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June 16, 1988

88-95

Vines, Robinson,
Hernandez elected

N-CO

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention during its 131st annual session.

Vines, seen as the candidate favored by conservatives defeated Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church, Phoenix, Ariz., by less than 700 votes.

Of the 31,291 ballots cast, Vines received 15,804 votes (50.53 percent), compared to 15,112 (48.32 percent) for Jackson.

Vines was nominated by Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas, and newly elected president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, who praised Vines as "a model in evangelism and church growth" who could be "a healer" in the divided SBC.

Jackson was nominated by George Harris, pastor of Castle Hills First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas, who lauded the Arizona pastor as "a loyal Southern Baptist and a committed Christian" and as "the right man for these days and this hour."

Other nominees who each received less than one percent of the total vote were James Craig, a layman from South Tulsa Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla., who was nominated by Robert Maples of First Baptist Church, Roswell, N.M., and Anniece Shorrosh, a full-time evangelist from Old Spanish Fort Baptist Church, near Mobile, Ala., who nominated himself.

Darrell Robinson, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., was elected first vice president, receiving almost 60 percent of the vote 12,622, in defeating James Pleitz, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, who received 8,612 votes.

Rudy Hernandez, pastor of Metro Baptist Church, San Antonio, was elected second vice president, receiving 5,399 votes. Other candidates were Dorothy Sample of Flint, Mich., former president of SBC Woman's Missionary Union 3,336; Robert Witty of Tucson, Ariz., founder of Luther Rice Seminary, 1,402; and Emile Rousseau Jr., pastor of Taylor Baptist Church, Taylor, La., 322.

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Vines blames neo-orthodoxy
for convention's problems

By Mark Wingfield

N-CO

Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Neo-orthodoxy, not classical liberalism, is the problem in the Southern Baptist Convention, Jerry Vines insisted in a news conference June 14 soon after his election as president of the 14.7-million-member denomination.

Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., narrowly defeated Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., for the No. 1 office in the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

Vines made the statement when asked to give names and addresses of five liberals in denominational agencies. Vines was the presidential candidate of a faction within the convention that for the past nine years has crusaded to remove allegedly liberal agency heads and seminary professors.

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"If you're talking about classical liberalism, that is not the real theological issue in our denomination," he said. "You're getting closer to the matter when you think in terms of neo-orthodoxy."

Vines defined the neo-orthodox as those who "use our vocabulary but not our dictionary." He did not name anyone who is liberal or neo-orthodox.

In answering another question, Vines said he does not expect all Baptists to label themselves as "inerrantists," the term that has been the watchword of Southern Baptist conservatives. Inerrantists are those who believe the Bible is without error, he added, noting, "I do not require that others use that word, though."

Despite shunning labels, Vines reaffirmed his intent to appoint to SBC boards and committees those who are sympathetic with the conservative movement.

"I will seek to appoint the very best Southern Baptists I can possibly find," he said. "I have frankly been pleased with the appointment process of our present president, Dr. Rogers."

Vines said he will abide by the "parameters the denomination has overwhelmingly communicated they would like," referring to the conservative trend in votes taken in SBC meetings in the past nine years.

"I am committed to appointing those who fall within the parameters of the Baptist Faith and Message Statement concerning Scripture. I just could not look Southern Baptists in the face and appoint people who believe there are errors in the Bible," he said.

But Vines would not say whether or not he would appoint Jackson to a board or committee, even though Jackson professes to be an inerrantist.

"I would be glad to take a look at that when the time comes," he replied.

When asked directly if he would appoint known moderates, Vines referred to his previous statements and did not answer the question.

He said he believes President Rogers did a good job of appointing women to boards and committees. This year's Committee on Nominations report included 21 women among 136 new nominees.

Vines confirmed that his church, which is among the denomination's largest, does not have Woman's Missionary Union or Baptist Men organizations.

"We have a magnificent group of ladies who meet every Tuesday morning to move out into the community to do missions in its purest form," he said. A group of men also meets on Tuesday nights, he said.

"In terms of the traditional organizational structure, no that's not WMU, that's not Brotherhood," Vines said. "But in terms of what the goals of those organizations are, I would say it's exciting and it's an innovative approach to reaching people for Christ."

Vines also was asked how he could say Southern Baptist Cooperative Program budget support would be a criteria for his appointees when his own church gives only 2.7 percent to the unified funding plan.

Vines replied that churches participate in the Cooperative Program on a voluntary basis. His church, which has an annual budget of about \$8 million, has increased its Cooperative Program giving by \$50,000 to \$250,000 for 1988, he said.

In the past seven years, since Vines has been at the Jacksonville church, its Cooperative Program gifts have increased 257 percent, he said.

Vines' personal goal as president is to continue to be a soul winner, he said, adding, "This is what has made Southern Baptists the great denomination they are today."

He called on Southern Baptists to renew their commitment to "move out into the highways and hedges of this nation" to tell people about Jesus.

Vines declared he is not controlled by Paul Pressler, Paige Patterson or anyone else. Pressler of Houston and Patterson of Dallas are credited as the leaders of the denomination's conservatives.

"I have never been under the control of any individual. I do not expect at this point in time to be under the control of any person," Vines said. "I am committed to be available and open to all Southern Baptists and not under the control of any."

He declined to comment on whether he thought the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs should be defunded, saying he did not have enough information to make a statement.

He also said he hopes no moderates will leave the convention because they feel disenfranchised.

"I do not feel any of our Southern Baptist people are disenfranchised as long as they have an opportunity to vote," he explained.

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SBC discharges
Peace Committee

N-CO
By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention discharged its Peace Committee in a unanimous vote June 14 after hearing a brief report on the work of the committee during the past year.

Chairman Charles Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., has headed the 22-member group during the three years since it was created during the 1985 annual meeting in Dallas to attempt to resolve the conflict in the SBC.

The committee made its final report at the 1987 annual meeting in St. Louis, but requested the privilege of continuing for "up to three years for the purpose of observing the response of all agencies, officers, and other participants to the recommendations ... in an effort to encourage compliance and foster harmonious working relationships among all segments of our Baptist family."

The report of the committee was adopted in St. Louis by an estimated 96 percent favorable vote.

In the report to the San Antonio, Texas, convention this summer, Fuller said the committee wished to make a "commendation, an observation, an exhortation, and a recommendation.

"The convention authorized the Peace Committee to have one meeting during the year," Fuller said. "At that meeting we heard reports from 18 of your agencies. We find that the seminaries and other agencies are making good progress in their serious efforts to implement the convention-adopted recommendations made by the Peace Committee.

"We also urge Southern Baptists to recognize and affirm the efforts that have been made and that will continue to be made."

In the observation, Fuller said:

"We deplore the divisive political activities and counter activities by all sides this past year. We would observe that the conscious disregard of the political recommendations of the ... report has contributed to the escalation of conflict among us.

"These violations, when compared, may be smaller or greater, but we see them as widespread and sometimes flagrant.

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"We cannot coerce Southern Baptists to abide by either the spirit or the letter of convention action. But we should realize we are determining the future of our convention by individual action and reaction. Organized political activity is not going to cease, nor substantially decrease, until individual Southern Baptists on all sides turn a deaf ear to those who would have us engage in divisive, destructive politics.

In his exhortation, Fuller noted many Southern Baptists "have firmly held convictions on all sides of the spectrum that are not going to change. However, we as Peace Committee members have learned that we can grow in mutual respect and love even though we cannot change each other in matters of doctrine."

The committee, he said, urges "all Southern Baptists to resist the temptation to isolate ourselves among those with whom we agree. We have learned that isolation contributes to alienation within our convention. We encourage continued communication among those who might not agree on every issue.

"Let us not abandon attempts to find ways of working together to further the impact of the gospel."

Fuller noted the committee "came into existence during a time of turmoil" and said it made four contributions during the three years it has existed.

"First, during these years of intense confrontation, we are still together as a convention; other denominations have not been so fortunate.

"Second, we have sought to clarify the issues that have divided us.

"Third, we have served as a forum of discussion, debate and dialogue, in other words, a shock absorber for Southern Baptists, allowing time for the convention to adjust to the changes which are occurring among us.

"We have put in place a process for making changes called for by the convention."

Fuller concluded by saying: "We believe that some things needed to be corrected and that the momentum for such correction is under way. Now we have come to a time for healing. Such healing exceeds the capability of this committee to effect. It must become the assignment for us all."

The messengers adopted without discussion or dissenting vote Fuller's recommendation the committee be discharged. He noted the recommendation was unanimous from the committee.

Following the adoption of the report, Vice Chairman Charles Pickering, an attorney from Laurel, Miss., told messengers he had been instructed by the committee to "request this convention to join the Peace Committee in expressing our affection for and appreciation of Dr. Charles Fuller for the extreme fairness, the great patience and gentle Christian spirit which he has demonstrated these past three years."

"His has been a difficult task. We don't think anyone could have done better. He has served Southern Baptists well. We owe him a debt of gratitude, and we express our heartfelt thanks."

After Pickering made his statement, SBC President Adrian P. Rogers of Memphis, Tenn., who has been a member of the Peace Committee, called Fuller back to the podium and told messengers of the "love and respect" he has for his long-time friend Fuller.

"God bless you; we love you," Rogers told Fuller before the applauding messengers.

Gregory warns against
'wall of orthodoxy'

By Anita Bowden

N-10

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptists must not build a wall of orthodoxy around their convention and in the process tear down the "castle" they are trying to protect, a prominent Southern Baptist pastor warned June 15 during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, delivered a non-partisan convention sermon that condemned participants on both sides of the SBC's ten-year-old theological/political controversy.

He told about an uninhabited castle in Ireland that was being systematically dismantled by peasants looking for building materials. The owner discovered the plight of his castle and ordered a wall be built around it. When he returned several years later he found that the castle was gone. The carefully cut stones had been used to build the wall.

Gregory warned messengers not to hear him as speaking unilaterally. "I am speaking bilaterally," he said.

"We are at a flashpoint," he added. Southern Baptists cannot survive "many more months of personal animosity in our midst."

Gregory, who included himself in the group responsible for building a "wall of orthodoxy" around the SBC, suggested that the wall could remain, along with the castle, if certain things change.

First, Southern Baptists must consecrate their conversations, he said, noting, "We must say here (San Antonio) that we will not allow corrupt words out of our mouths."

Those who would defend Southern Baptist institutions have no justification to use any language they choose to accomplish that defense. Conversely, those who would defend orthodoxy are not justified to use any method at their disposal, he said.

"The end does not justify the means, whatsoever," he added.

Gregory asked messengers, "What is it this day that more harms the Southern Baptist witness than anything else?" His answer: What Southern Baptists are saying.

Second, the wall and castle can co-exist if some attitudes change.

Gregory pleaded with messengers to rid themselves of bitterness. "A lifetime of smoldering bitterness will put you on the shelf" as far as service for God is concerned, he said.

Institutions and concepts are not malicious, he said. "Individuals are malicious. It is as individuals that we must deal with malice." And malice will prevent persons from seeing, hearing or feeling God, he stressed.

Finally, Southern Baptists can build the wall and preserve the castle if they will imitate God's divine kindness.

He spoke of strained situations between messengers where averted glances, limp handshakes and forced smiles are commonplace.

"We look suspiciously to see who's talking to who about what," he said.

Southern Baptists must "be kind to one another again," he urged.

He reminded messengers that Scripture references to forgiveness do not say, "Forgive one another unless you're involved in a world-class, epic, theological battle -- then you're excused."

People on both sides of the controversy have told him, "I have a long memory," he said.

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When Christians stand before God on the final judgment, the last thing they are going to want to hear him say is, "I have a long memory," Gregory said. "You'd better start suffering from some holy amnesia before you stand in his presence."

Gregory told about the animosity that built between Martin Luther, the German reformer, and Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss reformer. Their disagreement was over how symbolic or how literal the elements were in the Lord's Supper. On all other essential matters of faith they agreed.

Finally they met face to face and Zwingli offered his hand, in brotherhood, to Luther. But Luther refused to take it.

"I hold out my hand to you, Brother Adrian Rogers, Winfred Moore, Jerry Vines, Richard Jackson," Gregory said. "We can build the wall and keep the castle. Be my brother."

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Separate church from world,
Rogers tells Southern Baptists

By Jim Newton

N-10
Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Condemning abortion by demand and supporting prayer in public schools, Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian P. Rogers called for Baptist pastors to be present-day prophets who preach with integrity when he addressed the SBC annual meeting June 14 in San Antonio, Texas.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., was interrupted more than a dozen times with sustained applause by more than 32,000-plus Baptists in Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center.

While supporting the historic principle of separation of church and state, Rogers urged Baptists to uphold separation of the church from the world. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot and will not be identified with any political party," he declared. Instead, Baptists must be able to call Democrats, Republicans and independents to repentance.

Prompting a standing ovation, Rogers condemned abortion on demand, declaring abortion is "wrong, wrong, wrong."

Since 1973, 20 million babies have been aborted, compared to only 1.4 million killed all of America's wars, he lamented. "The nation has been stained and flooded with the blood of 20 million pre-born babies. ... They're killing babies."

Supporting prayer in public schools, Rogers said Christians have a right to pray anywhere -- including the school. To people who argue that students can pray silently, he countered, "They can do that in a Russian concentration camp, too."

Rogers also received a standing ovation when he opposed what he called liberalism in Baptist schools and seminaries financially supported by conservatives who disagree with such theology.

"I would not for anything in the world try to force my beliefs on someone else, but when somebody tells me I must underwrite his liberalism or be branded a non-Baptist, I'm saying he is trying to force his beliefs on me," Rogers declared to a standing, clapping audience.

He condemned both liberalism and legalism to biblical Pharisees and liberalism to the Sadducees of the New Testament. "I'm as much afraid of legalism as I am of liberalism," Rogers said.

He chided liberal theologians who do not know the "Theos" (God) nor the "logos" (Word of God). "Why should they call themselves theologians?" he asked. "They're like Grape Nuts, neither grapes nor nuts."

Rogers said Baptists have not only a right, but a fearful responsibility to see that those who teach in our theology schools represent our cherished, biblical and Baptist beliefs."

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He quoted at length, prompting sustained applause, the late J.B. Gambrell, former Baptist editor and president of Mercer University; and the late B.H. Carroll, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Gambrell, he said, wrote, "Men who do not preach the accepted doctrines of Baptists have no right in Baptist pulpits. ... When he (a Baptist) claims the right to use an institution -- its money, prestige and opportunities -- to overthrow the faith which the institution was founded to build up, he passes the bounds of liberty and enters the realm of arrogant license. Common honor and decency would dictate that such a man would resign from his position. ..."

Quoting Carroll, Rogers said: "The more divine doctrines a church can agree on, the greater its power. ... The modern cry of less creed and more liberty is degeneration from vertebrate to jellyfish. It means less unity, less morality, and it means more heresy."

"Hear this plea from your president," Rogers said: "Unity in diversity is the Baptist way, and I like it; but denominational cooperation through doctrinal compromise is neither Baptist nor biblical."

"We must beware of people trying to put us into theological straight jackets, but we must also be careful that we don't end up wearing no clothes at all."

Preaching his president's address on the subject of "Salty Saints in a Sick Society," Rogers called for Baptists to respond to the purity of Christ, the integrity of Christ and the vitality of Christ.

Calling on Christians to be the salt of the earth, Rogers said that in many churches, "The bland are leading the bland." He observed that salt sometimes stings, burns and irritates. "I'm irritating some of you now with my remarks, but no offense, no effect."

He warned that Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust effort to proclaim the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000 has become a "tired slogan." As evidence, he pointed out it takes 40 Baptists to win and baptize one convert, and that 7,244 Baptist churches did not baptize anyone last year.

Rogers, who was elected president of the SBC in 1979, and again in 1986 and 1987, introduced his family and dedicated his recent book, "Mastering Your Emotions" to his dad.

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Jackson cites style
as controversy source

By Ken Camp

N-CE
Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--A difference in the philosophy of leadership style, not theology, is the issue dividing Southern Baptists, defeated presidential nominee Richard Jackson said in a news conference June 14 in San Antonio, Texas.

Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., said manipulation has characterized the political leadership of the denomination in recent years, pointing to "a small group trying to work out a plan and strategy" to direct the course of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Although he said "never is a long time," Jackson insisted he would probably not allow himself to be nominated for the SBC presidency again.

Jackson emphasized he will continue to remain active in the convention, saying, "I won't go away." However, he insisted he would not be the titular head of the moderate camp during the coming year: "I'm not the titular head of anything -- even my church. You want to know my idea of pastoral authority? I gain it by being a servant."

Jackson encouraged all Southern Baptists to offer support and prayer for newly elected President Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

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"Pray that Dr. Vines will be so fair in representing Southern Baptists that we would rejoice to reelect him by acclamation," he said.

Jackson's advice to those who supported him was two-fold: Don't panic and don't give up on the Southern Baptist Convention.

"There's bound to be somebody better than me. Hang tough," he said. "God was sovereign this morning when I got up. He'll be sovereign when I go to bed tonight."

Jackson expressed his hope that the Paul Pressler - Paige Patterson coalition would not presume to speak for Vines or politicize his presidency. Pressler, a Houston judge, and Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, have been architects of the SBC conservative resurgence.

"Let Jerry Vines be president of the convention," he said. "Let him give leadership."

When asked whether reputed links between the conservative wing of the convention and the political Religious Right are the result of a conservative groundswell of grassroots support, he expressed doubt.

"Grassroots people are often quoted, but I don't hear them talking much," he said.

Jackson affirmed church-state separation, the priesthood of believers and soul liberty as being at the heart of Baptist identity.

"Being a Baptist means you don't have to check your mind at the door," he said.

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Alliance to remain in SBC
despite 'devastating' loss

By Stan Haste

N-10

Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Leaders of the Southern Baptist Alliance have announced they are determined to stay in the Southern Baptist Convention in spite of what one of them called the "devastating" loss of moderate presidential candidate Richard Jackson to conservative victor Jerry Vines.

Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., defeated Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., by 692 votes out of 31,291 cast June 14 in San Antonio, Texas.

At a news conference held moments after Vines' victory was announced to messengers at Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, Alan Neely, acting executive director of the year-old Southern Baptist Alliance, told reporters, "If we cannot win in San Antonio with a candidate like Richard Jackson, ... I'm not sure we could win with the Apostle Paul."

Neely, who announced in early June he is leaving the faculty of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary to assume a teaching post at Princeton Theological Seminary, said in spite of their disappointment at the election of a sixth consecutive conservative as SBC president, most moderate Southern Baptists are determined to stay.

"This is characteristic of the kind of solidarity" in the 14.7-million-member denomination, he said.

Asked why moderate Southern Baptist leaders insist on staying in the denomination after absorbing one defeat after another during the past decade, Neely quoted a friend who told him, "I do not want to bury my mother until I'm sure she is dead." Most Southern Baptists "are not willing to give up on resuscitation," he added.

Reading from a prepared statement at the outset of the session with reporters, Neely said: "The SBC as we perceive it is now a fundamentalist-dominated convention. Diversity is rejected and dishonored. The convention is a house divided."

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Neely called on the 48.3 percent of SBC messengers who voted for Jackson to join the Alliance "as a clear alternative to fundamentalism, authoritarianism, hierarchical and right-wing political ideology."

The statement continued: "The Southern Baptist Alliance will continue to be a symbol of freedom and a home for committed but now clearly disenfranchised Southern Baptists. We will join others who seek sanctuary and support for our cherished Baptist principles of the priesthood of the believer, the autonomy of the local church, the servant role of leadership, theological education and not indoctrination, the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ calling all of God's people to repentance and faith, reconciliation and hope, social and economic justice and to the principle of a free church in a free state."

Neely said he expects funds to begin flowing into the Alliance for support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Washington-based agency whose budget suffered an 11 percent cut and of women pastors in mission churches whose salaries are no longer supplemented by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The Alliance also provides financial support for a chapter of the American Association of University Professors at Southeastern Seminary and to the independent moderate newspaper, SBC Today.

"There must be channels for those who are loyal," Neely said, adding, "We respect the right of every Baptist church to decide" where it will send monies. "Churches across the Southern Baptist Convention are reassessing their gifts to the agencies of the convention."

Joining Neely was Alliance President John Thomason, pastor of Northminster Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., who said he felt some encouragement at the narrow margin of Jackson's defeat. He said the election demonstrated his group "does not represent a fringe group" but the "mainstream" of Southern Baptists.

My recommendation would be that we hold the course," he said.

Because the voice of moderates has been muzzled during a solid decade of conservative victories, Thomason said, the Alliance provides a "place of fellowship for Southern Baptists who feel disenfranchised."

Defending the Alliance's alternative funding of "organizations and causes jeopardized over the past 10 years," Thomason said, "We have more to do than lose elections and live on the edge."

The Mississippi pastor said he is bothered by what he called an "assassination by implication," a reference to conservative charges of theological liberalism in Southern Baptist seminaries. "I do not know a classical liberal" on any SBC seminary faculty, he said.

Noting Jesus is both divine and human in orthodox Christian teaching, Thomason said the Bible likewise is both a divine and human book. "What is true in the doctrine of Christ is true in the doctrine of the Bible," he said.

Concerning the Bible, Thomason concluded, the question for Southern Baptists is, "Is the Bible to be made into an idol or not?"

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Lolley leads protest
of SBC resolution

By Lonnie Wilkey

N-CO
Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Standing in front of the site where Americans died for the cause of freedom more than 150 years ago, Randall Lolley led about 200 Southern Baptists in protesting an action which he said, "destroyed a cherished Baptist principle."

Lolley, former president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and others in the rally were upset with a Southern Baptist Convention resolution approved June 15 which dealt with the priesthood of the believer.

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The resolution also stated the doctrine "can be used to justify the undermining of pastoral authority in the local church."

The resolution resolved that "we affirm that this doctrine in no way gives license to misrepresent, explain away, demythologize, or extrapolate out elements of the supernatural from the Bible."

Lolley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Raleigh, N.C., called the resolution the "most non-Baptist document I've ever seen."

Lolley and an estimated 100 people went to the registration hall of the convention center and turned in their ballots.

The group, led by Lolley and his wife, Lu, then proceeded to the Alamo. By the time the group arrived, the crowd had grown to about 200 people. They gathered on the grounds of the Alamo, but were told by guards they had to move.

Lolley said the "cherished Baptist principle of the priesthood of the believer has now been destroyed by the majority opinion of the people registered as messengers at this convention."

He called the resolution "the most non-Baptistic, most heretical, from the Baptist free church point of view, statement ever made."

Lolley branded the act "heresy" and wrote the word across the resolution. Others in the crowd did the same and joined Lolley in ripping the resolution as a sign of protest.

Lolley asked someone in the crowd to pray. The essence of the prayer was: "On this site where people fought for freedom of the democratic process, we tear up a resolution which attacks the priesthood of believers and sets us back before the time of Martin Luther."

After the hymn and as the crowd began to disperse, Lolley said: "This may have been the best Baptist meeting of the week."



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**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee**

Vines blames neo-orthodoxy
for convention's problems

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Neo-orthodoxy, not classical liberalism, is the problem in the Southern Baptist Convention, Jerry Vines insisted in a news conference June 14 soon after his election as president of the 14.7-million-member denomination.

Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., narrowly defeated Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., for the No. 1 office in the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

Vines made the statement when asked to give names and addresses of five liberals in denominational agencies. Vines was the presidential candidate of a faction within the convention that for the past nine years has crusaded to remove allegedly liberal agency heads and seminary professors.

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"If you're talking about classical liberalism, that is not the real theological issue in our denomination," he said. "You're getting closer to the matter when you think in terms of neo-orthodoxy."

Vines defined the neo-orthodox as those who "use our vocabulary but not our dictionary." He did not name anyone who is liberal or neo-orthodox.

In answering another question, Vines said he does not expect all Baptists to label themselves as "inerrantists," the term that has been the watchword of Southern Baptist conservatives. Inerrantists are those who believe the Bible is without error, he added, noting, "I do not require that others use that word, though."

Despite shunning labels, Vines reaffirmed his intent to appoint to SBC boards and committees those who are sympathetic with the conservative movement.

"I will seek to appoint the very best Southern Baptists I can possibly find," he said. "I have frankly been pleased with the appointment process of our present president, Dr. Rogers."

Vines said he will abide by the "parameters the denomination has overwhelmingly communicated they would like," referring to the conservative trend in votes taken in SBC meetings in the past nine years.

"I am committed to appointing those who fall within the parameters of the Baptist Faith and Message Statement concerning Scripture. I just could not look Southern Baptists in the face and appoint people who believe there are errors in the Bible," he said.

But Vines would not say whether or not he would appoint Jackson to a board or committee, even though Jackson professes to be an inerrantist.

"I would be glad to take a look at that when the time comes," he replied.

When asked directly if he would appoint known moderates, Vines referred to his previous statements and did not answer the question.

He said he believes President Rogers did a good job of appointing women to boards and committees. This year's Committee on Nominations report included 21 women among 136 new nominees.

Vines confirmed that his church, which is among the denomination's largest, does not have Woman's Missionary Union or Baptist Men organizations.

"We have a magnificent group of ladies who meet every Tuesday morning to move out into the community to do missions in its purest form," he said. A group of men also meets on Tuesday nights, he said.

"In terms of the traditional organizational structure, no that's not WMU, that's not Brotherhood," Vines said. "But in terms of what the goals of those organizations are, I would say it's exciting and it's an innovative approach to reaching people for Christ."

Vines also was asked how he could say Southern Baptist Cooperative Program budget support would be a criteria for his appointees when his own church gives only 2.7 percent to the unified funding plan.

Vines replied that churches participate in the Cooperative Program on a voluntary basis. His church, which has an annual budget of about \$8 million, has increased its Cooperative Program giving by \$50,000 to \$250,000 for 1988, he said.

In the past seven years, since Vines has been at the Jacksonville church, its Cooperative Program gifts have increased 257 percent, he said.

Vines' personal goal as president is to continue to be a sul winner, he said, adding, "This is what has made Southern Baptists the great denomination they are today."

He called on Southern Baptists to renew their commitment to "move out into the highways and hedges of this nation" to tell people about Jesus.

Vines declared he is not controlled by Paul Pressler, Paige Patterson or anyone else. Pressler of Houston and Patterson of Dallas are credited as the leaders of the denomination's conservatives.

"I have never been under the control of any individual. I do not expect at this point in time to be under the control of any person," Vines said. "I am committed to be available and open to all Southern Baptists and not under the control of any."

He declined to comment on whether he thought the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs should be defunded, saying he did not have enough information to make a statement.

He also said he hopes no moderates will leave the convention because they feel disenfranchised.

"I do not feel any of our Southern Baptist people are disenfranchised as long as they have an opportunity to vote," he explained.

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SBC discharges
Peace Committee

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention discharged its Peace Committee in a unanimous vote June 14 after hearing a brief report on the work of the committee during the past year.

Chairman Charles Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., has headed the 22-member group during the three years since it was created during the 1985 annual meeting in Dallas to attempt to resolve the conflict in the SBC.

The committee made its final report at the 1987 annual meeting in St. Louis, but requested the privilege of continuing for "up to three years for the purpose of observing the response of all agencies, officers, and other participants to the recommendations ... in an effort to encourage compliance and foster harmonious working relationships among all segments of our Baptist family."

The report of the committee was adopted in St. Louis by an estimated 96 percent favorable vote.

In the report to the San Antonio, Texas, convention this summer, Fuller said the committee wished to make a "commendation, an observation, an exhortation, and a recommendation.

"The convention authorized the Peace Committee to have one meeting during the year," Fuller said. "At that meeting we heard reports from 18 of your agencies. We find that the seminaries and other agencies are making good progress in their serious efforts to implement the convention-adopted recommendations made by the Peace Committee.

"We also urge Southern Baptists to recognize and affirm the efforts that have been made and that will continue to be made."

In the observation, Fuller said:

"We deplore the divisive political activities and counter activities by all sides this past year. We would observe that the conscious disregard of the political recommendations of the ... report has contributed to the escalation of conflict among us.

"These violations, when compared, may be smaller or greater, but we see them as widespread and sometimes flagrant.

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"We cannot coerce Southern Baptists to abide by either the spirit or the letter of convention action. But we should realize we are determining the future of our convention by individual action and reaction. Organized political activity is not going to cease, nor substantially decrease, until individual Southern Baptists on all sides turn a deaf ear to those who would have us engage in divisive, destructive politics.

In his exhortation, Fuller noted many Southern Baptists "have firmly held convictions on all sides of the spectrum that are not going to change. However, we as Peace Committee members have learned that we can grow in mutual respect and love even though we cannot change each other in matters of doctrine."

The committee, he said, urges "all Southern Baptists to resist the temptation to isolate ourselves among those with whom we agree. We have learned that isolation contributes to alienation within our convention. We encourage continued communication among those who might not agree on every issue.

"Let us not abandon attempts to find ways of working together to further the impact of the gospel."

Fuller noted the committee "came into existence during a time of turmoil" and said it made four contributions during the three years it has existed.

"First, during these years of intense confrontation, we are still together as a convention; other denominations have not been so fortunate.

"Second, we have sought to clarify the issues that have divided us.

"Third, we have served as a forum of discussion, debate and dialogue, in other words, a shock absorber for Southern Baptists, allowing time for the convention to adjust to the changes which are occurring among us.

"We have put in place a process for making changes called for by the convention."

Fuller concluded by saying: "We believe that some things needed to be corrected and that the momentum for such correction is under way. Now we have come to a time for healing. Such healing exceeds the capability of this committee to effect. It must become the assignment for us all."

The messengers adopted without discussion or dissenting vote Fuller's recommendation the committee be discharged. He noted the recommendation was unanimous from the committee.

Following the adoption of the report, Vice Chairman Charles Pickering, an attorney from Laurel, Miss., told messengers he had been instructed by the committee to "request this convention to join the Peace Committee in expressing our affection for and appreciation of Dr. Charles Fuller for the extreme fairness, the great patience and gentle Christian spirit which he has demonstrated these past three years."

"His has been a difficult task. We don't think anyone could have done better. He has served Southern Baptists well. We owe him a debt of gratitude, and we express our heartfelt thanks."

After Pickering made his statement, SBC President Adrian P. Rogers of Memphis, Tenn., who has been a member of the Peace Committee, called Fuller back to the podium and told messengers of the "love and respect" he has for his long-time friend Fuller.

"God bless you; we love you," Rogers told Fuller before the applauding messengers.

Gregory warns against
'wall of orthodoxy'

By Anita Bowden

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptists must not build a wall of orthodoxy around their convention and in the process tear down the "castle" they are trying to protect, a prominent Southern Baptist pastor warned June 15 during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, delivered a non-partisan convention sermon that condemned participants on both sides of the SBC's ten-year-old theological/political controversy.

He told about an uninhabited castle in Ireland that was being systematically dismantled by peasants looking for building materials. The owner discovered the plight of his castle and ordered a wall be built around it. When he returned several years later he found that the castle was gone. The carefully cut stones had been used to build the wall.

Gregory warned messengers not to hear him as speaking unilaterally. "I am speaking bilaterally," he said.

"We are at a flashpoint," he added. Southern Baptists cannot survive "many more months of personal animosity in our midst."

Gregory, who included himself in the group responsible for building a "wall of orthodoxy" around the SBC, suggested that the wall could remain, along with the castle, if certain things change.

First, Southern Baptists must consecrate their conversations, he said, noting, "We must say here (San Antonio) that we will not allow corrupt words out of our mouths."

Those who would defend Southern Baptist institutions have no justification to use any language they choose to accomplish that defense. Conversely, those who would defend orthodoxy are not justified to use any method at their disposal, he said.

"The end does not justify the means, whatsoever," he added.

Gregory asked messengers, "What is it this day that more harms the Southern Baptist witness than anything else?" His answer: What Southern Baptists are saying.

Second, the wall and castle can co-exist if some attitudes change.

Gregory pleaded with messengers to rid themselves of bitterness. "A lifetime of smoldering bitterness will put you on the shelf" as far as service for God is concerned, he said.

Institutions and concepts are not malicious, he said. "Individuals are malicious. It is as individuals that we must deal with malice." And malice will prevent persons from seeing, hearing or feeling God, he stressed.

Finally, Southern Baptists can build the wall and preserve the castle if they will imitate God's divine kindness.

He spoke of strained situations between messengers where averted glances, limp handshakes and forced smiles are commonplace.

"We look suspiciously to see who's talking to who about what," he said.

Southern Baptists must "be kind to one another again," he urged.

He reminded messengers that Scripture references to forgiveness do not say, "Forgive one another unless you're involved in a world-class, epic, theological battle -- then you're excused."

People on both sides of the controversy have told him, "I have a long memory," he said.

When Christians stand before God on the final judgment, the last thing they are going to want to hear him say is, "I have a long memory," Gregory said. "You'd better start suffering from some holy amnesia before you stand in his presence."

Gregory told about the animosity that built between Martin Luther, the German reformer, and Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss reformer. Their disagreement was over how symbolic or how literal the elements were in the Lord's Supper. On all other essential matters of faith they agreed.

Finally they met face to face and Zwingli offered his hand, in brotherhood, to Luther. But Luther refused to take it.

"I hold out my hand to you, Brother Adrian Rogers, Winfred Moore, Jerry Vines, Richard Jackson," Gregory said. "We can build the wall and keep the castle. Be my brother."

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Separate church from world,
Rogers tells Southern Baptists

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Condemning abortion by demand and supporting prayer in public schools, Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian P. Rogers called for Baptist pastors to be present-day prophets who preach with integrity when he addressed the SBC annual meeting June 14 in San Antonio, Texas.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., was interrupted more than a dozen times with sustained applause by more than 32,000-plus Baptists in Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center.

While supporting the historic principle of separation of church and state, Rogers urged Baptists to uphold separation of the church from the world. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot and will not be identified with any political party," he declared. Instead, Baptists must be able to call Democrats, Republicans and independents to repentance.

Prompting a standing ovation, Rogers condemned abortion on demand, declaring abortion is "wrong, wrong, wrong."

Since 1973, 20 million babies have been aborted, compared to only 1.4 million killed all of America's wars, he lamented. "The nation has been stained and flooded with the blood of 20 million pre-born babies. ... They're killing babies."

Supporting prayer in public schools, Rogers said Christians have a right to pray anywhere -- including the school. To people who argue that students can pray silently, he countered, "They can do that in a Russian concentration camp, too."

Rogers also received a standing ovation when he opposed what he called liberalism in Baptist schools and seminaries financially supported by conservatives who disagree with such theology.

"I would not for anything in the world try to force my beliefs on someone else, but when somebody tells me I must underwrite his liberalism or be branded a non-Baptist, I'm saying he is trying to force his beliefs on me," Rogers declared to a standing, clapping audience.

He condemned both liberalism and legalism to biblical Pharisees and liberalism to the Sadducees of the New Testament. "I'm as much afraid of legalism as I am of liberalism," Rogers said.

He chided liberal theologians who do not know the "Theos" (God) nor the "logos" (Word of God). "Why should they call themselves theologians?" he asked. "They're like Grape Nuts, neither grapes nor nuts."

Rogers said Baptists have not only a right, but a fearful responsibility to see that those who teach in our theology schools represent our cherished, biblical and Baptist beliefs."

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He quoted at length, prompting sustained applause, the late J.B. Gambrell, former Baptist editor and president of Mercer University; and the late B.H. Carroll, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Gambrell, he said, wrote, "Men who do not preach the accepted doctrines of Baptists have no right in Baptist pulpits. ... When he (a Baptist) claims the right to use an institution -- its money, prestige and opportunities -- to overthrow the faith which the institution was founded to build up, he passes the bounds of liberty and enters the realm of arrogant license. Common honor and decency would dictate that such a man would resign from his position. ..."

Quoting Carroll, Rogers said: "The more divine doctrines a church can agree on, the greater its power. ... The modern cry of less creed and more liberty is degeneration from vertebrate to jellyfish. It means less unity, less morality, and it means more heresy."

"Hear this plea from your president," Rogers said: "Unity in diversity is the Baptist way, and I like it; but denominational cooperation through doctrinal compromise is neither Baptist nor biblical."

"We must beware of people trying to put us into theological straight jackets, but we must also be careful that we don't end up wearing no clothes at all."

Preaching his president's address on the subject of "Salty Saints in a Sick Society," Rogers called for Baptists to respond to the purity of Christ, the integrity of Christ and the vitality of Christ.

Calling on Christians to be the salt of the earth, Rogers said that in many churches, "The bland are leading the bland." He observed that salt sometimes stings, burns and irritates. "I'm irritating some of you now with my remarks, but no offense, no effect."

He warned that Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust effort to proclaim the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000 has become a "tired slogan." As evidence, he pointed out it takes 40 Baptists to win and baptize one convert, and that 7,244 Baptist churches did not baptize anyone last year.

Rogers, who was elected president of the SBC in 1979, and again in 1986 and 1987, introduced his family and dedicated his recent book, "Mastering Your Emotions" to his dad.

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Jackson cites style
as controversy source

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--A difference in the philosophy of leadership style, not theology, is the issue dividing Southern Baptists, defeated presidential nominee Richard Jackson said in a news conference June 14 in San Antonio, Texas.

Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., said manipulation has characterized the political leadership of the denomination in recent years, pointing to "a small group trying to work out a plan and strategy" to direct the course of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Although he said "never is a long time," Jackson insisted he would probably not allow himself to be nominated for the SBC presidency again.

Jackson emphasized he will continue to remain active in the convention, saying, "I won't go away." However, he insisted he would not be the titular head of the moderate camp during the coming year: "I'm not the titular head of anything -- even my church. You want to know my idea of pastoral authority? I gain it by being a servant."

Jackson encouraged all Southern Baptists to offer support and prayer for newly elected President Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

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"Pray that Dr. Vines will be so fair in representing Southern Baptists that we would rejoice to reelect him by acclamation," he said.

Jackson's advice to those who supported him was two-fold: Don't panic and don't give up on the Southern Baptist Convention.

"There's bound to be somebody better than me. Hang tough," he said. "God was sovereign this morning when I got up. He'll be sovereign when I go to bed tonight."

Jackson expressed his hope that the Paul Pressler - Paige Patterson coalition would not presume to speak for Vines or politicize his presidency. Pressler, a Houston judge, and Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, have been architects of the SBC conservative resurgence.

"Let Jerry Vines be president of the convention," he said. "Let him give leadership."

When asked whether reputed links between the conservative wing of the convention and the political Religious Right are the result of a conservative groundswell of grassroots support, he expressed doubt.

"Grassroots people are often quoted, but I don't hear them talking much," he said.

Jackson affirmed church-state separation, the priesthood of believers and soul liberty as being at the heart of Baptist identity.

"Being a Baptist means you don't have to check your mind at the door," he said.

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Alliance to remain in SBC
despite 'devastating' loss

By Stan Hastey

Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Leaders of the Southern Baptist Alliance have announced they are determined to stay in the Southern Baptist Convention in spite of what one of them called the "devastating" loss of moderate presidential candidate Richard Jackson to conservative victor Jerry Vines.

Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., defeated Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., by 692 votes out of 31,291 cast June 14 in San Antonio, Texas.

At a news conference held moments after Vines' victory was announced to messengers at Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, Alan Neely, acting executive director of the year-old Southern Baptist Alliance, told reporters, "If we cannot win in San Antonio with a candidate like Richard Jackson, ... I'm not sure we could win with the Apostle Paul."

Neely, who announced in early June he is leaving the faculty of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary to assume a teaching post at Princeton Theological Seminary, said in spite of their disappointment at the election of a sixth consecutive conservative as SBC president, most moderate Southern Baptists are determined to stay.

"This is characteristic of the kind of solidarity" in the 14.7-million-member denomination, he said.

Asked why moderate Southern Baptist leaders insist on staying in the denomination after absorbing one defeat after another during the past decade, Neely quoted a friend who told him, "I do not want to bury my mother until I'm sure she is dead." Most Southern Baptists "are not willing to give up on resuscitation," he added.

Reading from a prepared statement at the outset of the session with reporters, Neely said: "The SBC as we perceive it is now a fundamentalist-dominated convention. Diversity is rejected and dishonored. The convention is a house divided."

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Neely called on the 48.3 percent of SBC messengers who voted for Jackson to join the Alliance "as a clear alternative to fundamentalism, authoritarianism, hierarchical and right-wing political ideology."

The statement continued: "The Southern Baptist Alliance will continue to be a symbol of freedom and a home for committed but now clearly disenfranchised Southern Baptists. We will join others who seek sanctuary and support for our cherished Baptist principles of the priesthood of the believer, the autonomy of the local church, the servant role of leadership, theological education and not indoctrination, the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ calling all of God's people to repentance and faith, reconciliation and hope, social and economic justice and to the principle of a free church in a free state."

Neely said he expects funds to begin flowing into the Alliance for support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Washington-based agency whose budget suffered an 11 percent cut and of women pastors in mission churches whose salaries are no longer supplemented by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The Alliance also provides financial support for a chapter of the American Association of University Professors at Southeastern Seminary and to the independent moderate newspaper, SBC Today.

"There must be channels for those who are loyal," Neely said, adding, "We respect the right of every Baptist church to decide" where it will send monies. "Churches across the Southern Baptist Convention are reassessing their gifts to the agencies of the convention."

Joining Neely was Alliance President John Thomason, pastor of Northminster Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., who said he felt some encouragement at the narrow margin of Jackson's defeat. He said the election demonstrated his group "does not represent a fringe group" but the "mainstream" of Southern Baptists.

My recommendation would be that we hold the course," he said.

Because the voice of moderates has been muzzled during a solid decade of conservative victories, Thomason said, the Alliance provides a "place of fellowship for Southern Baptists who feel disenfranchised."

Defending the Alliance's alternative funding of "organizations and causes jeopardized over the past 10 years," Thomason said, "We have more to do than lose elections and live on the edge."

The Mississippi pastor said he is bothered by what he called an "assassination by implication," a reference to conservative charges of theological liberalism in Southern Baptist seminaries. "I do not know a classical liberal" on any SBC seminary faculty, he said.

Noting Jesus is both divine and human in orthodox Christian teaching, Thomason said the Bible likewise is both a divine and human book. "What is true in the doctrine of Christ is true in the doctrine of the Bible," he said.

Concerning the Bible, Thomason concluded, the question for Southern Baptists is, "Is the Bible to be made into an idol or not?"

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Lolley leads protest
of SBC resolution

By Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist Press
6/16/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Standing in front of the site where Americans died for the cause of freedom more than 150 years ago, Randall Lolley led about 200 Southern Baptists in protesting an action which he said, "destroyed a cherished Baptist principle."

Lolley, former president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and others in the rally were upset with a Southern Baptist Convention resolution approved June 15 which dealt with the priesthood of the believer.

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The resolution also stated the doctrine "can be used to justify the undermining of pastoral authority in the local church."

The resolution resolved that "we affirm that this doctrine in no way gives license to misrepresent, explain away, demythologize, or extrapolate out elements of the supernatural from the Bible."

Lolley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Raleigh, N.C., called the resolution the "most non-Baptist document I've ever seen."

Lolley and an estimated 100 people went to the registration hall of the convention center and turned in their ballots.

The group, led by Lolley and his wife, Lu, then proceeded to the Alamo. By the time the group arrived, the crowd had grown to about 200 people. They gathered on the grounds of the Alamo, but were told by guards they had to move.

Lolley said the "cherished Baptist principle of the priesthood of the believer has now been destroyed by the majority opinion of the people registered as messengers at this convention."

He called the resolution "the most non-Baptistic, most heretical, from the Baptist free church point of view, statement ever made."

Lolley branded the act "heresy" and wrote the word across the resolution. Others in the crowd did the same and joined Lolley in ripping the resolution as a sign of protest.

Lolley asked someone in the crowd to pray. The essence of the prayer was: "On this site where people fought for freedom of the democratic process, we tear up a resolution which attacks the priesthood of believers and sets us back before the time of Martin Luther."

After the hymn and as the crowd began to disperse, Lolley said: "This may have been the best Baptist meeting of the week."

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