

# BAPTISTS UNITED NEWS

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## BEWARE OF EXTRA - SCRIPTURAL "PROPHECY"

BY: ROBERT M. TENERY

During the dark days of World War II, so-called "prophetic Preachers" were just sure that the world was witnessing the beginning of the end. Some preached that the Battle of Armageddon was already underway. Some fundamentalists preachers were even setting dates as to when the world would come to an end. They were just sure that the Anti-Christ was living. The term Anti-Christ, a perfectly Biblical term to describe an individual who is yet to reign on earth, was variously affixed to Mussolini, Tojo, Hitler, and Joseph Stalin. A few even decided that Roosevelt fit the bill. There was no doubt in their minds that the coming of Christ was just around the corner. They had vast followings but the War ended. It was not the Battle of Armageddon. It wasn't the time for Christ's return. Many of their followers were disillusioned. In some quarters such "Prophetic preachers" became laughing stock. Other preachers who knew full well that prophecy is a very vital part of Scripture shied away from ever preaching on prophecy. Some great books of the Bible which were given for our edification were ignored. Preaching concerning the Second Coming of Christ became the exception rather than the rule among evangelicals, including Southern Baptists. Thus, a great body of Biblical truth was ignored for a number of years because of the excesses of a few.

### TODAY

Today there is a new interest in prophecy among young and old alike. It is talked about on TV talk shows. There are movies concerning Biblical prophecy and the events surrounding the Return of our Lord. But, again today, we have excesses which again threaten to eclipse, good, sound, prophetic preaching and teaching. Of these excesses, we must beware! Present day prophetic prognosticators have zeroed in on such personalities as Henry Kissinger, Moyshe Dayan, and Ted Kennedy as candidates for the Anti-Christ. The front

runner at this time seems to be Henry Kissinger. A numbering scheme by which the numbers 666 is affixed to Henry Kissinger is presently making the rounds among those who like to speculate concerning future events.

### SHOCKING

It has been shocking to note that some famous authors who have, in the past, been generally considered sound and Biblical in their writings have suddenly begun to engage in untenable excesses. They apparently believe that their fame has made them credible regardless of what they say. We were shocked, for instance, when William Sailer pointed out that David Wilkerson's new book, The Vision claims the direct revelation or vision from God. It is referred to as a "terrifying prophecy of dooms-day". When students of prophecy drift off into such excesses, it tends to make prophetic preaching incredible in the minds and hearts of those who need to hear it most. Of course, David Wilkerson gained fame in his book, The Cross and the Switchblade. Because of his fame, his words will gain ready acceptance in the minds and hearts of many who read his books. This should lay upon him an even greater responsibility to be responsible in his writing concerning prophecy. These plunges into claims of extra-Biblical and direct revelation from God can very easily head into a weird mysticism which God will not bless and which will stifle the virile Christian witness of Bible-believing evangelicals. It seems that some students of prophecy are not unlike the philosophers on Mars Hill to whom Paul preached. They are gullible to any "new thing". They latch on to any new prophetic preachments with a fanatical tenacity which makes the spirituality of any man suspect if he dares to caution them about their blind excessive plunges into prophetic speculation. Some evangelical, Bible believing students of prophecy who have issued such cau-

tions have often aroused the ire of prophetic prognosticators and been charged with being "half infidel" or "liberal".

### WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

What is a Bible believing Christian to do? There is a new interest and openness among the people of God and, indeed, the world concerning Bible Prophecy. To be sure, the Bible teaches us to live in the expectancy of the Lord's Return. Jesus taught this. The Apostles taught this. The Resurrection and the Return were the essential elements in the preaching of the early church. To be sure, Jesus gave his followers signs of His return. In the 24th chapter of Matthew there is an intermingling of the prophecy concerning the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem which came in 70 A.D. and the signs of His return. Are Bible believing preachers and teachers to ignore the great body of Scripture dealing with prophecy just because a few are going to excesses and drifting into mysticism? Are we to discount all prophetic preaching and teaching because a few have brought forth incredible preachments that do not square with Scripture? What are we to do?

### SOLA SCRIPTURA

During the Reformation there emerged a principal by which all doctrine was to be tested. That principal is known as *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone). The principal of *Sola Scriptura* sets squarely in apposition to the idea of continuing Revelation in the name of which some religionists claim direct revelation from God which was equal in authority to the revelation of the Scripture. We believe *Sola Scriptura* is a good principal as it applies to prophecy. The Spirit of Prophecy should never reach beyond the limits of Scripture in a preacher's preaching, teaching or writing. The ear of America is tuned to prophetic preaching in  
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# REFLECTIONS ON THE SOUTHERN B

The Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas enrolled a record number of 17,619 messengers. Total attendance including visitors and children likely went over the 20,000 mark. The Dallas Convention likely was the most representative convention that we have had in recent years because of its accessibility to Southern Baptist people.

## FACILITIES

It is becoming more and more apparent that Committees responsible for the selection and preparation of Convention sites just must exercise more care. The city of Dallas is beautiful to be sure. Hotel and Motel accommodations are adequate. It is easily accessible by plane or automobile but the city wasn't ready for this Convention. There was construction going on all around the Convention Center. Parking was inadequate. Much of the parking that was available was accessible by very muddy streets and the messengers had to dodge mud puddles to get to the Convention Hall. Parking was also expensive. Shuttle busses helped but they were inadequate.

It seems that the Committee should exact a more definite agreement with city officials. We are all aware that convention sites are selected five years in advance. We are also aware that projected construction projects can fall behind during such a period of time. For this reason, it seems that it would be wise for our Convention Committee to consider only those cities which are already prepared to handle the Southern Baptist Convention. Twice in recent years we have gotten into difficulty by scheduling conventions in cities which had no facilities but made commitments on the basis of projected plans. In one instance the plans didn't materialize at all.

It seems that every major city is building a Convention Center. Chambers of Commerce and city officials often get over zealous in their efforts to attract conventions. Some have thought they could handle the Southern Baptist Convention when they were not able.

There are cities which are able to handle the Southern Baptist Convention rather comfortably. These cities include Houston, Miami Beach, Kansas City, and others. They always receive the Convention with open arms. It seems that we would do well to stay with Convention cities that have proven their ability to handle the Southern Baptist Convention until other sites are completed and there is no question of the availability of hotel and motel rooms, parking, and an adequate convention hall.

## MEETING HALL

We hope that the Convention Committee will steer clear of these

glorified warehouses in the future, such as the one in Dallas. While the Dallas facility would lend itself very ably to a display type convention, it did not lend itself to a deliberative convention such as the Southern Baptist Convention. \$50,000 had to be spent for video equipment to make it possible to conduct the Convention at all with any degree of order. If the facility had had risers similar to the Miami Beach facility, it would have been much better but there were no risers whatever. A convention the size of the Southern Baptist Convention is a great financial boon to the businessmen of the city and cities who want the Southern Baptist Convention should be required to make better preparation than has been made in some instances in the past.

## BFMF INFLUENCE

The influence of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship was evident throughout the Convention. It is of more than a little significance that the Southern Baptist Journal which went out to every Southern Baptist pastor and denominational worker only days before the Convention featured the ministry of Dr. Jaroy Weber, emphasizing in a special way the evangelistic outreach of his ministry. Some conservative men who wanted to see Dr. Weber elected president of the Convention were afraid that the feature article appearing in the Journal was the kiss of death for his presidency. It was only after much persuasion by some very influential men on the morning when the officers were to be elected that Dr. Weber consented to have his name placed in nomination. He did not feel that he could be elected. There were strong rumors that Convention Officials were backing another candidate. But, in the face of it all, Dr. Weber was handily elected in a run-off with Dr. Kenneth Chafin. Some observers attributed Dr. Chafin's defeat to the disenchantment on the part of Southern Baptist people with "Spring Street USA" - a television production of the Home Mission Board which Dr. Chafin hosts.

## TONE

The tone of the Convention was generally conservative. The prestigious Dallas Morning News interpreted the Convention's rejection of quota systems on our Boards for Women and Minority Groups as a victory for conservatives. The Convention shied away from any endorsement of the ordination of women. The Dallas Morning News rightly stated that the ordination of women is an issue that Conservative Baptists are bitterly opposed to.

## EVANGELISM COMMISSION

The motion to separate the Department of Evangelism from the Home Mission Board and make it a separate Board or Commission was tabled until next year. This was to give a committee headed by Dr. Carl Bates an opportunity to study the structure of the Home Mission Board and make recommendations back to the Convention next year. During debate on the matter it became very apparent that there was strong support for a separate Evangelism Commission and the measure would have likely have passed had it come to a vote. Among those who debated the issue was a former President of the Convention, Dr. Wayne Dehoney, who expressed his shock that only 5% of the total Home Mission Board Budget was given to evangelism and that the Evangelism Department of the Home Mission Board occupied such an insignificant place in the organizational structure of the Board. He then made a motion that the matter be tabled until next year in order that the study committee may have an opportunity to do something about the place of evangelism at the Home Mission Board. The messengers, in an attempt to be fair and in an effort to give the Home Mission Board every opportunity to correct the situation, went along with Dr. Dehoney's motion to table. Whatever the Committee recommends, the red flag is up to the Home Mission Board. Evangelism must occupy a much more prominent place in the ministry of that Board.

## DOUBTS

It is obvious that many messengers are going to continue to support the idea of a separate evangelism commission regardless of what the committee recommends. A number have expressed their doubts privately that evangelism will, in reality, occupy the significant place it should in the ministry of the Home Mission Board under the present leadership of that Board. They remind us that evangelism is the very heart beat of those who are successful at it and the past performance of Home Mission Board personnel certainly does not indicate that evangelism is their heart beat or their first interest. That is the reason that evangelism occupies such a low estate at the Board now. The evangelistic records of some on the study committee does not indicate the kind of knowledge or background in evangelism that would recommend them for the task. We can only hope that they will consult with those who do know evangelism.

Many believe that the low status of evangelism at the Home Mission Board has been a deterrent to attracting and holding men at the Board who possess a God-given aptitude in the field of evangelism.

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# BAPTIST CONVENTION

BY:  
**ROBERT M. TENERY**

## GOOD

Some good has already come out of the move for a separate evangelism committee. Denominational leadership has been made acutely aware that evangelism is a matter of first priority and magnitude among Southern Baptists of the '70's and denominational officials used every opportunity to reassure the messengers that they were committed to evangelism. Following the debate on the Evangelism Commission, Dr. W. O. Vaught, Chairman of the Foreign Mission Board, came to the microphone to reassure the messengers that the major thrust of the Foreign Mission Board was evangelistic. Dr. Rutledge came to the microphones in an effort to convince the messengers that the Home Mission Board was, indeed, concerned about evangelism.

Significantly enough, the Southern Baptist Journal supported a separate commission on evangelism

## BFMF LUNCHEON

This writer was invited to a luncheon with the directors of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship. There were approximately twice as many in attendance as was expected. It was a very refreshing meeting. Those bringing greetings to the Fellowship included Dr. Harold Lindsell, editor of Christianity Today, Evangelist E. J. Daniels, Dr. Robert Witty of Luther Rice Seminary, Dr. Jimmy Milliken of Mid-American Seminary, and Dr. Ross Edwards of the Word and Way (Baptist State Paper of Missouri). If we correctly interpret the purposes and objectives of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, it is basically committed to a ministry of persuasion and influence for good. Events, trends and developments within our Convention will be interpreted to our Baptist people through the pages of the Southern Baptist Journal in the light of the Baptist Faith and Message adopted at the 1963 Kansas City Convention. The Journal will challenge those things that are wrong and magnify those things that are right. Particular attention will be given to any departure from the Scriptures in our denominational life. While members of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship will likely participate in the debating of issues from time to time, and while those members may make proposals to the Convention, floor fights will not be a major strategy of the Fellowship. The Fellowship will continually call our denomination to a deeper commitment to Biblical principals and will advocate that all of our agencies and institutions operate in complete accord with the Baptist Faith and Message. Those individuals who can never be satisfied

with anything less than a floor fight at every Convention may not feel at home in the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship. This does not mean that members of the Fellowship will never challenge anything on the Convention Floor. It does not mean that they will never make proposals on the Convention Floor but, floor fights will not be a major strategy of the Fellowship. The Fellowship will not feel a need for a floor fight every year to justify its existence. The Fellowship will also serve to encourage those pastors and churches who have been discouraged because of liberalism within our ranks to remain within the structure of the Convention and will provide for them a means of expressing their deepest convictions concerning the basic tenets of the Baptist Faith.

## THE PRESIDENT

The President of our Convention, Mr. Owen Cooper of Yazoo City, Mississippi, conducted himself as a Christian gentleman and we believe that he wanted to be fair to everyone. Some messengers, however, expressed a legitimate concern that more care be given to conduct our business affairs in accord with our constitution which provides that our deliberations shall proceed according to Robert's Rules of Order. There has been some tendency in the last several years to proceed according to whim rather than according to rules. A president will often issue a ruling which is more concerned with convenience than with living by the legal, constitutional document by which we govern ourselves. While it may take a little more time on some occasions, future presidents of our convention will be wise to adhere strictly to the rules regardless of how prominent and how prestigious a messenger wants to break the rules. Many of the actions that we take at conventions have legal ramifications and it is not unthinkable that we could some day find some action of the Convention challenged in a court of law and have a judge overturn actions of the convention simply because we did not follow our own legally adopted constitution during the course of our deliberations. Rules sometimes seem stringent but it is impossible for a deliberative body as large as the Southern Baptist Convention to get along without them. We hope that future presidents will be more meticulous in presiding according to our adopted constitution. A constitution cannot be overturned by any vote of a single Convention. A president should not justify his departure from the rules by asking the body to sustain him. Seldom will the Convention embarrass the President by over-ruling him. If we proceed according to the rules, the President must want to.

## CONCLUSION

This writer was encouraged by the Dallas Convention. There is an undeniable demand on the part of our Baptist people that all of our missionary outreach be more evangelistic in nature. In his address on Foreign Mission Night, Dr. Baker James Cauthen reminded the messengers that the Bible does not command us to "go dialogue but to go make disciples". Some messengers saw this as his personal challenge to a new philosophy of missions which is not missions - but it is a philosophy of missionary defeat. Dr. Cauthen took the position that we are to be positive in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to men who know him not. Missionary dialogue is unfruitful as far as bringing men to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and Dr. Cauthen was obviously disturbed about this approach to missions. We can all hope that his voice will be heeded, because if there was ever a man among Southern Baptists who could be called "Mr. Missions: it is Dr. Baker James Cauthen.

We believe that our denominational leadership will be more sensitive to missions and evangelism. We can hope and pray that our leadership will be more careful to see that things done in the name of missions is really missions and that the term "missions" is never used to justify some humanistic denominational project which does little to call men to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. We are not where we ought to be yet but we are headed in that direction. There are some things on the horizon that still concern us but we believe that it would be a mistake for any pastor or church to disassociate themselves from our convention at this time. We believe that there are great days ahead.

RMT



- ▲ People Search
- ▲ Enlarged Organization
- ▲ Family Visitation
- ▲ Reach Out Week
- ▲ Every Prospect Visited
- ▲ High Attendance Celebration Sunday

Baptists United for Spiritual Revival (a North Carolina organization) is in friendly co-operation with the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship which is a Convention-wide organization.

# BIBLE CONFIRMS GEOLOGICAL FIND

BEWARE - CONTINUED

For many years the proponents of the evolutionary hypotheses have rejected the Biblical account of creation and insisted that dinosaurs became extinct about 70 million years ago and that man came on the scene about 1 million years ago. They have also insisted that some of the fossilized dinosaur tracks found in Texas were made by animals which existed 120 million years ago. However, recent discoveries have unearthed fossilized human tracks which existed in the very same rock strata with three toed dinosaur tracks. On one occasion, the human tracks trailed across the dinosaur tracks at right angles. Both sets of tracks were obviously made in soft mud which was later baked by the sun and fossilized as the area turned arid. The human tracks were 18 inches long. The cause for this tremendous size is explained in Genesis 6:4 where the Bible states that there were "Giants in the earth in those days".

A group of scientists from over the nation recently met in Glen Rose, Texas to examine the fossilized tracks which were found in the Paluxy river Bed near Glen Rose. The tracks confirm that dinosaurs and man passed along the river bed within a short time of one another, and that man and dinosaurs existed at the same time. This is supported by the book of Genesis. It explodes the contention by evolutionists that dinosaurs and other air breathing animals existed many millions of years before man. The tracks were found under a nine inch stratum of limestone covered by six to ten feet of earth. In his book, The Genesis Flood, Dr. Henry Morris discusses this find

and states that similar giant human foot prints have been found in Arizona, near Mt. Whitney in California near the White Sands in New Mexico, and in other places.

But what do the evolutionists do with the evidence? They are faced with believing the obvious truths based on the archeological find or rejecting them. They must believe the Genesis account of creation that man and other air breathing animals were created on the sixth day of divine creation and thus explode the entire evolutionary hypotheses, (time structure and all) or reject the obvious truth that is revealed in the Glen Rose find. If they accept the obvious truth then many of the evolutionists will be out of a job and therefore, we predict, that most of them will reject the evidence and cling to their jobs and their out-moded, evolutionary hypotheses.

In essence, the evolutionists say that man is an accident - that he originated from some primeval scum on a primeval sea and that his only purpose for existence is survival. The Biblical account of creation reveals that the universe was divinely created in six days with man and air breathing animals being the final acts of creation. The Bible contends that man has a divine purpose for existence so the inquirer has to decide whether man is an accident with no purpose or whether he is a divine creation with a purpose - whether the universe exists in chaos or whether there is a divine intelligence behind it all. This writer believes the Genesis account of creation!

RMT

## Situation Ethics

A favorite program of the liberal establishment during the 1960's was to promote the proposition of "situation ethics" or the idea that ethics and morality are not fixed but dependent upon the existing situation and the people involved therein.

That idea, of course, is one of the root causes of the terrible decline in ethical behavior and morality in general in the United States.

Having developed the theme and put it into widespread acceptance the liberals (including many churchmen) now have the gall to complain

about it when used by non-liberals. In this they attempt to join those non-liberals who all along have insisted that ethics and morality are fixed and must be applied across the board.

It makes sense for more conservatives to complain about the behavior of high government officials in the Watergate scandals. It makes little sense for the liberal establishment to object.

After all people like John Mitchell, John Haldeman and others in high places broke the law of the land because they were trying to defend the nation against subver-

this day. To be sure, many responsible preachers such as Billy Graham have asserted their belief time and time again that the Coming of the Lord is near. They live in the expectancy of His soon return as Jesus taught us to but they avoid all manner of date setting, or the naming of candidates for the office of Anti-Christ. There are many good books coming off the press today on the return of the Lord. A good writer may be sure that any book that he writes on the Return of the Lord will be printed because the publishing firms have recognized the new interest in prophecy as a great opportunity to sell books. But just because a book is printed does not mean that it is believable. There are a number of good books on the scene which deal with the coming of the Lord by responsible writers. One such book is a recent book by Dr. Joe T. Odle entitled "The Coming of the King". Dr. Odle is a responsible, conservative, Bible Scholar who has written a good, Biblical book from the Pre-millennial viewpoint on the Return of our Lord. Hal Lindsay's book The Late, Great, Planet, Earth has gained broad acceptance among many responsible conservative Bible scholars and there are others. In reading books on prophecy the reader will do well to continually apply the *Sola Scriptura* principal and all human writing is to be judged and tested by the Scriptures. Any writing that goes beyond what the Scriptures teach concerning the Return of our Lord has gone too far and is incredible. The Book of Acts tells us of some early Christians who searched the Scriptures daily to see whether or not those things which they had been told were true or not. This is a good principal for modern day students of prophecy. Those who are well grounded in the Scripture cannot be confused by humanistic projections of men.

This writer is very basically committed to the pre-millennial return of our Lord. It is a great time to declare prophetic truth. Let us continue to declare it while staying in complete accord with the Scriptures in our preaching.

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sion, according to their consciences. That's situation ethics - no more, no less.

So why should the exponents of situation ethics cry out? Their strident condemnations have heavy overtones of hypocrisy.

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