

BAPTIST FEATURES

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Prayer Period Helped
Resolve Differences

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is a companion to the series of six articles previously written on the report of the Committee to Study Total Southern Baptist Convention Program. This article is a feature on the membership of the committee itself, providing insight into the men and women, the thought and prayer behind the report itself. Mr. Garrett was a member of the committee.

By W. Barry Garrett
Regional Editor, Baptist Press

Late into the night went the debate. The issue was sharp and the positions were firm. It looked like the problem could not be resolved. The only way a solution could be found was with the help of the Lord.

Chairman Douglas M. Branch of the Committee to Study Total Southern Baptist Convention Program (Survey Committee), called for a season of prayer after which the committee members were to retire without further debate.

Before going to bed groups met in various places, some kneeled by the bedside, a few walked a lonely road under a starry Texas sky, and during the silent hours of the night all breathed fervent prayers to God.

Early the next morning immediately after breakfast when the committee met again, harmony prevailed, minds were together, and a unanimous decision reached.

This is the spirit in which the members of the Survey Committee worked and in which they present their recommendations to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Although varying and sometimes sharply conflicting opinions were expressed by the committee members in their discussions of the problems of Southern Baptists, there was never any doubt of the unanimous concern of every committee member for the best interests of the Baptist cause as expressed through the Southern Baptist Convention.

The committee meetings expressed in the truest sense the search of honest minds for Holy Spirit-led answers. This ideal may not have been reached in every instance, but that certainly was the objective of the entire committee.

Eight laymen, eleven pastors, two ladies, and one editor make up the personnel of the Survey Committee elected by the Convention. These people are not novices in Baptist and denominational circles, but are from among the experienced people of the Convention. It is doubtful that a more representative group of Southern Baptists could be found.

These committee members have served in nearly every capacity there is in the local churches, the associations, the state conventions, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

They have been or are pastors; deacons; Sunday school, Training Union, Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood workers; finance committee members; moderators; clerks; missions committee members; presidents of state conventions; state board members. In the Southern Baptist Convention nearly every position of service possible to a Southern Baptist has been or is filled by one of the Survey Committee members.

The pastors on the Survey Committee have served pastorates representative of every area of Southern Baptist life--rural churches, town and village churches, and big city churches. Some of the pastors on the committee had previous business and professional experience before entering the ministry.

Two charming and successful housewives who are well-experienced in church and denominational affairs were on the committee. Among the laymen were highly successful business men who love their Lord, their church, and their denomination.