the end of the 30-minute address in the larger context of an appeal for educational excellence.

As he concluded that section of the speech, the president said, "Finally, let's stop suppressing the spiritual core of our national being. Our nation could not have been conceived without divine help. Why is it that we can build a nation with our prayers but we can't use a schoolroom for voluntary prayer? The 100th Congress of the United States should be remembered as the one that ended the expulsion of God from America's classrooms."

—more—

Reagan also urged Congress and a nationwide television audience, "Let's redouble our personal efforts to provide for every child a safe and drug-free learning environment. If the crusade against drugs succeeds with our children, we will defeat that scourge all over the country."

In addition, he called for improved levels of performance in math and science, areas in which American pupils reportedly have fallen behind their counterparts in other industrialized societies that compete with the United States for world markets.

And on a matter related to the nation's observance of the 200th anniversary of the nation's Constitution, the president said, "Let's insist that students not leave high school until they have studied and understood the basic documents of our national heritage."

Despite Reagan's plea for a return to officially sanctioned prayer in public school classrooms, Congress is not likely to go along. The last time a constitutional amendment on the subject came to a floor vote — in 1984 — a Republican-controlled U.S. Senate rejected it. The House of Representatives has not voted on such a proposal since 1971.

—30—

SBC President Says Prayer Can
Open Door To World Ministry

Baptist Press
1/28/87

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)—The president of the Southern Baptist Convention promised the church he leads will be "united in heart with brothers and sisters across America" in prayer for world evangelization.

Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., noted he sees "monumental significance" in the SBC Foreign Mission Board trustees' call for "concerts of prayer" for advancing the gospel.

In December, the trustees urged Southern Baptist churches to initiate special prayer for world evangelization during all worship services, Sunday school classes, church training programs and other activities on the first Sunday of every month.

A toll-free "PrayerLine," 1-800-ALL-SEEK (1-800-255-7335), at the Foreign Mission Board relays the latest prayer concerns from across the world. The number can be dialed from every state except Virginia, Alaska and Hawaii, where regular toll calls will be needed to 1-804-355-6581.

"We may be on the brink of the greatest missionary advance the world has ever known," Rogers said in a telephone interview. "The world is ripe for judgment and ripe for evangelism. Sin has reached tidal wave proportions. On the other hand, there's a generation that, in a sense, has tried everything and found that nothing works. Many people are turning anew to the Lord.

"If God has given us an open door, we need to energize ourselves by prayer and step through it."

Rogers, who has been preaching from the New Testament book of Acts at Bellevue, noted, "If we prayed as the early church prayed, we might see more of the miraculous expansion of the missionary effort that they saw so long ago."

He also pointed to a "spinoff blessing" of concerts of prayer: "There may be some aspects in which we're not as unified as we could be, but I don't know a better source of unity than prayer. A wise man said a long time ago that it's not enough to be wired together by organization or rusted together by tradition but fused together through prayer."

Bellevue, Rogers added, is "turning up the burner" in prayer.

He recently urged church members "to saturate every activity with prayer, from choir practices to deacons' meetings to Sunday school classes to staff meetings ... that prayer not be some formalism that opens and closes the meetings, but an integral part of every meeting."

—30—