



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 2, 1988

88-73

Gregory declines
Nomination to HMB

By Dan Martin

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Texas Baptist convention President Joel Gregory has declined a nomination to serve on the board of trustees of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, became involved in controversy in late March when a Texas member of the Southern Baptist Committee on Nominations said his nominations of Texans to serve on Southern Baptist Convention boards were treated unfairly because of convention politics.

Jimmy Towers, pastor of Crossroads Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas, said an unnamed Texas Baptist pastor had been removed from consideration as a nominee to serve on the Home Mission Board and was replaced by Gregory.

Towers said Gregory, who initially had been nominated to serve on the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, was shifted to the Home Mission Board to make room for the nomination of Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, and the unnamed pastor was removed from consideration.

Towers was a Texas member of the Committee on Nominations, which is composed of a layperson and a clergy or denominationally related member from each of the 33 states qualified for representation. The committee's only function is to nominate trustees to the 20 national agencies of the SBC.

Gregory told Baptist Press he had contacted Committee on Nominations Chairman Joseph T. Knott III of Raleigh, N.C., shortly after "the thing broke. I let the chairman know how I felt about it. He told me the procedure and understood how I felt about it."

Gregory said at the time he was "in the process of appealing to the elected and appointed Southern Baptist leadership to restore that brother to his rightful place on the Home Mission Board."

He said he would pursue the matter "in every way to minimize confrontation, acrimony or personalities. We do not need any more of that."

"The whole incident speaks for itself," he said. "It is obvious that the elected leadership or appointed leadership did not want me to serve on the Foreign Mission Board.

"I can certainly accept that. But I am grieved that a very worthy Texas Baptist brother was removed from consideration for the Home Mission Board to accommodate me."

Gregory released a statement to Baptist Press in early May:

"There are two reasons that I cannot accept the appointment: personal and procedural.

"Personally, I am president of the Texas convention as well as having a heavy outside speaking schedule. I do not need any more outside responsibilities this year.

"Procedurally, an excellent Texas Baptist brother was nominated by the Texas representatives but later removed from any consideration in order to accommodate me. I cannot personally accept the appointment under that circumstance. That implies nothing about what anyone else should or should not do.

"Finally, this refusal is no reflection on the Home Mission Board or its leadership. At the appropriate time, I would be honored to serve any SBC agency."

Gregory told Baptist Press he does not know if the Texas pastor who was dropped from consideration will be restored to nomination to the HMB.

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Patterson was contacted about his plans and told Baptist Press: "At this point, I have no comment other than to say I have given permission to put my name on the list. They understand I am seeking the face of God, as I want to do what is best for everybody and cannot see what that is at the present time."

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The removal of the Texas Baptist pastor was retaliation, Towers told the Standard.

The motion to place Patterson on the Foreign Mission Board and to shift Gregory to the Home Mission Board was part of an "orchestrated" scenario, Towers said, adding he had been told by other committee members Patterson was not simply recommended in place of Gregory "because Joel is too popular to remove."

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Under convention bylaws, the nominations of people to fill vacancies on trustee boards were announced the last week in April, "at least 45 days before" the annual meeting.

Gregory made his announcement declining the nomination after the list of nominees still included his name.

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T.B. Maston, Christian ethics
Pioneer, dies at age 90

N- (CO
SWBTS)

Baptist Press
5/2/88

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--T.B. Maston, the "conscience of Southern Baptists" and a pioneer in Christian ethics, died May 1 at the age of 90.

Maston was professor emeritus of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he taught for 41 years, from 1922 to 1963.

During his tenure at Southwestern, Maston led the racial desegregation movement among Southern Baptists, writing about the subject as early as 1927. He published two books in 1959 that urged Baptists to integrate.

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Maston also was a pioneer in the study of Christian ethics among Southern Baptists and wrote 23 books on that subject as well as Christian development. His two most recent books were published in 1987.

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Maston continued his role among Southern Baptists up to the time of his death, writing a series of articles about ordination as recently as last year.

Maston was a popular speaker for several years at missionary orientations for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and traveled to more than 25 countries on 17 occasions speaking to missionaries.

Maston was born Nov. 26, 1897, in Jefferson County, Tenn. He was a graduate of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn.; Southwestern; Texas Christian University in Fort Worth; and Yale University in New Haven, Conn.

He married Essie Mae McDonald June 11, 1921, and they had two sons, Thomas McDonald, who died last November, and Harold Eugene of New York.

For 61 years, the Mastons cared for their eldest son, Tom, who was born with cerebral palsy.

He is survived by his wife and son, Harold, who is a professor at New York University.

Funeral services for Maston are to be May 4 at Gambrell Street Baptist Church in Fort Worth, where he was a member for more than 65 years.

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(A Maston life history will run tomorrow and pictures are being sent to Baptist state papers by Southwestern Seminary.)

Belize missionaries
Killed in car wreck

N-FMB

Baptist Press
5/2/88

ORANGEWALK TOWN, Belize (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries Alan and Lee Seay were killed April 29 when their car was struck head-on by an armored vehicle traveling in a British Army convoy near Orangewalk Town, Belize. Two Belize Baptists in the car with them were injured seriously.

Initial reports indicate the steering on the army vehicle may have failed.

The Seays and their passengers, Raul and Maggy Escalante, were returning to Orangewalk Town after a Baptist associational meeting when the accident occurred. The Seays apparently were killed instantly. The Escalantes were hospitalized, he with severe bruises and she with head injuries.

The Seays, both from Spartanburg, S.C., were appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1985. They were working with a new church in Orangewalk Town that they began about two months ago.

Seay, 48, was pastor of Jan Lee Baptist Church in Burkburnett, Texas, before missionary appointment. He also had been pastor of First Baptist Church in Byers, Texas; Vashti Baptist Church in Vashti, Texas; Orsino Baptist Church in Merritt Island, Fla.; and University Baptist Church in Lancaster, S.C.

He was a graduate of Dallas Baptist College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Mrs. Seay, 45, was the former Lee Rousey. She had been a secretary in Lancaster and bookkeeper in Wichita Falls, Texas, before her appointment.

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The Seays are survived by their parents, three children and a grandson. His parents are Dudley and Thelma Seay of Greenville, S.C. Her parents are Edwin and Willette Rousey of Spartanburg. Their children are Alan Seay Jr. of Petrolia, Texas; Richard Seay of Byers; and Angela Land of Canyon, Texas, and their grandson is Brandon Seay of Byers.

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Otis Brady, chairman of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Belize, said the Seays "were people of vision. They had the commitment, education, training and experience that uniquely qualified them for missionary service. Their death is a tragedy beyond anything we can imagine."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Las Vegas rooms
To be bountiful

By Marv Knox

N-10
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And if messengers need more than 6,570 rooms? No problem, said Hedquist. Las Vegas is a desert version of Hotel Heaven, with 51,000 rooms -- 5,000 rooms more than the total registration for the largest SBC annual meeting in history.

Las Vegas has promised to be a boon and a blessing to Southern Baptists since messengers chose it as a convention site during their 1983 annual meeting in Pittsburgh.

"There is no question people are going to be offended by the gambling," Hedquist noted. Indeed, the city has survived repeated attempts to get messengers to change cities for the '89 convention.

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In all, Las Vegas will offer 5,480 rooms within two miles of the convention center. A recreational vehicle park is located less than a mile from the center.

Shuttle buses will service the convention hotels, Hedquist reported. But parking will not be a problem, either, he added: "The two things about Las Vegas are lights and free parking. All hotels and the convention center are surrounded by free parking."

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Hotels with rooms in the SBC block are Alexas Park, Bali Hai Resort, Caesar's Palace, Dunes, El Rancho, Flamingo Hilton, Golden Nugget, Hacienda, Hotel Continental, La Mirage, Landmark.

Also Las Vegas Hilton, Mardi Gras Inn, Marina Inn, Mini-Price Motel, Paddlewheel Hotel, Riviera, Royal Las Vegas, Sahara, Sands, Union Plaza.

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Interpret Bible into modern
Context, speakers say

By Mark Wingfield

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5/2/88

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Speakers at the Southern Baptist Conference on Biblical Interpretation April 25-27 called on Christians to interpret the Bible in language secular people can understand.

Robert Johnston, dean of North Park College and Seminary in Chicago; Walter Kaiser, dean at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill.; and Grant Osborne, professor at Trinity, delivered major addresses at the conference sponsored by the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

"The church needs to speak in a language more attuned to where modern men and women live," Johnston said. "If mission is our goal, communication must begin with where people are."

Many secular Americans may be rejecting the gospel because they do not have any cultural models for understanding the church's traditional presentation, he added. While most churches are preaching accountability, most Americans are searching for fulfillment, he said.

Most successful evangelism has interpreted basic biblical themes in modern terms, he noted, citing Bill Bright's "Four Spiritual Laws" as an example.

Although the image of the cross as Christ's penal substitutionary action for sinful man is accurate, it is not the only valid image, Johnston said. "If the gospel is again to evoke faithful response, we need to help modern men and women see the cross as revealing the extent to which God our heavenly Father has expressed his love so that we might be reconciled to him and to his world," he explained.

Kaiser drew a distinction between the meaning and significance of Old Testament passages. The meaning is determined by the author's intention, but the significance involves the reader's perspective, he said.

Failure to interpret the Bible in light of both the author's intention and modern culture will result in "the loss of meaning in the house of God," Kaiser insisted.

Scripture must be "properly read" to be authoritative, Johnston said in another address. Interpretation requires a two-way conversation between the historical situation of the text and the modern understanding of the reader, he said.

Proper interpretation will elicit the same kind of response on modern hearers as it did on the original hearers, Johnston said.

Osborne explained interpretation is incomplete until put in a modern context. This involves understanding both modern culture and ancient culture, he said.

"The tendency is to say, 'The text contains all the meaning there is.' The problem, however, is that the New Testament author shared certain assumptions with his readers, and the interpreter needs to discover these underlying 'givens' in order to understand the text properly," he explained.

And on the modern side, "every exegetical (interpretive) decision has political ramifications" in the current Southern Baptist controversy, Osborne said. These ramifications should be classed as tolerable or intolerable only on the basis of whether or not they are "cardinal doctrines," he added.

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(Also contributing to this story were Trennis Henderson and Norman Jameson.)

Ministry in Christ's name
Will reach untouchables

By Susan Todd

N- CO
(WMMU)

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)-- Ministry, when motivated by the life of Christ, will compel Christians to reach out and touch the "untouchables" in their lives, a national Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union leader claimed.

Speaking to WMU magazine writers April 29, WMU Associate Executive Director Bobbie Sorrill urged them to model Jesus' example of touching a leper.

"I don't know any lepers," she said. "But maybe a WMU magazine could lead me to (identify) the untouchables in my life. It could lead me to touch the life of someone seated next to me on a plane when I would rather sit quietly and read. It may be someone whose spirit is in despair.

"An untouchable for you might be entirely different from a leper. It could be someone with AIDS or someone who does something you don't think is right. There are untouchables all over the world."

Sorrill pointed out the cost and sometimes unpleasantness of touching lives. Yet when the Christian mandate is followed, it should not even be a question, she said.

Jesus "clearly stated his mission," Sorrill said. "He came to change lives. It is still the Father's intent that that be our mission today. Jesus died and went to heaven. He didn't take the mission with him. He gave us, his followers, the mission to reach people around us."



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LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**
Historical Commission, SBC
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Kaiser drew a distinction between the meaning and significance of Old Testament passages. The meaning is determined by the author's intention, but the significance involves the reader's perspective, he said.

Failure to interpret the Bible in light of both the author's intention and modern culture will result in "the loss of meaning in the house of God," Kaiser insisted.

Scripture must be "properly read" to be authoritative, Johnston said in another address. Interpretation requires a two-way conversation between the historical situation of the text and the modern understanding of the reader, he said.

Proper interpretation will elicit the same kind of response on modern hearers as it did on the original hearers, Johnston said.

Osborne explained interpretation is incomplete until put in a modern context. This involves understanding both modern culture and ancient culture, he said.

"The tendency is to say, 'The text contains all the meaning there is.' The problem, however, is that the New Testament author shared certain assumptions with his readers, and the interpreter needs to discover these underlying 'givens' in order to understand the text properly," he explained.

And on the modern side, "every exegetical (interpretive) decision has political ramifications" in the current Southern Baptist controversy, Osborne said. These ramifications should be classed as tolerable or intolerable only on the basis of whether or not they are "cardinal doctrines," he added.

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(Also contributing to this story were Trennis Henderson and Norman Jameson.)

Ministry in Christ's name
Will reach untouchables

By Susan Todd

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)-- Ministry, when motivated by the life of Christ, will compel Christians to reach out and touch the "untouchables" in their lives, a national Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union leader claimed.

Speaking to WMU magazine writers April 29, WMU Associate Executive Director Bobbie Sorrill urged them to model Jesus' example of touching a leper.

"I don't know any lepers," she said. "But maybe a WMU magazine could lead me to (identify) the untouchables in my life. It could lead me to touch the life of someone seated next to me on a plane when I would rather sit quietly and read. It may be someone whose spirit is in despair.

"An untouchable for you might be entirely different from a leper. It could be someone with AIDS or someone who does something you don't think is right. There are untouchables all over the world."

Sorrill pointed out the cost and sometimes unpleasantness of touching lives. Yet when the Christian mandate is followed, it should not even be a question, she said.

Jesus "clearly stated his mission," Sorrill said. "He came to change lives. It is still the Father's intent that that be our mission today. Jesus died and went to heaven. He didn't take the mission with him. He gave us, his followers, the mission to reach people around us."

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