



**BAPTIST PRESS**

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May 8, 1987

87-72

Scholars Appraise  
Facets Of Inerrancy

By Marv Knox

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--World-class conservative scholars and Southern Baptist leaders held biblical inerrancy up to the light of critical appraisal during the convention's first Conference on Biblical Inerrancy May 4-7.

They examined facet after facet of the doctrine that has become the centerpiece of Southern Baptists' theological crown jewels -- and the center of their eight-year-old theological/political struggle. The conference was sponsored by the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in North Carolina.

Definitions and explanations of inerrancy refracted off the doctrine:

-- "It basically means, 'not wandering from the truth,'" said Kenneth Kantzer, chancellor of Trinity College in Deerfield, Ill. Accepting inerrancy requires the Christian to believe God caused his human writers to "freely produce just such a book as God intends Scripture to be."

-- Error is an "affirmation or assertion which is an attempt to tell the truth and fails," said J.I. Packer, professor of historical and systematic theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. "Nothing that we have found convicts biblical assertions of factual or moral error. No biblical phenomena need invalidate the confession of inerrancy that the teaching of Jesus and the apostles leads us to make."

-- The inerrant Scriptures are "words taught by the Holy Spirit (having) that quality which makes them overwhelmingly reliable witnesses to the words and deeds of the God who has in his inspired spokesmen and in his incarnate Son disclosed himself to men for their salvation," said Robert Preus, president of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Despite the similarity of definitions, Clark Pinnock said: "Inerrancy is not the firm and clear category we are being told that it is. It is supposed to be the very answer to all our problems, and yet the inerrantists themselves cannot agree on what it signifies."

Pinnock, professor of systematic theology at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, was a leader in the Southern Baptist inerrancy movement in the 1960s and early 1970s. He said his view has not changed "one whit in the matter of holding to the Bible as the inspired word of God," but "honest inerrantists surely must know their favorite category is not clear or firm."

He was echoed by Millard Erickson, dean of Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., who said a too-vigorous attempt to prove inerrancy results from a misunderstanding of the term. For example, misunderstandings of inerrancy arise out of the failure to see biblical statements in their cultural contexts or extending the range of the Bible's authority to include "every subject which it mentions, or even beyond that, to subjects that it does not address."

That includes science, said Packer: "The Bible contains, strictly speaking, no scientific statements at all. Biblical statements about God explain natural processes in terms of God's personal purpose but do not describe them scientifically."

And concerning charges that the Bible misrepresents history, Packer said the Bible is more concerned with advancing knowledge of God than presenting a detailed historical outline. "Biblical history, told from the standpoint of divine overruling, is by our standards sketchy on its human side, but its omissions should not be regarded as error or suspect," he explained.

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Although he said inerrancy covers all of the Bible, Preus noted the doctrine does not imply exactness of quotations, a position seconded by Kantzer, who said, "the words of Jesus in the gospels are not to be thought of as direct quotes." He explained Jesus' quotes likely are the authors' accurate paraphrases, similar to recitations of conversations by eye-witnesses.

Kantzer and Preus also pointed out "troublesome" biblical problems include apparent contradictory accounts that claim to relate the same event. Kantzer warned against overstretching the harmonization or reconciliation of apparently discrepant accounts "for which no plausible harmonization is possible," noting, "It is not necessary for us to be able to have a plausible solution to every alleged contradiction before committing ourselves to inerrancy."

Major speakers noted the doctrine of inerrancy applies only to the original autographs (writings) of Scripture, none of which exist.

Observers from among about 1,000 participants in the conference noted the inclusiveness of the type of inerrancy described by the primary speakers. Pinnock picked up on this and encouraged of his listeners who had been reluctant to claim the title "inerrantist" to do so.

The current debate within the convention is not between inerrancy and non-inerrancy but between an elaborate, structured view of inerrancy versus a simpler, experienced-based view, he said. "I wish that Southern Baptists would see that within evangelicalism outside their context we have been able to maintain some peace and cooperative effort between those who think it is very important to hold a strict definition of inerrancy and those who prefer a more open attitude to the text of Scripture," he added.

However, Southern Baptist speakers on the program countered Pinnock's plea. Both inerrantists and non-inerrantists who responded to the non-Southern Baptist scholars' presentations expressed reservations that Southern Baptists who do not claim to be inerrantists should accept the label.

The inerrantists, most of them leaders in the movement to more tightly define the Baptist Faith and Message Statement's description that the Bible has "truth, without mixture of error, for its matter," said others with less-conservative views do not deserve their title. They were supported by Kantzer, who said the real reason many non-inerrantists object to the title "is that they believe some parts of the Bible are true, and some parts are not."

Kantzer's remark prompted one seminary professor in the audience to shout out, "No!" Other speakers reflected his theme, however.

Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, compared the Southern Baptist Convention to a large building with diverse occupants. Baptists who refuse to accept inerrancy and subject the Bible to historical-critical analysis are in the basement of that building, "chipping away at the foundation" and threatening the entire structure, he said.

Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, characterized non-inerrantists as people "who believe the Bible is flawed with errors" and noted the "price for peace (within the SBC) is too high" if that means compromising the principle of inerrancy. He said inerrantists cannot "support those who teach the exact opposite of what we hold to be sacred."

Non-inerrantists said they hesitate to accept the term because they believe it is misleading and dangerous, not because they do not affirm the authority of Scripture.

Peter Rhea Jones, pastor of First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga., suggested use of the word "infallible" rather than "inerrant," pointing out the words often are used interchangeably: "It seems to me that some are claiming a greater degree of precision than God has seen to give us, and the word 'inerrancy' certainly denotes on first hearing an absolute meaning without exceptions. My contention is that the actual character of the Bible corresponds to infallibility."

Bill Hull, provost at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., voiced reservations about making inerrancy the "stackpole" around which the SBC becomes cohesive. He pointed out six Baptist denominations have organized around inerrancy and reported every one has had an open, catastrophic split.

Pinnock, who taught at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary from 1965 to 1969, urged participants to work toward peace in their convention. He suggested both sides in the conflict, whom he called "moderates" and "militants," sign the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy developed by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy.

Moderates must "make it much clearer ... that they are in fact biblical conservatives and evangelical Christians," he said. He urged them to distinguish their faith "as forcefully from the errors on the left as they presently do from errors on the right."

Meanwhile, Pinnock said, the other side must "stop behaving as if they are Roman Catholics. Behind inerrancy lies the desire to secure God's truth invincibly so it cannot be lost or distorted. The logic of orthodoxy taken to its full extent can lead on right to Rome."

He cautioned Southern Baptists to curb their zeal, lest they "hurt a lot of good people who happen to love God."

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Newton Named Communications  
Head For Lausanne Committee

Baptist Press  
5/8/87

ATLANTA (BP)—Jim Newton, long-time writer and editor for the Baptist Press, has been named director of communications for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.

Newton, director of news and information services for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, will be moving to Singapore in July to head communications for the broadly-based interdenominational, international committee.

For the past two years, Newton, 51, has served as senior communications consultant to the Lausanne Committee, developing a comprehensive international communications program leading up to an international congress the committee will hold in Singapore in 1989.

His appointment was announced in Charlotte, N. C., by Thomas Wang, international director for the Lausanne Committee.

At almost the same time, the Lausanne Committee announced a decision to move the site of its 1989 International Congress on World Evangelization from Lausanne, Switzerland, to Singapore, in an effort to save an estimated \$3 million in costs.

Last July, Evangelist Billy Graham, honorary chairman of the Lausanne Committee, had announced the 1989 congress would be held at the same location of the 1974 international congress which gave birth to the Lausanne committee and the movement it represents. Leighton Ford of Charlotte, Graham's brother-in-law, is chairman of the 75-member committee. The international headquarters will be moving in June from Charlotte to Singapore.

Newton had served for seven months in 1983 as news director for Graham's International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam, on special leave from the Home Mission Board.

In 1986, Newton was manager of the news room for the second such conference, called Amsterdam 86. Newton was also on the press staff for the first World Congress on Evangelism sponsored by Graham in Berlin, Germany, in 1966.

For the past 28 years, Newton has worked in various communications roles for the SBC Home Mission Board, the SBC Brotherhood Commission, the SBC Executive Committee, and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

He has been a staff writer and editor for Baptist Press bureaus in Dallas, Memphis, Atlanta, and was for eight years assistant director of the Baptist Press in Nashville, 1965-73.

Before going to the Home Mission Board in 1980, Newton was editor of World Mission Journal published by the Brotherhood Commission for eight years. He was press representative in Texas Baptists' public relations office from 1959-65.

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A journalism graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, Newton is a third-generation weekly newspaper editor from Kingsville and Bishop, Texas. His brother, mother, father and both grandfathers were editors of weekly newspapers in Texas.

Newton and his wife, the former Patricia Tullos of Clinton, Miss., plan to purchase a home in Clinton, where Mrs. Newton's family and their two daughters live. Mrs. Newton, a secretary in the church music department for the Georgia Baptist Convention, is a former editorial assistant for the Baptist Record in Mississippi.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press

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CORRECTION: In the Committee on Boards report, released through Baptist Press April 28, the name of Robert W. Clayton, pastor of Fellowship church, Rome, Ga., was omitted as a nominee to the Foreign Mission Board. Clayton replaces William Lee Clinton of Tucker, Ga., who was ineligible for renomination.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

Baptist Press  
5/8/87

SOUTHERN BAPTIST PASTORS' CONFERENCE  
Cervantes Convention Center  
June 14-15, 1987

Sunday Evening, June 14, 1987

6:30—Pre-session Music — Festival Choir and Orchestra, Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga.

- Welcome -- Nelson L. Price, pastor, Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga.
- Invocation — Robert E. Reccord, pastor, Carmel Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.
- Congregational Praise — Jim Faull, minister of music, Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga.
- Special Music -- Festival Choir and Orchestra, Gary Harris, soloist, Marietta, Ga.
- Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in Forgiveness" — Thomas D. Elliff, pastor, First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla.
- Congregational Praise
- Offertory: Roswell Street Orchestra, Phillip Allen, director, Marietta, Ga.
- Offering
- Special Music — Festival Choir and Orchestra
- Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in Conquering Contemporary Crisis" — Richard Vera, evangelist, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas
- Special Music — Roger Hill, soloist, Marietta, Ga.
- Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in the Compassion For Souls" — Bailey Smith, evangelist, Del City, Okla.
- Benediction — James Garner, pastor, First Baptist Church, Bogalusa, La.

Monday Morning, June 15

- 9:00—Special Music — Greg Buchanan, concert harpist, Fort Worth, Texas
- Invocation — Otto Valdes, missionary, Birmingham Baptist Association, Birmingham, Ala.
  - Congregational Praise
  - Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in a Life of Self-Denial" — Jack Millwood, pastor, First Baptist Church, Chickasaw, Ala.
  - Congregational Praise
  - Special Music — Joe Estes, music evangelist, Mobile, Ala.
  - Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in Resurrection" — Landrum P. Leavell II, president, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
  - Special Music — Greg Buchanan
  - Testimony — Mark Price, Cleveland Cavaliers, Cleveland
  - Congregational Praise
  - Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in Salvation" — E.W. McCall, pastor, St. Stephens Baptist Church, LaPuente, Calif.

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- Congregational Praise
- Offering
- Special Presentation -- Tom Clark, Broadman, Nashville
- Special Music -- Jeff and Joy Earle, concert artists, Marietta, Ga.
- Message: "The Emmanuel Factor and Neo-Pagan Philosophy" -- Carl F.H. Henry, evangelical theologian and author, World Vision International, Arlington, Va.
- Benediction -- Jim McLeroy, pastor, First Southern Baptist Church, Las Vegas, Nev.

#### Monday Afternoon, June 15

- 1:15--Special Music -- Miss J.J. Turner, concert soloist, Carrollton, Ga.
- Invocation -- Jay T. George, pastor, Overton Road Baptist Church, Tucson, Az.
- Congregational Praise -- Joe Estes
- Special Music -- Miss J.J. Turner
- Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in the Spirit-Filled Life" -- Ralph M. Smith, pastor, Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas
- Congregational Praise
- Special Music -- Joe Estes
- Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... When We Need Him" -- Richard G. Lee, pastor, Rehoboth Baptist Church, Tucker, Ga.
- Congregational Praise
- Offering
- Election of Officers
- Special Music -- Greg Buchanan
- Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in the Church" -- David Miller, missionary, Little Red River Baptist Association, Heber Springs, Ark.
- Congregational Praise
- Special Music -- Miss Marlesa Ball, Miss Georgia, 1986
- Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in Contending for the Faith" -- Jerry Sutton, pastor, Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville
- Benediction -- Gary Taylor, pastor, Tower Grove Baptist Church, St. Louis

#### Monday Evening, June 15

- 6:30--Pre-session Music -- Festival Choir and Orchestra
- Special Music -- Babbie Mason, concert artist, Marietta, Ga.
- Invocation -- Randy W. Turner, pastor, Parkway Baptist Church, Natchez, Miss.
- Congregational Praise -- Jim Faull
- Special Music -- Greg Buchanan
- Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in Search of Integrity" -- James T. Draper Jr., pastor, First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas
- Welcome to the Southern Baptist Convention -- Adrian Rogers, pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church, and president of Southern Baptist Convention
- Introduction of 1988 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference Officers
- Offertory -- Roswell Street Orchestra
- Offering
- Special Music -- Festival Choir and Orchestra, Roger Hill, soloist, Marietta, Ga.
- Message: "The Emmanuel Factor ... in Evangelism" -- Jerry Johnston, evangelist, Overland Park, Kan.
- Benediction -- New President of SBC Pastors' Conference

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Pastors Will Focus  
On 'Emmanuel Factor'

Baptist Press  
5/8/87

ST. LOUIS (BP)--"The Emmanuel Factor" of how Christ influences and impacts the daily routine of life will be the theme of the 1987 Pastors' Conference, to be held June 14-15 in Cervantes Convention Center.

"I have urged each of the speakers to preach Jesus," said Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., and president of the Pastors' Conference.

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The Pastors' Conference, expected to attract about 20,000 people, is one of the meetings held in advance of the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, scheduled June 16-18, also in Cervantes Convention Center.

Price told Baptist Press he encouraged speakers "to preach Christ and not get involved in denominational politics. I want the conference to build up the pastors and the people who attend, and I am optimistic the speakers are going to do that."

Price said he wrote to each speaker and said: "I want to encourage you to preach Jesus. We will have three days following the conference in which the SBC can deal with expedient 'political' issues and other vital topics. That is essential. However, our presentation of Jesus in the proper manner will include the spirit with which this is done. Therefore, it is imperative that we deal with inspiration and motivation."

The program, he said, is "loaded with people who are not big names. I wanted to blend familiar voices with some new voices. Some of the speakers were asked to speak because of personal acquaintances or hearing from friends about how these people were being used by the Lord. I felt some of them might be a contemporary voice and an encouragement."

Carl F.H. Henry, whom Price said is "Southern Baptists' best known international theologian," will speak on "The Emmanuel Factor and Neo-pagan Philosophy." Price said: "I thought we needed to hear this gentleman." Henry, a former editor of "Christianity Today," is from Arlington, Va., and is associated with World Vision International.

Price also invited Landrum P. Leavell II, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, to address the conference on "The Emmanuel Factor in Resurrection." Price said Leavell "is a voice that needs to be heard."

Other well known names include former SBC presidents Bailey E. Smith of Del City, Okla., and James T. Draper Jr., of Euless, Texas. Smith will speak on the compassion for souls and Draper on the search for integrity.

Among others to speak include Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla.; Richard Vera, an evangelist from Dallas; Jack Millwood, pastor of First Baptist Church of Chickasaw, Ala.; E.W. McCall, pastor of St. Stephens Baptist Church in La Puente, Calif;

Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church of Austin, Texas; Richard G. Lee, pastor of Rehoboth Baptist Church of Tucker, Ga.; David Miller, director of missions from Heber Springs, Ark.; Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church of Nashville; and Jerry Johnston, an evangelist from Overland Park, Kan.

Music will be led by Jim Faull, minister of music at Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga.

In addition to Price, other officers of the Pastors' Conference are Tommy Hinson, pastor of First Baptist Church of West Memphis, Ark., vice president, and Richard Blair, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, secretary-treasurer.