

June 4, 1958

Editors Label Houston
Session 'One Of Best'

By the Baptist Press

Editors of Baptist periodicals, reviewing in their papers the recent 1958 session of the Southern Baptist Convention at Houston, believe it was one of the denomination's best.

Rep. Brooks Hays (D., Ark.), who was re-elected for a second term as Convention president, received praise from most editors for his manner of presiding, his call for world peace efforts, and his Christian statesmanship.

The high point of the meeting, according to the editors, from an inspirational standpoint was the presentation of the Foreign Mission Board, which closed with a 30-minute prayer service of repentance and rededication.

The hospitality of Houston Baptists was mentioned by a large number of editors. They noted the difference in convening in a city like Houston with a strong Baptist population and the nation's second largest city---Chicago---the year before.

But while agreeing it was "basically a good one," one editor, Jack L. Gritz, Oklahoma City, from the Baptist Messenger, also described it as a "talkative and touchy" Convention.

At least three editors felt, as did James F. Cole, Alexandria, La., editor of the Baptist Message, that President Brooks Hays is the "man of the hour" for Southern Baptists.

Appraisal of foreign missions night, when the report of that Board was presented, then concluded with the dedicatory prayer service, followed the sentiments of Editors Erwin McDonald and John J. Hurt, Jr.

McDonald, editor of the Arkansas Baptist, Little Rock, and Hurt, editor of the Christian Index, Atlanta, felt that service was the "high point of the Convention."

Editor R. N. Owen of the Baptist and Reflector, Nashville, devoted an entire editorial to the "never-to-be-forgotten" Foreign Mission Board presentation.

W. C. Fields, editor of the Baptist Record, Jackson, Miss., summed up feelings for Houston when he commented that it is "a good Convention city."

C. W. Bazemore, assistant editor of the Biblical Recorder, Raleigh, N. C., saw the 1958 Convention as a "milestone in Southern Baptist advance."

Penetrating beyond the "peaceful and deeply spiritual" tone of the Convention, Editor Leon Macon of the Alabama Baptist, Birmingham, was disturbed by what he felt is a social trend in the Convention.

This, according to Macon, was reflected in the action setting up a special committee on world peace and in the activity of the Convention's Christian Life Commission.

"Is bigness tempting us to throw our weight around to seek the establishing of peace in society through corporate action instead of permeating society with individuals who radiate peace through their own redeemed lives?" Macon asked.

"The trend of the Christian Life Commission also alarms us," he added. "It should be a voice and not a force. We should not be led into social actions, seeking to eliminate social problems through the force of our corporate size, but ours should remain a permeating process on society."

Editor Marse Grant of Charity and Children, Thomasville, N. C., returned from the Convention with the conviction that "The Christian Life Commission should be strengthened."

"For Convention budget-makers to continue to restrict it financially," Grant continued, "is to go against the will of the Convention as expressed in the resounding vote of confidence given the Commission at Houston."

Grant, like his fellow editors, reported that "The hospitality of Houston was a big factor in the success of the Convention."

Editor L. H. Moore of the Illinois Baptist, Carbondale, described the Convention in these words: "The Convention at Houston was in keeping with the fine traditions and experiences that Baptists cherish."

Other comments:

McDonald, Arkansas Baptist---"Any way you look at it, the 1958 Southern Baptist Convention was outstanding."

Gritz, Baptist Messenger---"Representatives of the churches seemed reluctant to vote. . . . Perhaps the Convention at Louisville next year will realize this. It had better. The messengers at Houston postponed many important decisions. But the Convention is going to have to come to grips with some touchy questions."

C. R. Daley, editor, Western Recorder, Middletown, Ky.---"I still have difficulty believing that an old fashioned, wet-eyed, shouting prayer meeting could take place at a Southern Baptist Convention with an audience of 15,000 or more. But it happened . . . at Houston . . . foreign mission night."

Of Hays, Daley said, "There's almost universal feeling he is God's gift to Southern Baptists for this critical hour."

Gainer E. Bryan, Jr., Baltimore, editor, Maryland Baptist---"Southern Baptists are maturing. This is the dominant impression that emerges from the 101st session of the Southern Baptist Convention held in Houston."

Willis J. Ray, Denver, editor, Rocky Mountain Baptist---"The writer has been attending Southern Baptist Conventions since 1929. . . . In our estimation, the Convention just closed at Houston was more far reaching in scope, more challenging in program, and more interesting and diversified in presentation than any Convention we have attended."

Ray, commenting on tentative approval given to a new Stewardship Commission, asks: "Why not a new department of stewardship within the Sunday School Board? . . . Why set up a new commission when the Sunday School Board can do this work cheaper than can a new commission?"

Joe Novak, Wichita, Kans., editor, Baptist Digest---"The survey committee found it rather rough going at the Houston Convention as the messengers tore to pieces their 38 definite recommendations. Only 19 were approved without any changes, and four were accepted with amendments or 'understandings.'"

H. H. McGinty, Jefferson City, Mo., editor, Word and Way---". . . a sensible Convention. Time and again this great body refused to be moved into extreme positions by impassioned pleas. . . . The Convention was a 'survey' Convention. . . . It was a self-effacing Convention. . . ."

J. Kelly Simmons, Phoenix, editor, Baptist Beacon---"Reconciliation, improvement, advance, and peace were the key words of the recent Southern Baptist Convention session in Houston. What more opportune words can be found for our day or any other day?"

Floyd Looney, Fresno, editor, California Southern Baptist---"Baptists had a good Convention in Houston, but it was by no means the best."

West, Rust Honored
By Virginia College

RICHMOND--(BP)--An officer of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and a Baptist seminary professor were among six persons receiving honorary degrees (June 9) at University of Richmond here.

Elmer S. West, Jr., personnel secretary, Foreign Mission Board here, received the doctor of divinity degree. The doctor of letters was conferred on Eric C. Rust, professor of Christian apologetics, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Others receiving honorary degrees at the same time from the Virginia Baptist college were James L. Camp, Jr., Franklin, Va., chairman of the university trustees, doctor of science; Joseph Leonard King, professor of English, Denison University, Granville, O., and Hon. Harold F. Snead, judge of the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia, Richmond, doctors of laws, and Lee C. Sheppard, pastor, First Baptist Church, Columbia, Mo., doctor of divinity.

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Stetson Establishing
6 Extension Centers

DeLAND, Fla.--(BP)--Stetson University is establishing extension centers this fall in six Florida localities to provide education facilities for pastors, ministers of education, and ministers of music in their own communities.

Stetson, Florida Baptist college, will offer diplomas in Biblical studies and in church leadership. The extension program will be directed by William H. McCammon, who has been director of religious activities at Stetson for the past 10 years. He will give full time to extension work.

Centers will be located in Jacksonville, Orlando, St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Sarasota-Bradenton, Fort Myers, and Pensacola.

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Furman Buildings
Honor Presidents

GREENVILLE, S. C.--(BP)--Four dormitories and the main classroom building on Furman University's new campus here have been named for five past presidents and a former trustee of Furman.

Dormitories will be named for these former presidents---Charles Manly, Edwin McNeill Poteat, William J. McGlothlin, and Bennette E. Geer. Geer, the only past president now living, shares the building name with his brother, John M. Geer, former trustee.

The classroom building will be named for James C. Furman, Furman's first president.

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Add honorary degrees (from Baptist colleges)....

Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex.---William Fleming, millionaire rancher-oil man, donor to many Baptist activities, resident of Fort Worth, honorary doctor of humane letters. Lee Hemphill, pastor, First Baptist Church, Littlefield, Tex., doctor of divinity. G. Avery Lee, pastor, First Baptist Church, Ruston, La., doctor of literature.

Wake Forest College, Winston-Salem, N. C.---Robert James McCracken, pastor, Riverside Baptist Church, New York City, and William Harrison Williams, pastor, Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church, Charlotte, N. C., doctors of divinity; William Howard Plemmons, president, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, N. C.; Richard J. Reynolds, Palm Beach, Fla., president, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, and Charles Henry Babcock, Winston-Salem, president, Reynolds & Co., doctors of laws; and Ray Everett Brown, superintendent, University of Chicago Clinics and Hospitals, Chicago, doctor of humanities.

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V. F. Forderhase, secretary, church music department, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas, has been named song leader for the second Southern Baptist Convention Royal Ambassador Congress to be held in Ft. Worth, Aug. 12-14. Opening session of the Congress will be held on the Hap Hovencamp ranch, just outside Ft. Worth. All other sessions will be in the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum.