

SECTION ELEVEN

Biographical Material

James L. Holly, M.D.

- 1. Dr. Holly's relationship with Masonry**
- 2. Dr. Holly's relationship with his father who is a Mason**
- 3. Dr. Holly's ministry (Two brochures)**

Section XI -- Biographical Material

James L. Holly, M.D.

Dr. Holly has never been a Mason, has never petitioned a Lodge for membership, and has never asked to join a Masonic Lodge. Since he was fourteen years of age, he has known of the wickedness of the Masonic Lodge.

See attached article concerning interview with Dr. Holly's father who is a Mason.

Also, see attached brochure which describes Dr. Holly's ministry in more detail. It will be quickly seen that Dr. Holly's principle desire is to see revival come to the Southern Baptist Convention. Masonry is an obstacle to that goal, not an object of ministry.

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Convention messengers target Freemasonry for investigation

By Trennis Henderson and Greg Warner

INDIANAPOLIS (ABP) -- Southern Baptists declined to launch a special investigation of the teachings of Freemasonry, deciding instead to instruct their Home Mission Board to study the fraternal order for a third time.

After authorizing the study of the Masons' "compatibility with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine" June 10, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution containing thinly veiled accusations against Freemasonry.

Neither the Home Mission Board president nor the man who campaigned for the convention-level investigation were pleased with the outcome.

"I am disappointed in the decision," HMB President Larry Lewis said after messengers amended the original motion in order to instruct the HMB -- instead of a special SBC committee -- to conduct the study.

Lewis said the study will hurt HMB missions. "Any position we take -- either pro Masons or against Masons or neutral -- will generate a certain amount of ire and wrath and thus hurt missions," Lewis said.

Studies indicate 12 percent of Southern Baptist pastors and an even higher percentage of deacons are Masons. Masonic organizations also support Southern Baptist education and other efforts. The HMB depends heavily on donations to its annual missions offering and the denomination's Cooperative Program budget, both of which could suffer if the HMB or SBC are seen as targeting Masons.

Larry Holly, a physician from Beaumont, Texas, who has waged a personal battle against Freemasonry for several years, said he too was "disappointed" in the amended action. He added, however, he will cooperate with the HMB study, hopefully offering input.

"I'm just going to pray and trust the Home Mission Board will deal with it," Holly said. But he added his fight is not over, suggesting he would seek changes in the HMB report if he finds it unsatisfactory. "The fat lady hasn't sung yet."

In a similar study in 1985, the HMB's interfaith witness department concluded Freemasonry is not a religion or cult, and on that basis declined to critique it.

Holly opposes Freemasonry, he said, because of its cult-like activities, secrecy and the fact it teaches that other religions are as valid as Christianity. He called Freemasonry "a force of darkness that is preventing revival" in the SBC.

Prior to this year's annual meeting, Holly sent copies of a 58-page booklet opposing Freemasonry to 5,000 SBC leaders at a cost he estimated at \$8,000. Holly has described the spirit of Freemasonry as "wicked, godless, anti-Christian."

"Let every Southern Baptist beware, who having bowed his knee to the Masonic altar, has thereby betrayed the Lord," the booklet

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convention to establish an ad hoc committee to study Freemasonry.

When the motion came up for debate June 10, Holly declared: "The issue is not how many Masons will stand up and profess belief in the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The issue is: What do Southern Baptists actually know about the Masonic Lodge?"

Holly, a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Beaumont and a former trustee of the SBC Sunday School Board, said all Southern Baptists interested in truth should support the ad hoc study, including Masons who consider the fraternal organization to be harmless.

"With this study, you will have the opportunity to disprove the accusations which I and others have made," he said.

Alvin Rowe, pastor of First Baptist Church, Rockledge, Fla., offered an amendment calling for the Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department -- rather than an ad hoc committee -- to study the issue. After accepting the amendment overwhelmingly, messengers passed the amended motion by an equally wide margin.

The amendment was "a clever ploy," Holly said afterward, since it was "obvious" from the floor discussion that his motion was going to pass. He said his attempts to speak against the amendment were not acknowledged, as SBC president Morris Chapman quickly called for a vote.

In 1985 Holly introduced a proposed resolution which described Freemasonry as a "spiritually devastating and ungodly brotherhood of satanic darkness."

That resolution was referred to the HMB, which responded that Freemasonry was not within its assigned responsibility. A 1991 motion calling for an investigation of Freemasonry also was referred to the HMB. Agency trustees again chose not to study the issue, opting to return the matter to messengers for their consideration.

Fred McPeake, a Mason and messenger from Knoxville, Tenn., said Holly's motion "begins with a premise based on error that Freemasonry is a religion."

"It is not a religion, nor is it a substitute for religion, nor is it a false religion," said McPeake, executive director of the Scottish Rite of Masons in a 24-county region of Tennessee. "It is not in conflict with the Baptist faith."

McPeake said it would be "a waste of time, a waste of needed funds to get involved in investigating a fraternity that is well known and has been well known for years and years."

Other messengers cited the faithful churchmanship of Masons and benevolent work conducted by Masonic organizations.

Holly told Associated Baptist Press he does not favor efforts to keep Masons out of SBC churches or to keep churches with Masons out of the SBC. But Masons should not be given leadership positions in churches, he said.

Holly acknowledged that his own father is a Mason who has been led by Masonic teaching to believe he is "good enough" to get into heaven without personally accepting Jesus Christ.

While he and his father disagree about Masons, Holly said, he still has "a wonderful relationship" with his father. "He's the finest man who ever walked the face of the earth," the younger Holly said.

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Contacted by Associated Baptist Press in his Natchitoches, La., home, Billy Holly would neither confirm nor deny his involvement in Masons. An Episcopalian, the senior Holly said he is on "perfect terms" with his son and holds "no ill feelings," despite their differences over Freemasonry.

He said his son, Larry, learned well the lesson the father taught his children: to develop their own opinions and defend them fervently. "When any boy gets grown and becomes a man, he can do his own thinking," Billy Holly said.

Following passage of the amended motion, a messenger asked how the convention could expect the HMB to study the issue when it had previously declined to do so. SBC president Morris Chapman responded that messengers, by their action, had "instructed" the HMB's interfaith witness department to conduct the study and report back to messengers during next year's annual meeting.

Moments after approving the motion, messengers adopted seven resolutions without debate. A resolution "on Christian witness and voluntary associations" urges Southern Baptists "to refrain from participation or membership in organizations with teachings, oaths, or mystical knowledge which are contrary to the Bible and to the public expression of our faith in Jesus Christ, which must be above all reproach."

During a press conference following the vote, resolutions committee chairman Al Mohler said the resolution "certainly included Freemasonry but is much broader than Freemasonry."

Mohler, editor of the Christian Index of Georgia, said committee members determined "we needed to address the basic moral, discipleship issue" concerning every Christian's responsibility to measure all personal relationships and associations "by biblical criteria."

"Christians are encouraged in their discipleship to declare openly their faith and to live lives which are transparent before the world, bearing testimony to Jesus Christ," Mohler said. "Whatever mars or impedes or compromises that testimony is, by its very nature, problematic for the Christian in terms of discipleship."