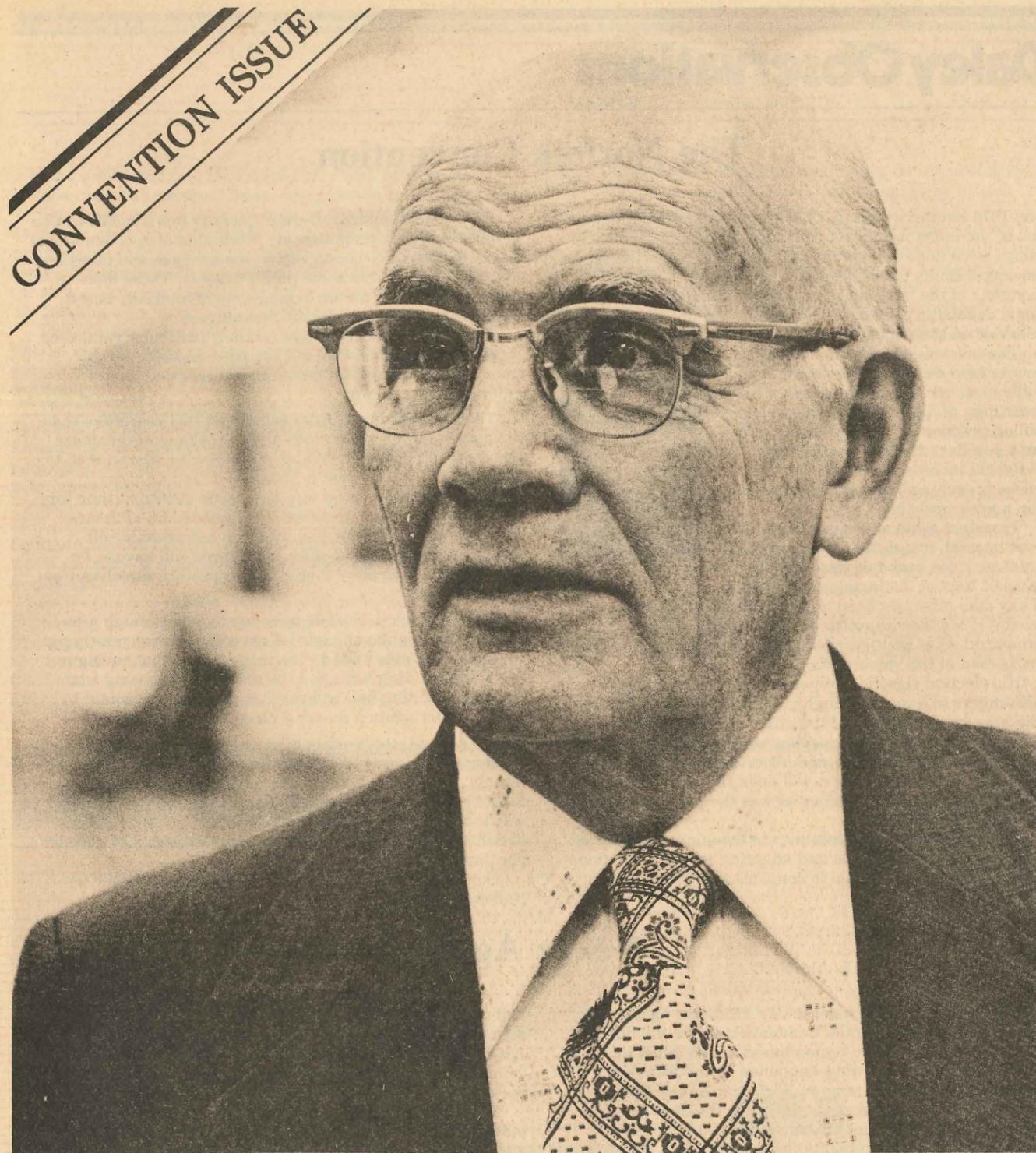


CONVENTION ISSUE



New SBC President James L. Sullivan

WESTERN RECORDER

JUNE 24, 1976

The Norfolk Convention

The 1976 Southern Baptist Convention will not be judged as one of the more significant conventions though important things were done and commendable actions were taken. As has increasingly been the case in recent years, the high moments of the meeting were somewhat marred by emotional debate on controversial matters and uncalled for behavior on the part of a few messengers.

The most significant action of the messengers was the choice of James L. Sullivan as convention president. This is something of a departure from the prevailing practice in recent years of selecting a popular, dynamic pastor whose statistical records are impressive and whose preaching exposure has made him a preacher's hero.



President Sullivan is an articulate, level-headed, insightful denominational statesman. He probably has the best grasp of Baptist distinctives and genius of any man alive. As head of the literature producing agency of Southern Baptists for many years, he has influenced what Baptists read and believe today more than any person of this generation.

His election signifies proper recognition by convention messengers of a group of highly qualified Baptist leaders who have been deprived of the office of president while serving a convention agency. Now as they become unrelated to any agency, their ability and experience can be utilized. Hopefully Sullivan's election will open the way for other such able men to fill this office as was the practice in earlier years of convention life.

Messengers reflected maturity in listening patiently to reports from study groups and adopting recommendations which will prove more vital to convention life with passing years.

A few messengers reflected sincerity but inconsideration in insisting on disproportionate discussion of such emotional issues as abortion, pornography, media trash and questionable material used in some public schools. These matters are important and strong expressions of biblically based morality were adopted by the messengers.

However, some crusaders for their particular version of morality statements were not satisfied and resorted to unruliness and abuse of presiding officers and long suffering messengers.

The Committee on Order scheduled this year more than the usual time for resolutions and miscellaneous business. But it proved not to be enough for everyone who wanted to say his piece. Every year it becomes more and more apparent that there is no way to provide sufficient time for convention business, inspirational periods and all issues messengers want to discuss. If we do not practice self restraint, present convention procedures will have to be altered to include more limitations to protect ourselves from ourselves.

The facilities in Norfolk were inadequate though area Baptists and public officials knocked themselves out trying to provide for every need. The inconvenience of having to use three meeting halls and the distance of housing from the main meeting hall will make messengers reluctant to approve ever again a meeting place as limited as Norfolk.

Thank God, the Norfolk convention had its high moments. And pray we will always have a lump in our throats, a tingling up and down our spines and a tear in our hearts and eyes when we see young missionaries on their way to the ends of the earth and when we hear preaching like that of Carl Bates and the moving testimony of a leader like James Sullivan.

Our God is marching on! We follow in his train.
Hallelujah!

Never Again

Tuesday, June 15, 1976 was the day President Gerald Ford visited the Southern Baptist Convention and it will not be soon forgotten. It will be remembered not so much for what the President said but what happened to thousands of Southern Baptists who came to Norfolk to do the Lord's business. For this one messenger it was the most disappointing day in 25 years of convention attendance.

The security arrangements for the President's visit were understandable but to subject elected convention messengers to such treatment is deplorable. The Norfolk facilities were already limited and to add further limitations to the first two convention sessions was enough to justify the frustration and resentment of thousands of messengers.

Though the President's appearance was in the afternoon, Presidential security officials took over the attendance arrangements for both the morning and afternoon sessions

and convention officials had little to say about how things were done. This was necessary because the building could not be searched and prepared for the President's visit between the morning and afternoon sessions but only during the night before the first day of the convention.

To control the crowd only 10,500 messengers were admitted and the same 10,500 to both the morning and afternoon sessions. Tickets were given to the first 10,500 messengers who registered and all tickets were distributed on Monday, a day before the convention convened and before many messengers even arrived in Norfolk.

The scene on Tuesday morning was pandemonium. Late arrivers were dumbfounded and many were furious. One hour before the convention was called to order lines of messengers blocks long formed and ticket holders inched toward the few doors unlocked. Each messenger was

checked individually by security officers with brief cases, handbags and all personal items being carefully examined.

Several thousands with admission tickets wearied of the long wait, gave up in disgust and left. Consequently many seats were unfilled while non-ticket holders were turned away. The whole thing was so contrary to Southern Baptist conviction and practice of granting privileged status to none but treating all with equality and fairness.

The President behaved becomingly and the messengers treated him cordially and respectfully. He read an excellent speech containing expressions of fundamental Baptist convictions.

The program planners sincerely meant for the President's appearance to be non-political but intention and actuality are not always the same. Considering the present political scene, to say the President's visit was non-political is to ignore the facts.

Some of my sincere fellow Baptists have a different view of the President's visit. They call it the greatest day in Southern Baptist history because it gave Southern Baptists world visibility in a matter of hours. They have right to their evaluation.

As for this one Baptist, world visibility for Southern Baptists by this method is not as important as the rights and treatment of fellow Baptists. As for world visibility for Southern Baptists, a Baptist layman by the name of Jimmy Carter has done more with a smile and a sincere Christian testimony than all the convention appearances of an Episco-

palian United States President could ever do in reading a Baptist sounding speech written and designed by speech writers to please Baptist listeners.

The invitation to the President was a mistake and his acceptance was a mistake. It was the first and should be the last time a President is invited to speak to a Southern Baptist meeting simply because he is the President. The invitation in an election year was especially unwise.

The President's visit was a case of civil religion in its classic form. It is contrary to the historic practice of Baptists who have served a prophetic role to the state instead of being neutralized by joining church and state. In civil religion American patriotism is equated with religion with the President serving as high priest. Baptists are loyal and patriotic citizens but their first allegiance is to God and not to the state.

The Norfolk experience should remind us that Baptists as a minority group have never sought prestige and attention from visits of high political officials. And now as the largest evangelical group in America we should not risk selling our soul for a 30 minute visit of an appointed American President running for election.

The Southern Baptist Convention meeting is for messengers from local churches to do the business of the Lord. Their participation should never again be sacrificed for the appearance of a political dignitary.

Never!

Baptist Forum

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Pentecost was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (Acts 2:16-17), and was a once for-all event. The total phenomenon was never repeated.

Jesus taught that, following his glorification, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, every one who believed on him would receive the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39).

God calls all to repentance, and promises the Holy Ghost to all who ask him (Acts 17:30-39; 2:39, Luke 11:13).

On the day of Pentecost, about three thousand people asked, upon being convicted for sin, "What shall we do?" They were told by Peter to repent, and were promised the gift of the Holy Ghost. This was not a promise of some gift from the Holy Ghost subsequent to conversion, but a promise of the Holy Ghost himself, as a gift in the conversion experience.

They were baptized because of the remission of their sins in the name of the Holy Trinity (Matt. 28:19). If they had not received the Holy Spirit, why were they baptized in his name?

If there is a "second" and "third" experience of the Holy Ghost, including tongues, to be sought by believers, why did Peter not inform them of this? These converted Jews were of the Diaspora, Jews from every nation under heaven. Without doubt, many of them would soon be returning to their distant lands, and Peter might never see some of them again.

There is no record that the three thousand ever spoke with tongues, or that the church in Jerusalem ever had the experience of glossolalia again.

The gospel comes in the Holy Ghost, and is received with the joy of the Holy Ghost (I Thess. 1:5-6). Scriptures may be multiplied which show that every true Christian has the Holy Spirit (Acts

5:31-32, Heb. 10:10-20, I John 5:10, Rom. 8:9-10, 14-16, for example).

The New Testament writers wrote upon the premise and assumption that each child of God (not every professor) has the Holy Ghost. "No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 12:33).

Carl Loy
Columbia, Ky.

BOLD BELIEVERS IN GIVING



Through a Christian Life Style

JUNE 24, 1976
WESTERN RECORDER

Christian Education

SBTS Elects N. C. Man

A record gathering of 1,271 alumni of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary met in annual reunion and elected new officers.

Those at the luncheon also took occasion to honor James L. Sullivan, newly-elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, who is a graduate of the Louisville seminary and is currently teaching a course on "How Southern Baptists Work Together" for the seminary's Boyce Bible School.

New officers elected included President Julian Cave, Jr., pastor of St. John's Baptist Church, Charlotte, N. C.; president-elect, W. C. Fields, assistant executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee; and secretary, Edgar E. Hatfield, Tulsa, Okla. Cave and Hatfield will serve in 1977, Fields in 1978.

SEBTS Picks Tomlinson

Alumni of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary elected new officers, adopted a giving program goal for the next year and heard a progress report from seminary President Randall Lolley.

Lolley reported progress on the expansion-renovation program of Southeastern's library facilities and announced that it would be ready for use in

January 1977.

New officers elected by the group are President William I. Tomlinson, of Richmond, Va.; Vice President John Platt, of Fairforest, S. C.; and Secretary Jack Clifford, of Hyattsville, Md.

MWBTS Names Bunch

David Bunch, area director for the Iowa Baptist Association, was elected president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary alumni association.

To serve with Bunch will be Sanford Beckett, associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Hattiesburg, Miss., vice president, and Arthur McGinnis, pastor of Pearl Street Baptist Church, Paola, Kan., secretary-treasurer.

SWBTS Picks Oklahoman

Alumni of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth elected Lavonn Brown, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Norman, Okla., as new president of the 30,000-member alumni association.

Other officers elected were Cecil Sherman, pastor, First Baptist Church, Asheville, N. C., president-elect, and John Seelig, vice president for administrative affairs at Southwestern Seminary, secretary.

GGBTS Elects San Diegan

Wayne Eurich, superintendent of missions for San Diego Baptist Association, was elected president of the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary Alumni Association.

Alumnus of the year awards went to Henry T. Blackaby, pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Clyde B. Skidmore, pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church, Bakersfield, Calif.; and Alfred M. Smoak, pastor of Alder Avenue Baptist Church, Fremont, Calif.

NOBTS Honors Pair

Two Southern Baptist leaders were honored as New Orleans Seminary distinguished alumni during the seminary's annual alumni luncheon.

Receiving the awards were William L. Clark, director of the Division of Chaplaincy for the SBC Home Mission Board; and Charles Harvey, pastor of Sunset Acres Baptist Church, Shreveport, La. Harvey is the immediate past chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive committee.

The alumni elected Frank Gunn, pastor of First Baptist Church, Biloxi, Miss., as president, and heard an address by Seminary President Landrum Leavell.

Convention Reports

Southern Baptists Set Records, Hear Ford, Elect Sullivan

Reeling in the ecstasy and agony of a program appearance by President Gerald Ford, the Southern Baptist Convention jammed into its three-day 119th session a celebration of the bicentennial, election of a new president, adoption of a report clarifying the role of its Executive Committee and acceptance of a mission challenge to share the gospel with the entire world's population by the year 2000.

James L. Sullivan, 66-year-old retired president and chief executive of the SBC Sunday School Board for 21 years, was elected president of the 12.7 million member convention in a majority first-ballot victory over four other nominees after Memphis Pastor Adrian Rogers withdrew from consideration.

A record 18,672 registered "messengers" tried to crowd into the 11,500-seat Scope Convention Center for the sessions. The previous record registration was 18,190 messengers attending the 1974 convention in Dallas.

In business sessions the messengers approved a \$55 million budget and 10 resolutions on issues ranging from abortion to homosexuality.

The convention opened with a mood of frustration and hostility when it was announced that the first 10,500 messengers to register would be given pink admission cards to attend the Tuesday morning and afternoon sessions and that all others could not enter the auditorium to hear the address by President Ford because of security and fire protection regulations.

Messengers, who drove hundreds of miles and spent hundreds of dollars to attend, complained about their inability to get inside the auditorium. There were reports of shouting matches, scuffling and hostility among those who could not get inside, despite a closed-circuit television and image magnification system that piped convention proceedings into the adjacent 2,500-seat Chrysler Auditorium.

Evening sessions were also beamed to the 1,850-seat Virginia Beach Dome, 22 miles away on Virginia Beach where thousands of the messengers stayed and commuted to sessions via bus.

Frustrated by crowded conditions, the messengers amended convention procedures to require convention cities to provide a main auditorium seating a minimum of 16,000 and guarantee 6,500 hotel rooms with a majority within walking distance or 10-minute bus ride.

Elected first vice-president was Dotson Nelson Jr., pastor of Mountain Brook Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala. Named second vice-president was Mrs. Carl Bates, wife of the pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N. C.

The messengers reelected W. Fred Kendall of Nashville, registration secretary; and Clifton J. Allen of Winston-Salem, N. C., recording secretary.

In other action, the messengers approved two major studies covering the role and function of its Executive Committee, and a missions challenge for the last 25 years of the 20th century. Both studies were authorized two years ago by the SBC in Dallas.

A seven-member committee which studied the role of the SBC Executive Committee offered five recommendations and 12 suggestions to the convention. All were approved.

The Missions Challenge Committee, composed of seven trustees each from the Home and Foreign Mission Boards plus at-large members, offered 15 recommendations, each built around a plea for Baptists to commit themselves to taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone in the world by the year 2000.

The most hotly-debated issue was a resolution on abortion, which required three different business sessions before approved as proposed by the resolutions committee.

Messengers defeated two amendments that leaned toward the anti-abortion view and then affirmed the most hotly-contended paragraph which affirmed "the limited role of government" in abortion matters and the right of mothers to a full range of medical services.

The resolution affirmed the biblical view of the sanctity of human life, including fetal life, and urged Baptists to help change attitudes that might encourage persons to use abortion as a

means of birth control. It repeated many of the positions stated in a resolution messengers adopted in 1971.

A resolution on homosexuality also drew debate with the messengers deleting a phrase expressing compassion for homosexuals as persons and rewording it to express "concern that all persons be saved from the penalty of sin through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Other adopted resolutions pledged support of the nation's bicentennial and expressed appreciation to President Ford for recognizing in his speech the role Baptists played in the nation's development; reaffirmed SBC support of full religious and political freedom for all people, calling especially for the release of Georgi Vins, imprisoned Baptist minister in Russia; and opposed government support of teaching the views of Transcendental Meditation.

Messengers also approved resolutions supporting the work of the American Bible Society, expressing appreciation to the host city, officers and news media, supporting observance of Sunday as a day of rest and opposing the use of beverage alcohol and portrayal of pornography.

The most hostile debate came over reports of the Christian Life Commission and the Public Affairs Committee dealing with a social studies curriculum series called MACOS (Man: A Course of Study) used by some public schools for fourth and fifth graders.

Herschel A. Markham, pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Fairburn, Ga., called the materials "luciferian, satanic, devil-filled" and wanted to read sections of the material to the messengers.

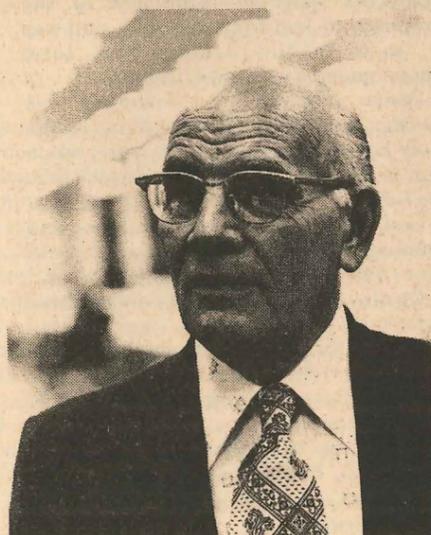
At one point, Markham threatened to sue the convention if he were not allowed to speak further. He sought the microphone almost a half-dozen times to speak, but offered no motion or amendment to the reports of the two agencies, ultimately received by the messengers.

Southern Baptists set a new attendance record when Mrs. Annie Nobles Mizell, a 66-year-old woman deacon from Pactolus Baptist Church, Washington, N. C., registered as the 18,191st messenger.

The messengers voted to hold the 1980 session of the convention in St. Louis on June 10-12 and named William L. Self, pastor of Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta, to preach next year's convention sermon.

Double Exposure

"Never in my entire life did I earn a dollar that I know anything about that I didn't tithe to the church," new SBC President James L. Sullivan told messengers as the 119th Southern Baptist Convention came to a close Thursday night in Norfolk. The former Kentucky pastor told of his growing up experience in Mississippi in a family where no thought was ever given to missing a service at church. In all of this, it seemed to messengers last week that God had laid his hand on Jimmy Sullivan - - and, more significantly - - upon Southern Baptists, in bringing them together for a time such as this.



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"Earnestly contend for the Faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."—Jude 3.

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Convention Reports

Remarks by President Gerald R. Ford to the 1976 Southern Baptist Convention Norfolk, Virginia June 15, 1976

It is a great honor for me to be the first President of the United States to address the Southern Baptist Convention. I recall with special interest the last time I was introduced at an event sponsored by the Southern Baptists. It was a Brotherhood Commission prayer breakfast in Dallas almost exactly two years ago, when I was Vice President. The man introducing me was very considerate, very generous in his remarks, and very friendly. I was introduced as a man with "an open mind and a compassionate heart," and I would like to return that compliment today to the man who introduced me — Governor Jimmy Carter. The honor you have paid me with the invitation to speak to this convention is special to me in a very personal way.

Although our religious denominations are different, I have long admired the missionary spirit of Baptists and the fact that you strive to keep the Bible at the center of your lives. I also respect and appreciate your commitment to the health care and educational advancement of your fellow citizens, as exemplified by the many hospitals, universities and seminaries supported by Baptist churches.

My son Mike, who is now a divinity student at Gordon-Conwell Seminary in Massachusetts, was graduated from the Baptist-affiliated Wake Forest University five years ago, and it was my pleasure to be the speaker at his graduation ceremony. We meet today in a year of historic importance and national celebration, the Bicentennial year of American independence. Even as your denomination has grown from fewer than 500 people in America at the beginning of the 18th Century to almost 13 million today, Baptists have played a fundamental part in the birth and growth of America.

An early champion of religious freedom—which the great Baptist minister

George Truett once called "the supreme contribution of the New World to the Old" — was Roger Williams, founder of Providence, forerunner of Jefferson and giant among Baptists. The principle of democracy itself was rooted deeply in Baptist Church life long before there was a United States of America. Thomas Jefferson so admired the Baptist form of church government that he called it "the purest democracy in the world." Abraham Lincoln's mother, a devout Baptist, was perhaps the most important and enduring influence in the memorable life of her son, implanting in him a deep faith in God and always encouraging him to "be somebody." History gives us many more examples of profound Baptist influence on American life, a tradition still being enriched today.

Billy Graham came from your ranks to become one of today's most influential Christian evangelists and one of the most admired men of our times. Brooks Hays—twice the President of this convention, a former colleague of mine in the House of Representatives and a very dear friend—has stood throughout his distinguished career as a man of courage and conviction, a man of towering moral strength, a man who sets a good example for all of us in public or private life. These rich contributions of religious liberty, democratic principles, social equality, evangelistic fervor and moral strength have reserved for your people an honored place in American society. You have always jealously guarded the separation of church and state, but you have always believed that private morality and public service can—and must—go hand in hand. The essential task of leadership in our modern age, as in ages past, is to inspire, to teach, to act with courage, to live with honor, to show the way.

The minister in the pulpit, the teacher in the classroom, the foreman on the

dock, the executive in the boardroom, the commanders of armies and navies, the parents of children—all share the burden and the satisfaction of leadership fully as much as those who serve in government.

What is required of us all, if we are to lead successfully, is a strong moral foundation. We cannot stand very long on shifting sands of "situation ethics." History proves that power and prestige are slippery peaks from which the mighty have often fallen into disgrace. Jesus said, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" We stand in danger today of losing the soul of America to the seductions of material gain and moral apathy, to a new code of conduct which reviles the basic truths and mocks the basic beliefs on which this Nation and much of religion were founded.

Forgiving hearts and tolerant attitudes are among the greatest lessons of Christian teaching, but at some point we must take a stand and say "this is right, this is wrong; there is a difference."

In this Bicentennial year, we celebrate our independence from a foreign power, but we reaffirm our dependence upon a higher power. We recognize, just as George Washington did in his first inaugural address, that no nation on earth can owe more to providence than the United States of America. Our greatness is because of our goodness. Should we cease to be good, we would soon cease to be great.

Public officials have a special responsibility to set a good example for others to follow—in both their private and public conduct. The American people, particularly our young people, cannot be expected to take pride—or even to participate—in a system of government that is defiled and dishonored—whether in the White House or in the halls of Congress. Jesus said, "Unto whomso-

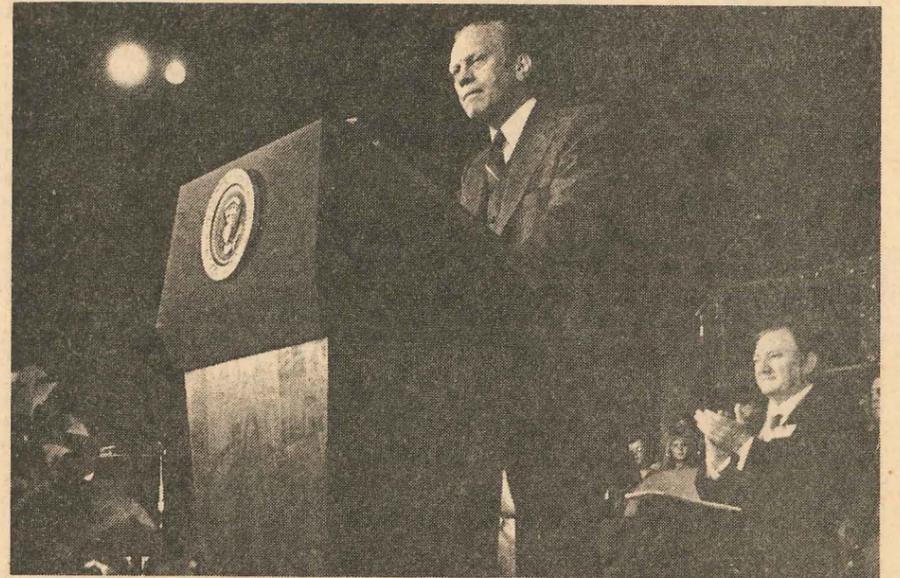
ever much is given, of him much shall be required." Personal integrity is not too much to ask of public servants. In fact, we should accept nothing less.

The American people have seen too much abuse of the moral imperatives of honesty and decency on which religion and government and civilized society must rest. To remedy these abuses, we must look not only to the Government but, more importantly, to the Bible, the church, the human heart. We must look to the family for "instruction in righteousness" and for the stabilizing influence so important in a complex, confusing and ever-changing world. We must look to the faith of our fathers. The laws of God were of very special importance to our Founding Fathers and to the Nation they created.

The early history of our Country was written by men who valued the freedom of religion and who had in common a deep faith in God. I believe it is no accident of history, no coincidence that this Nation which declared its dependence on God even while declaring its independence from foreign domination has become the most richly blessed Nation in the history of the world. For it is as true today as it was in Old Testament times that "blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord." I believe that very deeply.

In my own life, and throughout my career in public service, I have found in the pages of the Bible a steady compass and a source of great strength and peace. As each of my predecessors in the Presidency has done, I asked for God's guidance as I undertook the duties of this office. I have asked for that guidance many times since. Just as Roger Williams and his followers found refuge in Providence, more and more Americans today are turning for refuge to the safe harbor of religious faith—a fact borne out by your own rapidly increasing membership rolls.

This rekindling of religious conviction, this new appreciation for Biblical teaching we see in America today is an encouraging development as we move into our third century as a Nation. It means that we will resolve to make our society not only prosperous but noble, not only progressive but constructive. We may come to know peace, not as the mere absence of war, but as a climate in which understanding can grow and human dignity flourish.



President Gerald R. Ford addressed the Tuesday afternoon, June 15, session of the Southern Baptist Convention at the Norfolk Scope Convention Center, becoming the first incumbent president to speak to that body.

We are far from attaining heaven on earth, but we should never grow weary in the struggle to make this earth a better place to live. That must be our constant goal, whether we labor in government or in the kingdom of God. The Southern Baptist Convention has sought through much of its history to overcome the enemies of this world—ignorance, disease, poverty, tyranny, injustice, greed and war itself—even

while setting your sights on the gates of Heaven. As America enters its third century, still battling these enemies, still reaching for life on a higher plane, we could ask no better inspiration than these words of a favorite passage of mine from the Book of Proverbs: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE:

New SBC Head Favors Carter, Ford

The newly-elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention praised the moral commitments of both President Gerald Ford and Democratic Presidential hopeful Jimmy Carter, but refused to endorse either during his first news conference in Norfolk.

James L. Sullivan of Nashville, the newly-elected president of the 12.7 million member convention, said he was thrilled with the appearance of President Ford on the convention program the previous day.

Sullivan, who for 21 years was president and chief executive officer of the SBC Sunday School Board before his

retirement in 1975, said, however, that Ford's appearance on the convention program should not be considered a political endorsement.

"He is the president of all the people, including the president of Jimmy Carter who has expressed approval of his being here, and I feel it was very appropriate," Sullivan said. He added, however, it would not have been appropriate if the convention had met after the Democratic and Republican national conventions.

Sullivan, 66, said he had not personally decided who he would support for President, and would not do so until

Convention Reports

after the political conventions.

"I would be thrilled with either the President who was here yesterday, or the nominee of the Democratic National Convention, for I believe they both have a high moral quality," Sullivan said.

Earlier in the news conference, Sullivan called for high moral principles in the public and private lives of members of Congress and government officials at all levels.

"Morality of public officials is everyone's business," he declared. "We cannot set the moral tone of the country without it (morality among government leaders)."

He disagreed with First Lady Betty Ford who has been quoted as saying that Rep. Wayne Hays (D., Ohio) is a fine man personally, and that the public needs to separate his public and his private lives.

"I do not believe you can separate private conduct and moral life from an official's public life," Sullivan said. "I would call for the highest level of moral living among government officials."

Asked what would happen if President Ford is not nominated for the presidency, Sullivan responded that "it certainly could happen." He added that "dealing with politics is like dealing with Baptists—you can't outguess them."

Sullivan also commented on the "angry Baptists" who couldn't get into Scope during Ford's address by noting: "I think they'll cool off. I regretted it, but I thoroughly understand the situation . . ."

Without directly referring to the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, a controversial group dedicated to finding and exposing theological liberals within the denomination, Sullivan noted some of the leaders of the group were personal friends.

"And I hope they remain that way," he said.

"I think democracy cannot function without operating from a diversified base," he said. "You have to have varied opinions. Every segment of this convention makes a contribution to it."

"I hope we can find out what the leaders of this group (BFMF) have in mind. The only thing that bothers me is that they have incorporated into an organization that institutionalizes the movement. I hope these men, if they have a cause, will express it openly,"

he said.

When asked if his election is a repudiation of the Baptist Literature Board, a group which recently started publishing its own Sunday School literature, Sullivan said: "I don't think my election is a repudiation of anybody. I have always operated in the center of the constituency."

He also was asked directly about BFMF, and noted that he believes they "are wrong to organize formally. That's the danger."

William A. Powell of Atlanta, editor of *Southern Baptist Journal*, the BFMF publication, BLB, asked Sullivan, "Do you believe original manuscripts of the Bible are without error?"

The question is the one the group generally predicates to discover a theological position.

Sullivan replied: "Yes, certainly. But we don't have a copy. I've always wondered why, on a lot of these matters, that God didn't provide more solid answers."

"We don't have the original cross,

but if we did, we might end up worshiping the wood instead of Christ. And if we had the original manuscript, we might wind up worshiping the pages. Southern Baptists are Bible-believing people and Bible-loving people."

Powell earlier had been quoted as saying he would be "very, very disappointed" if Adrian Rogers, a director of BFMF, past president of the pastors' conference and pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, were not elected president of the convention.

Many interpreters saw a campaign between Sullivan and Rogers as a battle between the Baptist Sunday School Board and BLB, even though Rogers' church uses the official literature.

Sullivan also commented on race and women by noting when he became president of BSSB in 1953, it was a different world. He instituted, he said, rules in which men and women, blacks and whites would be paid the same wages for the same work. The rules, he said, were revolutionary for the time.

VELMA SULLIVAN, FIRST LADY

She Never Admired Anybody But Jimmy

When James L. Sullivan was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, it was without either his wife's vote or his own vote.

She was not an elected messenger to the convention.

"Our church in Nashville (First Baptist) has so many people attending the convention—and it's only allowed 10 messengers—I wasn't a messenger this year," she explained.

Mrs. Sullivan said she looks forward to her husband's service with the convention, and predicted her duties as the denomination's first lady will be what they have always been.

"Whatever the Lord calls Jimmy to do includes me, too, as his wife."

Mrs. Sullivan, a regal-looking woman with silver-white hair and bright blue eyes that reflect an easy smile, had always declared there were three people she would never marry—a pharmacist, a doctor, or a preacher.

"But when Jimmy came along, he changed that idea."

The two grew up next door to each

other in Tylertown, Miss.

"He first saw me when I was a year-and-a-half old and went to live with my aunt and uncle who reared me after my parents died," she said. "I was the only girl he ever dated. He was not the only boy I ever dated," she admitted with a little smile.

She describes herself as a person who has "never been terribly interested in myself. I have always been interested in other people. I am never bored waiting for my husband because as long as there are other people it's always an interesting world."

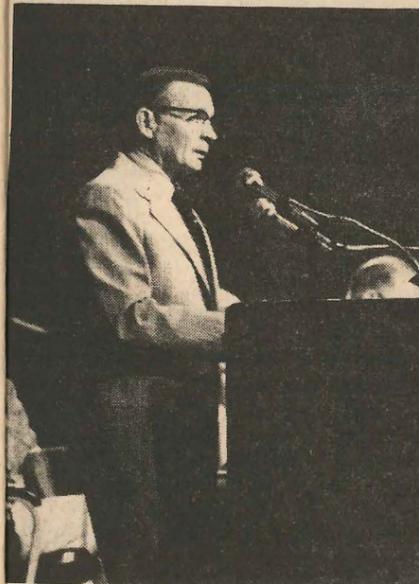
She said she had always been "a liberated woman in Jesus because he really set me free. But as far as having to be specific in my liberation I don't think I have ever felt down-trodden or felt I couldn't attain my highest achievement."

"Whom do I really admire most? I don't know. I've always been so busy admiring Jimmy I never thought about admiring anybody else."

The 1976 Southern Baptist Convention in Pictures



New officers of the Southern Baptist Convention's executive committee are (l to r) Mrs. Claude Kirkpatrick, a voice teacher from Baton Rouge, La., recording secretary; Rufus B. Sprayberry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Vernon, Tex., vice chairman; William Ches Smith III, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tifton, Ga., chairman; and Porter Routh of Nashville, Tenn., executive secretary-treasurer.



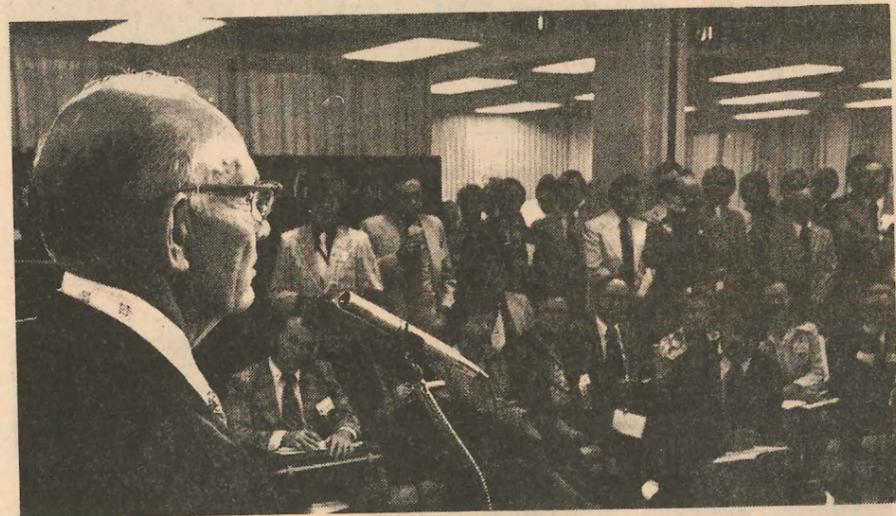
C. R. Daley, chairman of the committee to study the Southern Baptist Convention's executive committee, presents a report to messengers.



Southern Baptist Convention mission day campers spent part of their week at a nearby zoo enjoying the animals while their parents, messengers to the SBC annual meeting in Norfolk, conducted denominational business. Karen Lee, age seven, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin K. Lee of Pearl River, Miss., and Paul Gilder, age seven, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gilder of Morgan City, La., register their approval.



Elected as officers of the Woman's Missionary Union at the annual meeting in Norfolk were Mrs. A. Harrison Gregory (left), Danville, Va., president; and Mrs. William Ellis (right), Shelbyville, Ky., recording secretary. With them is Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of the WMU.



James L. Sullivan, newly-elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, meets with members of the secular and religious press following the announcement of his selection by messengers to the SBC's annual meeting in Norfolk.



H. Franklin Paschall (at podium) of Nashville, Tenn., was one of nine former convention presidents who joined outgoing President Jaroy Weber (third from left) of Lubbock, Tex., on the platform in Norfolk. From left are Carl Bates, Charlotte, N. C.; W. A. Criswell, Dallas, Tex.; Weber; Paschall; Wayne Dehoney, Louisville, Ky.; Herschel Hobbs, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Ramsey Pollard, Memphis, Tenn.; Brooks Hays, Washington, D. C.; J. D. Grey, New Orleans, La.; and R. G. Lee, Memphis.



United States President Gerald Ford and Southern Baptist Convention President Jaroy Weber listen to Freedom '76, a Texas singing group, prior to Ford's address.



John Dunaway, pastor at Corbin's First Church, a member of the SBC Executive Committee, addresses the convention.



Porter Routh (right), executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention's executive committee, was recognized during the SBC's annual meeting in Norfolk for 25 years of service in that position. SBC President Jaroy Weber presented Routh with a citation to mark the occasion.



Anita Bryant and the Anita Bryant Singers presented a concert to the closing session of the 1976 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference at the Norfolk Scope Convention Center.



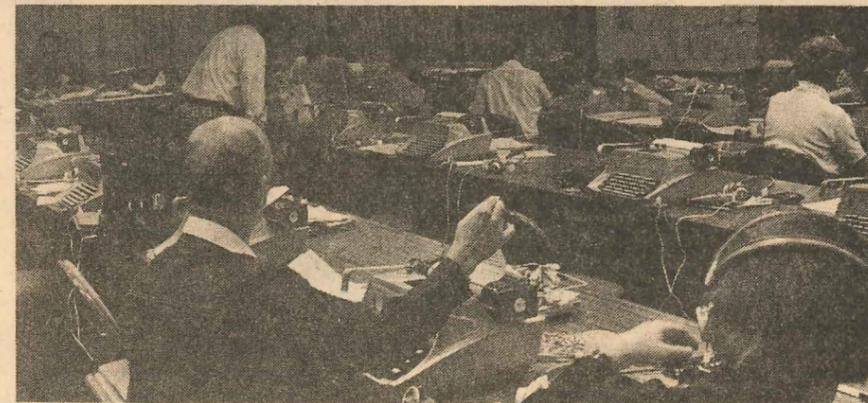
R. G. Puckett (center), chairman of the committee on the order of business for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Norfolk, Va., greets President Gerald Ford.



Participants in Kaleidoscope '76, a national meeting for young adult women sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union, took an afternoon off from their meetings to attend a fish fry. In line is Jane Hix (right), BYW consultant for WMU and coordinator of the meeting. Kaleidoscope, held in Virginia Beach Dome June 11-13, was attended by 800 women from 28 states.



Literally thousands stood on opening morning waiting to get into Scope, being checked by Secret Service agents before being admitted.



Behind the scenes, the SBC press room is a busy operation night and day. About 225 reporters registered here.

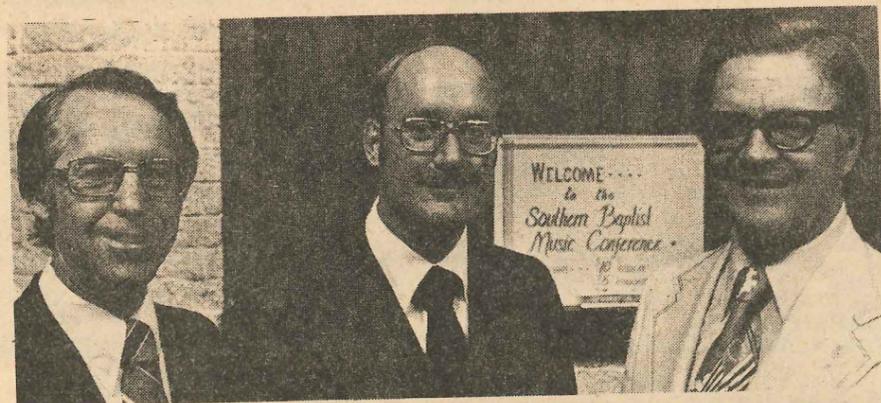


New officers of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference are (1 to r) Mike Todd, pastor of Bluff Park Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., treasurer; Jerry Vines, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., president; and Bailey Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., vice president.



Ladies' handbags and other items carried by Southern Baptist Convention messengers were inspected by secret service agents prior to President Ford's appearance at Norfolk's Scope Convention Center.

New officers of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association elected in Virginia Beach were (1 to r) Neta Stewart, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, secretary-treasurer; Mrs. Evelyn George, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, assistant secretary-treasurer; William E. Young, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, president; James Williams, Southwestern Seminary, vice-president; and Charles M. Lowry, Louisiana Baptist Convention, vice-president.



Selected as officers at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference in Norfolk, Va., June 14 were (1 to r) Allen Brown, state music secretary for Virginia Baptists, vice president of the denominational division; Max Lyall, professor of music at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., vice president of the education division; and Paul Bobbitt, state music secretary for the Florida Baptist Convention, president.



800 BYW's Explore Missions Options

Almost 800 Southern Baptist young adult women were challenged at the three-day Kaleidoscope '76 in Virginia Beach to look beyond themselves to find their personal missions in life and channel those missions in active involvement.

Kaleidoscope '76, the first national meeting for Baptist Young Women, a Woman's Mission Union organization for women 18 to 29, explored options in missions in addresses by mission board executives, WMU leaders and missionaries and in small group activities.

Responsible citizenship was stressed as one way to influence missions. Women wrote letters to their hometown newspapers expressing opinions on political issues in response to major addresses by mission board administrators on how missions are affected by politics. They were asked to mail the letters when they return home.

Wendell Belew of Atlanta, director of the Home Mission Board's division of mission ministries, told registrants that Baptists tend to restrict political involvement to a few issues that they traditionally have been keen on, citing gambling and local liquor laws. He urged women to expand their political interests.

"Many issues need to be dealt with," Belew said, citing child-beating, wife-beating, Sunday closing laws, rights for women, and world hunger.

Following Belew's address women divided up into small groups to devise ways they could inform their churches of the gravity of the hunger problem.

Suggestions included conducting information campaigns in churches, participating in church-wide meals with meager menus and inviting speakers to a local church who are knowledgeable about the hunger problem in that community.

HMB Exhibit Winner

The exhibit of the Home Mission Board was judged the "best of show" in exhibit-display competition.

Judges from the Richmond-Norfolk area said they selected the exhibit outstanding among more than 20 entered in the competition because it was easy to

view, friendly, and open—getting the viewer involved, and for its use of a performing group to develop the theme and get attention.

The Home Mission Board exhibit, which also won first place in Category D (costing \$2,000 and up), was themed Bold Mission Thrust.

Goal for Year 2000: All To Hear Gospel

A ringing challenge to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with every person in the world in the next 25 years was accepted in Norfolk.

"We join hands and hearts in this cooperative effort," said SBC President Jaroy Weber as the report of the SBC Missions Challenge Committee was adopted.

The committee was appointed in 1974 to study the potential of SBC worldwide missions during the last 25 years of the Twentieth Century.

While the report contains 15 specific recommendations, committee chairman Warren Hultgren, pastor of Tulsa's First Baptist Church, said the "sumum bonum" of the report is the challenge that "the convention set as its primary mission to challenge that every person in the world shall have the opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ in the next 25 years."

Vines Succeeds Rogers As Pastors' President

Jerry Vines, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., was elected president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

Vines will succeed Adrian Rogers, pastor of Memphis' Bellevue Baptist Church.

Elected to serve with the Alabama pastor were Bailey Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., vice president, and Mike Todd, pastor of Bluff Park Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., secretary-treasurer.

The election was calm, in marked contrast to the controversy which has surrounded the pastors' conference. Rogers has drawn fire from denominational and secular press over the selection of speakers at the conference.

One charge was that Rogers "load-

ed" the conference with people connected with the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, a group described as "ultra-conservative."

Vines took exception to the charge, noting he is not a member of the BFMF, even though he has addressed two of the national meetings of the group since it was formed in 1973.

The new president also took exception to editorials and reports printed in Baptist state papers prior to the conference meeting.

Vines pointed to stories concerning the possibility Rogers will be elected president of the SBC.

"I think what John J. Hurt of the Baptist Standard in Texas printed is unprecedented. To my knowledge there has never been an open, overt attack on a person such as he made on Dr. Rogers," Vines said.

Hurt asked Rogers editorially to either decline the nomination or to withdraw.

"I think that if Dr. Rogers withdraws, John Hurt ought to resign his position. Fair's fair," Vines said.

Born Again President?

A pastor from Oklahoma virtually endorsed presidential aspirant Jimmy Carter in Norfolk.

Bailey E. Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., criticized those in the secular media who have questioned Carter concerning his personal spiritual experience.

Smith said that the nation needs a "born again" President. He then said that "while it would certainly be improper for me to name that man, his initials are the same as our Lord's."

Vote for Man Espousing Christian Ideas: Weber

Jaroy Weber, outgoing president of the Southern Baptist Convention, urged Southern Baptist messengers in Norfolk June 15 to go to the polls and vote for men who can lead the nation to follow Christian principles.

"We must be willing to become involved at every level of government by encouraging some of our most capable businessmen, educators and religious leaders to run for public office," said

MORE
CONVENTION
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Weber, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Tex.

"Then, we who are Christians must give ballot support to men who can lead our nation back to those Christian principles expressed in that motto, 'in God we trust'."

While Weber did not mention a specific presidential candidate, former Georgia governor Jimmy Carter, an active Southern Baptist, is a leading candidate for the Democratic nomination for president.

President Gerald Ford, who has addressed Southern Baptist gatherings before, was scheduled to speak to the messengers that afternoon on a patriotic theme.

Weber also praised Southern Baptists for their growth in recent years as a denomination to almost 13 million members in almost 35,000 churches in 50 states.

The SBC president attributed the growth to faithfulness of Southern Baptists to the Bible, an emphasis upon the joy of the spirit-filled life, better training methods in evangelism and a bold missions emphasis.

As to the future, Weber recommended that Southern Baptists "remain on a compass heading of evangelism and missions."

Another contribution Southern Baptists can make is to take a stand for stronger Christian homes, President Weber said. He amplified his suggestion this way:

"The home must stand to speak of the biblical principles governing marriage, family and sex . . . (It) must be taught by the example of parents. Our Baptist churches must speak to the spiritual needs of the home. The home must be penetrated with Christian influence by the church.

"We have been content too long with getting a family into a church building on Sunday with too little concern in getting the powerful presence of God into the home and life of the family members every day of the week.

"Too many of us practice a form of religion on Sunday and leave every vestige of worship out of our lives the rest of the week."

Missionaries Name Brown

The Southern Baptist conference of directors of associational missions elect-

ed officers at its annual meeting in Norfolk and heard several speakers suggest ways to deal with identity problems facing associations of Baptist churches.

The two-day conference also honored Arthur B. Rutledge, retiring executive director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, for his contribution to associational missions.

President for 1976-77 will be John A. Brown, director of missions of the Norfolk Baptist Association. Other officers will be Tom S. Roote Jr. of Birmingham, president-elect; George E. Arthur of Dexter, Mo., secretary; Robert C. Helmich of Muskogee, Okla., treasurer; and D. E. Strahan of Madison, Wis., newsletter editor.

Maybe Jerry 'Live' But Jimmy in Print

While President Gerald Ford was addressing the Southern Baptist Convention Tuesday, copies of a book written by his probable Democratic opponent, Jimmy Carter, were selling in the Convention Book Store at a brisk pace.

More copies of Carter's book—1400—were brought to the 119th session of the Convention for sale in the book store than any other single title.

Published in September, Broadman now has 100,000 copies in print. The paper back rights to the book were recently sold to Bantam, and they have approximately 150,000 copies in print.

The Living Bible, a Bible paraphrase published by Tyndale House, was the most successful book of nonfiction in 1972 and again in 1973. The book in first place in 1974 was *The Total Woman*, published by Revell. *Angels: God's Secret Agents*, written by Billy Graham and published by Doubleday last fall, was the bestseller for 1975.

\$55 Million Budget OK'd

Messengers to the 119th session of the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a record \$55 million budget for 1976-77, an increase of \$4 million over the current budget.

The messengers also approved without debate a recommendation that the denomination hold its 1980 convention in St. Louis, Mo., June 10-12, 1980. St. Louis will provide a 20,000 seat main

auditorium, plus a 14,000 auxiliary auditorium, and 7,200 rooms.

The \$55 million budget approved by the convention includes \$49 million basic operating budget, \$1 million for capital needs, and \$4.9 million in a "Challenge goal" beyond the basic and capital needs budgets.

The \$4.9 million in the "challenge" section is split into two phases of \$1 million and \$3.9 million. The first \$1 million will be divided among the 19 SBC agencies receiving operating funds, and the \$3.9 million will be divided among the six seminaries, two mission boards, and the Radio and Television Commission.

Trustees of the SBC Brotherhood Commission had officially requested that all the SBC agencies receive allocations from phase two of the challenge budget, but the Executive Committee did not recommend their requests to the convention. No move was made from the convention floor to amend the budget.

RE Group Praises BSSB

In a thinly-veiled slap at the church literature publishing efforts of the ultra-conservative Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association voted in Virginia Beach to commend the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board for publishing Bible-centered, doctrinally-sound literature.

The action came just three weeks after Baptist Press had reported that the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship was publishing literature through its Baptist Literature Board, claiming the literature was "produced by Southern Baptists" when actually it was written and edited for and by Scripture Press, a non-denominational publishing house in Wheaton, Ill.

The religious educators voted without debate or opposition to commend the SBC Sunday School Board for providing "Bible-centered, doctrinally-sound educationally-based, high-quality curriculum materials at the most economical prices for use by our churches."

In other business, the association elected a Sunday School Board executive as its new president, and commended the denomination agencies for the quality of their cooperative planning in the "Bold Mission Thrust" being pro-

jected by Southern Baptists in 1978-79.

The new president is William E. Young, supervisor of the children's section for the church training department of the Sunday School Board.

Named as vice president and president-elect was Elmer Bailey, minister of education for Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.

Protecting the President: Not Easy — Even at SBC

"Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States."

As 10,500 Southern Baptist messengers rose to the familiar announcement, President Gerald Ford walked onto the stage at Scope Convention Center.

But before Ford — or any President, for that matter — addresses a public meeting, an unbelievable amount of preparation is required.

For more than a week, Scope had been swarming with federal employees — Secret Service, press representatives from the White House, communications technicians and staff members — making sure all was in order for the presidential visit.

The Secret Service — number and duties unknown — set up a command post in Scope manned by the G-men, as well as other federal, Virginia and Norfolk police.

While President Ford was in the hall, he was unobtrusively ringed by proper, polite but firm and unsmiling men.

In addition to 250 persons accredited through the SBC press room, another 100 were accredited through the advance White House press office — a total of 52 regular White House reporters and eight in the "White House Pool" came with Ford.

With the President Tuesday were representatives of the major wire services, news magazines, television networks and a selection of newspapers from across the nation.

Most of the press delegation came on a chartered plane which accompanies Ford's Air Force One on such trips. They arrived at Scope before he arrived and left about a half hour after he had departed.

The trip was planned down to the last detail and timed to the closest minute.

And, as it turned out, Ford was

probably one of the few people who had no trouble getting into Scope Arena Tuesday.

Washington Not All Bad

Two insiders on the Washington scene told the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union in Norfolk that Christians are in government, despite what people may think after reading "bad news" from Washington daily.

"It is very possible for Christian people to serve in Washington and hold on to all the principles of their faith," said Representative John Buchanan (R.-Ala.) of Birmingham.

"My wife and I have been very pleased to find many brothers and sisters in Christ" in government circles.

Speaking on the Christian life of a political family, Buchanan, an ordained Baptist minister, stressed his church as the most important influence on his family. The Buchanan family is active in Riverside Baptist Church in Washington, D. C., a multi-racial church.

Praising Buchanan, the news editor of *Christianity Today*, Edward E. Plowman, told the women, "There is good news coming out of Washington. It's just not getting published."

Plowman said Buchanan was one of several dozen congressmen and senators who are known to be professing Christians. He identified presidential seekers Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter and President Gerald Ford as Christians, but said some are more open about it than others.

Tempers Flare in Wake Of Tight SBC Security

Angry messengers milled outside Norfolk Scope Tuesday morning, upset and frustrated at being barred from the building because of security precautions for President Gerald Ford.

An estimated 2,500 persons—mostly registered messengers—talked angrily and some even threatened an "ad hoc convention of our own since we can't get into this one."

As Paul Moore, local coordinator from Norfolk, climbed atop a table to attempt to explain the situation to the angry people, he was shouted down.

"This is ridiculous," said Joe Bar-

bour, pastor of Berean Baptist Church in Kansas City, Kan. "Why in the world did we have a convention in a place that has no more room than this?"

His sentiments were echoed by Bob Kersey, associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Paducah, Ky. Said Kersey, "The problem isn't the President, it's the facilities. It's hard to drive 900 miles and not be able to get in."

Security precautions for President Ford reduced seating capacity in the already inadequate Scope arena from 11,500 to 10,500 seats. An overflow of 2,500 was accommodated in Chrysler Hall, nearby.

The participants in Chrysler Hall sat for a half hour in darkness watching the proceedings on a gigantic TV screen, but they couldn't hear because of audio problems.

Guy Boatright of Roanoke, Va., said he is "very unhappy over the situation, but if we voted to bring it to a place too small, we'll just have to suffer the consequences."

"We didn't come here to hear Jerry Ford. You can hear him any day of the week on TV. We came here to take care of Baptist business," said Vaughn Porter of Roanoke.

Dean Grelling, of Temple City, Calif., said, "I paid \$1,000 each to come to Norfolk. We have tried to enter the center and were refused entrance.

"We have a right to be here. We have a right to be in the building. They knew we were coming. They have no right to turn us away. The President has a job to do in Washington, he has no business here."

One Baptist editor, Lynn Clayton of the *Baptist Digest* of Kansas-Nebraska, described the scene as "20,000 messengers scrambling for 10,500 seats."

Jim Martin, pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church of Omaha, Neb., summed up the feelings of many of those who were turned away:

"The selection of Norfolk as a convention site, lovely as it is, is not a miscalculation; it is a total disaster."

Will We Last 'Til 2076?

A leading Southern Baptist preacher pictured America as a nation of fear in Norfolk and predicted the country will fail to observe its 300th birthday unless its citizens improve their relationship with God.

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W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, largest in the Southern Baptist Convention with 15,000 members, characterized America as a land of lawlessness and violence.

"No nation has ever survived in wickedness and drunkenness, desecration, or debauchery," declared Criswell, former president of the SBC.

Criswell spoke at the closing session of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, one of five Baptist groups meeting in advance of the 119th assembly of the Baptist denomination.

Criswell said "there are drugs to tear the body apart, promiscuity to tear the home apart, bombs and acts of terrorism to tear our property apart, vandalism to tear our schools apart, hatred and rebellion to tear our cities apart, and strange cults and practices to tear our churches apart."

"We are fast becoming a people and a nation who live in fear. We are afraid to walk our own city streets. We are afraid of the robber, the mugger, and the rapist."

Criswell said the solution was not superior legislation, acts of Congress or environmental cleaning, but "a mighty and sweeping revival" resulting in new relationships between individuals and God.

R. G. Lee of Memphis, 89-year-old retired minister and former SBC president who has preached the closing sermon at the pastors' conference for almost a decade, suggested some paths for the preachers. They included personal piety and purity, hard work, lots of prayer, good stewardship, continuous training, strong preaching, and serving as God's advocate in the world.

Church Musicians Told All Ministers Important

A Virginia pastor told Southern Baptist church musicians in Norfolk Monday that all ministers are equally important, "the pastors' conference notwithstanding."

Citing the apostle Paul's comments in Ephesians on the variety of the gifts of ministry, Richard E. Myers, pastor of the University Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Va., noted that while "thousands of Southern Baptist ministers have flooded this area for our annual camp meeting under concrete tents . . .

there is not any one group of us that outranks the other."

Hold told the musicians that their ministry should be rendered with personal integrity, as a Christian example, and "without regard for acclaim."

In business actions, the 300 registrants were introduced to three vice presidents previously chosen by mail ballot. The Church Music Conference is divided into three divisions, each entitled to a vice president.

The three are:
Education Division — Max Lyall, professor of music, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

Local Church Division — Jim Ashworth, minister of music, First Baptist Church, Ponca City, Okla.

Denominational Division — Allen R. Brown, state music secretary, Baptist General Association of Virginia.

Serving his second year of a two-year term as president of the group is Paul Bobbitt of Jacksonville, who heads the church music department of the Florida Baptist Convention. President-elect is James C. McKinney, dean of the school of church music, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex.

Abortion Stand Upheld

The Southern Baptist Convention held to its stand of therapeutic abortion in Norfolk after debating the issue at three business sessions.

Messengers defeated two amendments that leaned toward the anti-abortion view, then affirmed the "limited role of government" in abortion matters and supported "the right of expectant mothers to the full range of medical services and personal counseling for the preservation of life and health."

Following the U. S. Supreme Court decision on abortion, the SBC has repeatedly affirmed its 1971 resolution. That called for permitting abortion under "such conditions as rape, incest, clear evidence of severe fetal deformity and carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental and physical health of the mother."

The resolution in Norfolk said, "The practice of abortion for selfish non-therapeutic reasons only destroys fetal life, dulls our society's moral sensitivity and leads to a cheapening of

human life."

Citizens were urged to work to change attitudes and conditions that lead people to use abortion as a means of birth control.

While Mom and Dad Away, Children Play

More than 250 children of messengers retreated from the congestion and hurried pace to attend their own meeting at Lafayette Park.

Unlike the frustrating surprises that often greeted their parents at the crowded convention hall, the children in grades one through six who enrolled in the third annual SBC mission day camp found their agenda filled with fun and leisure.

Frank Black, day camp coordinator and Crusader Royal Ambassador director for the SBC Brotherhood Commission, said the mission camp was designed to allow children to escape to their own world where they could meet and talk with home and foreign missionaries, play mission games and take part in leisure activities.

"The camp frees messengers to do a better job of representing their church in the convention's business," Black pointed out.

The agenda of the three-day camp, sponsored jointly by the Virginia Brotherhood Department and the SBC Brotherhood Commission, included side trips to Norfolk Zoological Park and to historic Yorktown.

Wives Elect Officers

Election of officers and a look at the different roles of ministers' wives highlighted the 21st annual Ministers' Wives Conference held in Norfolk.

The 1977 officers elected last year were installed. This year's president, Mrs. Robert L. Franklin of Cairo, Ga., president, presented the gavel to incoming president Mrs. John Lawrence of Raleigh, N. C.

Officers elected for 1978 included Mrs. Landrum Leavell, New Orleans, La., president; Mrs. Harold Zwald, Atlanta, vice president; Mrs. Thomas Brandon, Sherman, Tex., recording secretary; and Mrs. Alton McEachern of Greensboro, N. C., corresponding secretary.

Lady Deacon No. 18,191

A woman deacon from North Carolina led Southern Baptists to an all-time record by becoming the 18,191st messenger to register for the annual meeting.

Mrs. Annie Nobles Mizell, 66, of Washington, N. C. registered about mid-morning June 16 to help Southern Baptists surpass their old record of 18,190 messengers, set in 1974.

"I was floored, really floored," Mrs. Mizell said of her place in history.

Mrs. Mizell was ordained a deacon in 1965, and has since served as a deacon for Pactolus Baptist Church twice. She said the church is a "small country church with about 100 members."

The thing that impressed her the most about the SBC in Norfolk is "the bigness . . . I didn't know there were so many Baptists."

Committee of Seven Report OK'd in Norfolk

Messengers attending the 119th session of the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a report from its Committee of Seven to streamline operations of the denomination's executive committee.

The committee, chaired by C. R. Daley of Middletown, Ky., editor of *Western Recorder*, Kentucky Baptist state paper, made 12 suggestions and five recommendations to messengers. They were all adopted without debate.

The committee's study suggested broadening the base of executive committee members, upgrading their orientation, improving communication between the executive committee and agencies and institutions of the convention, keeping the authority of the executive committee in "healthy tension" with that of convention-elected trustees of the agencies and institutions and clarifying the authority of the executive committee to look into the affairs of the agencies.

The executive committee is composed of representatives from state conventions who meet between annual sessions of the 12.7 million-member body and who carry on the continuing work of the convention.

One proposal which drew applause from the messengers was the suggestion that the base of selection of

Executive Committee members be broadened, thereby reducing the likelihood "for personal favoritism and cronyism in the selection of nominees."

The report also drew attention to the ongoing problem of absenteeism by executive committee members. The panel suggested that more care be exercised in selecting only those willing to participate in an orientation program and "to devote the time and effort needed" for effective performance as members.

A \$300 Surprise

Officials at the Southern Baptist Convention got a \$300 surprise June 17.

The tax man showed up to tell the Baptists they would be charged a 4% Virginia tax on sales of convention photographs, speeches and tapes to messengers during the three-day event.

W. C. Fields, director of public relations for the SBC and assistant to the executive secretary, said there was "a hint of such a tax when we met with the Scope people and local city authorities during convention pre-planning. But it was their, and our, opinion that we would be exempt. It was with some surprise we learned about it."

Fields said in his 17 years of conventions "in as many as a dozen states, this is the first time we have been charged sales tax for this. I'm sure it's more of a need for tax revenue rather than unfriendliness to visitors."

The money will come out of the convention's operating budget.

While the tax on sales of photographs, speeches, and tapes came as a surprise, it was no surprise to personnel involved with the Baptist Book Stores.

"Book store sales have always been taxed wherever the convention has been held," said Davis Hill of the Baptist Book Store division in Nashville.

"The book stores are obliged to abide by state and city tax laws. In Virginia there is just the 4% sales tax. In Miami we had to collect and pay city tax."

State's Randolph Elected

Grady Randolph, executive secretary of the Kentucky Foundation, Middletown, was elected president of the Association of Baptist Foundation Executives at the organization's annual meeting.

Other officers are Ed Coates, executive secretary of the North Carolina Foundation, Raleigh, vice president; Harry D. Trulove, executive secretary of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, Little Rock, secretary-treasurer; and Tal Roberts, vice president of the Baptist Foundation of Texas, Dallas, secretary-treasurer elect.

Speakers at the meeting included Michael Speer, associate executive director of the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission, Nashville; and Grady C. Cothen, president of the SBC Sunday School Board, Nashville.

The 22 state Baptist foundations and the Southern Baptist Foundation invest over \$220 million a year for the benefit of Baptist causes.

Georgian to Panel Helm

William Ches Smith, III, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tifton, Ga., was elected chairman of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Smith, 48, was vice chairman of the 64-member committee. He is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Other officers elected during a meeting of the Executive Committee were Vice Chairman Rufus B. Spraberry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Vernon Tex.; and Recording Secretary Mrs. Claude Kirkpatrick of Baton Rouge, La., a voice teacher and choir director.

Porter Routh of Nashville, Tenn., was reelected executive secretary-treasurer.

The Executive Committee conducts denominational business of the SBC between annual Convention sessions.

Messengers Vote 'No Preference' For U. S. President

The Southern Baptist Convention has reaffirmed its traditional stance of refusing to endorse political candidates.

The action came on a substitute proposal to replace a motion by pastor Bill Hale of Baker, La., asking the convention to invite Democratic presidential hopeful Jimmy Carter "to address this convention for at least 10 minutes."

Gene Puckett, chairman of the convention's committee on order of business, presented the substitute

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motion that the convention reaffirm its long tradition of non-endorsement of any political candidate.

"We invited the President of the United States (Gerald Ford) to speak to us yesterday", said Puckett, editor of *The Maryland Baptist*. He added the committee made it clear from the beginning that we did not want the vice president or the secretary of state. "We wanted the President."

"This was not a political rally," Puckett said. "It was a Christian gathering. The image of Southern Baptists has never been as high as it was this morning."

"We were on the morning newscasts of two networks and the third gave us five full minutes of coverage. We have never had that kind of treatment. We are now recognized as a very sincere religious group in America."

"I feel an invitation to Mr. Carter at this time would be an affront. To invite him at this time would cheapen him and put him in an awkward spot," Puckett said.

"Therefore," he said, "I urge the convention simply to reaffirm its traditional policy of not endorsing any candidate for office."

In response to Puckett's suggestion, Hale offered to withdraw his motion. The chair ruled, however, that parliamentary procedure disallows the withdrawal of a motion before the house in such circumstances. The substitute motion passed unanimously.

12 Kentuckians Elected To Leadership Posts

Ten Kentuckians were nominated by the committee on boards to strategic leadership positions and all were elected by the Southern Baptist Convention last week in Norfolk. Two more were named to the committee on boards.

Wayne Dehoney, pastor of Louisville's Walnut Street Baptist Church, was named to the committee on order of business, and is to be the committee's chairman next year.

Jack Gardner, Louisville layman, was reelected Kentucky representative on the SBC Executive Committee.

William L. Turner, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Lexington, was named to the SBC Home Mission Board, while Harold Wainscott, pastor of Latonia

Church, Covington, was elected to the Annuity Board.

New local (Louisville) members of the Southern Seminary trustees are Damon Surgenner and Gorman Roberts, both laymen. Leon Simpson, Cumberland College faculty member, will serve Southwestern Seminary while Louisville pastor James C. Jones serves Midwestern Seminary.

New board member of the Stewardship Commission is Eugene Fleming, pastor of First Baptist Church, Franklin. J. M. Boswell, Cumberland College president, will serve on the Education Commission.

Named to the committee on boards by the committee on committees was H. F. Parker, Louisville pastor, and Mrs. Austin Roberts, Danville.

Stormy SBC Session Nets CLC Report OK

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in Norfolk adopted the report of its Christian Life Commission (CLC), including a controversial section dealing with a social studies curriculum series in some schools.

In a sometimes stormy session devoted to miscellaneous business, messengers withstood a determined effort by a Georgia man to have the convention hear him read from social studies curriculum materials for fourth and fifth graders now in use in some public and private schools.

Herschel A. Markham, pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Fairburn, Ga., described MACOS (Man: A Course of Study) materials as "luciferian, satanic, devil-filled." At one point, he stood in the center of Scope Convention Center shouting in defiance at convention officers on the platform.

Markham's objection was to a section of the report of the Christian Life Commission on the social studies materials. Last year in Miami Beach, the convention referred MACOS materials to the CLC and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs (BJCPA) for study and recommendation.

Staff members from both groups studied the materials during the year and recommended that the convention neither endorse nor condemn them.

Markham accused both groups of speaking with a "forked tongue" and demanded, "Are you afraid to hear what's happening to your children?"

At one point, Markham threatened to sue the convention if he were not allowed to speak further. He later told a reporter that he would take the matter "all the way to the Supreme Court" if necessary.

Convention President Jaroy Weber had difficulty bringing the matter to a conclusion satisfactory to all the messengers. Scope Convention Center was only two-thirds full at the time, and some of those attending repeatedly shouted the demand that Markham be heard further.

Weber, who was applauded by the messengers after a Houston, Tex., pastor commended him for an "exceptional job" of presiding, gave Markham an additional two minutes to state his case.

Johnny Tallent, a Cincinnati, Ohio pastor, finally moved for the adoption of the report, claiming that Markham had been given "sufficient time" and had failed to present specific examples of what he had called "communistic" aspects of the material. The motion passed overwhelmingly.

Literal or Literary Bomb?

Following his stormy appearance in the convention business session, Herschel A. Markham of Fairburn, Ga., caught a bus to Atlanta. About 6:00 a.m. the next morning Atlanta newspapers reported a call from the bus station from someone saying he had a bomb in a suitcase.

Police and F.B.I. agents responded and found Markham at the bus station with a large suitcase and an attache case. They tried to talk him into surrendering but failed. After an hour-and-a-half they rushed him, pinning him to the floor. Examination of the suitcases found no bombs but some batteries.

He was taken to police headquarters and held without bond for medical examination and possible booking for terrorism. He was heard to say he had no literal bomb in his bag but a literary bomb apparently referring to the material he attempted to read to Southern Baptist Convention messengers the day before.

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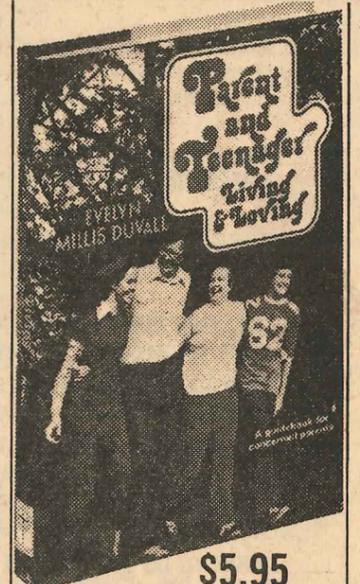
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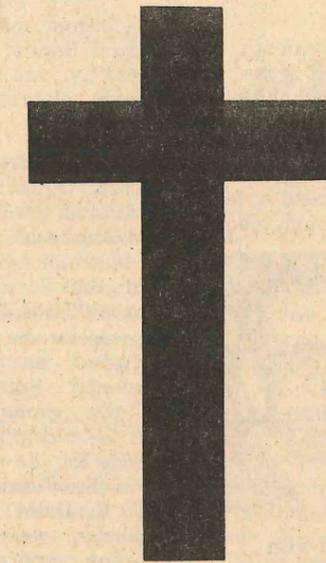
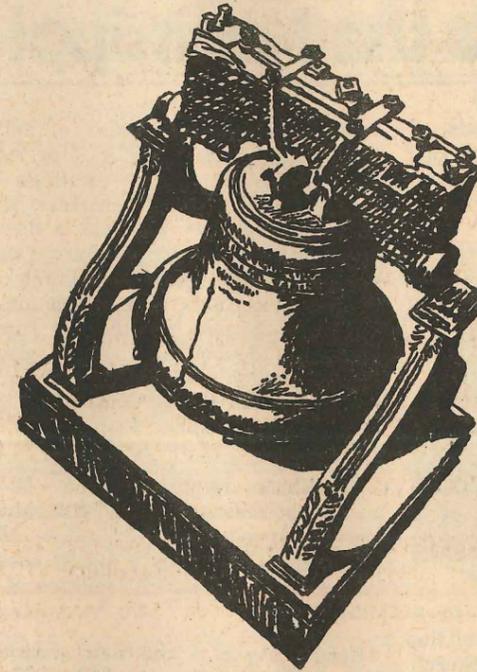
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DEATH

All the creatures of earth have death. No specie is exempt from it. It is the mark in common for every kind of life on earth and every individual of its kind.

Apparently, man is the only creature who can anticipate death—dread it, fear it, challenge it, retard it (through medicine) and even imagine a victory beyond it.

Whence came this unique endowment given the creature called man? Why does he have it? Why does he fight death, resist it, refuse to accept it? (Ralph Waldo Emerson is accredited with having said "The blazing evidence for immortality is the mind's unwillingness to settle for anything less.")

God is the great designer of creation and includes man. It also includes his mental and spiritual nature as well as his material and physical make-up. It is God who has designed man like he is. Has the Almighty turned out a mis-construction? Has he given man an appetite for eternity only to deny it? Has God designed a half-hinge that doesn't connect and won't work?

The poet, Addison said: "It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well! Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire, this longing after immortality? Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul back on herself, and startles at destruction? 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us; 'tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter, and intimates eternity to man."

Christ is the other half of that hinge. In him is eternal life. In him we learn that we are designed to fit the facts. The appetite would not exist if there were no possible fulfillment. God does not err.

We Christians, too, must put our dead away like other people do, but we do so in the context of the Christian hope. We put them away in Christ; in whom, by faith, our anguish is comforted. We give them up to the fulfillment of his bright promise. We, the creatures who have the power to anticipate death, to dread it and fear it, have also the power, in Christ, to anticipate a victory beyond it.



All former members and friends of Central Baptist Church, 829 High St., Paris, Ky., are invited to the 30th anniversary celebration, Sunday, June 27 at 3:00 p.m.

Immanuel Baptist Church, Frankfort, celebrated the 10th anniversary of pastor Malcolm Lunceford on Sunday, June 6. The special services for the day included an old fashioned "dinner on the grounds" and a recognition service for the pastor in the afternoon.



Lunceford

C. R. Daley, editor of the *Western Recorder*, was pulpit guest for the morning service and selected church members along with staff members paid tribute to Lunceford. Lunceford is a community leader as well as pastor of the Immanuel congregation. He has served as president of the West Frankfort Kiwanis Club, president of Frankfort-Franklin County Ministerial Association, a member of the Red Cross Board of Directors and a member of the executive board of the Capital Crusade for Christ in 1972. In 1971 he was chosen Clergyman of the Year by the Frankfort Civitan Club.

Many churches throughout the convention are already planning to have a special Church Music Week in August of 1976. They plan to feature a church-wide study of church music subjects from the following textbooks:

- For Adult and Youth — *Great Hymns of Testimony* by Brown (Teacher's material for class use: *Great Hymns of Testimony Resource Kit*)
- For Older Children — *The Singing Book* by Woodward
- For Younger Children — *Hymns to Know and Sing* by Hackney and Key
- For Preschoolers — *Me, Music, Others* by Jones

Churches are planning five to six hours of study on three or more nights during Aug. 22-29 and encouraging their congregations to take part in this refreshing experience. The textbooks are available from the Baptist Book Store, allowing three or more weeks for the order to arrive.

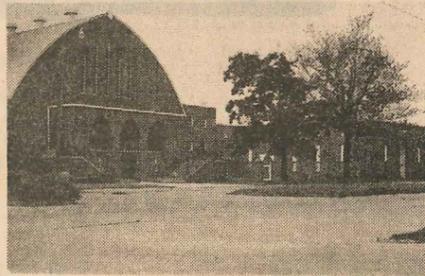
Mrs. Nona S. Vermillion of Jellico, Tenn., died recently after a period of declining health. Mrs. Vermillion was 75 years and a long time reader of the *Western Recorder*. She was a devoted Christian worker since her early years.

Fort Mitchell Baptist Church has passed resolutions in appreciation for Robert C. Lierman who died on June 3. He was a deacon and served also in many leadership places in the church. He is survived by his wife, Alice Mae, and four children.

Woodburn Baptist Church, Woodburn is the recipient of a \$6,000 bequest from a former member, Mrs. Mary Hampton. The money is being used to air condition the entire facilities of the church.

Robert Pryor is the new pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Irvine, Ky. A Louisville native, he is a former pastor of Turkey Creek Baptist Mission, Barbourville. He is married to the former Pearl Henson and they have three sons: Roger, Kirk and Johnny. Pryor is a recent graduate of Clear Creek Baptist School.

Cassette recordings of the Apr. 19 bicentennial service conducted in Harrodsburg at the marker commemorating the first recorded Baptist preaching in Kentucky and the messages of R. G. Lee in the Harrodsburg Baptist Church on Apr. 18 are available. Those interested should write Tom Divine, in care of W.H.B.N., Box 247, Harrodsburg, Ky. 40330.



Buena Vista Baptist Church, Owensboro, recently dedicated this new educational building. J. D. Herndon, former pastor of Buena Vista, gave the message for the dedication service. Archie W. Allison is pastor.

Sunday School Lessons

Lessons for July 4, 1976

International Series

The Spread of the Church

Acts 1:6-8

Just before Christ ascended, his disciples, who were still expecting him to bring national restoration and political independence to Israel, asked him if he would restore the kingdom immediately. He replied that this was not the consideration of present or paramount importance. Christ stressed that they were not to be absorbed in counting days, but in witnessing for him. For this work they needed a power beyond any provided by nature.

Witnessing to Christ's power to save is a task incumbent upon all Christians. No greater work than this can occupy the thought, time, strength, or substance of human beings. What a tragedy that Satan has blinded the eyes of so many Christians to the tremendous privilege and responsibility the Lord has conferred upon us in commissioning us to be his witnesses!

This task of witnessing for Christ with our lips and our lives transcends our natural abilities, so we must have spiritual replenishment. No amount of education, training, culture, or human achievement will ever enable or qualify any of God's people for effective witness-bearing. Apart from the Holy Spirit testimony for Christ will be ineffective.

II Corinthians 5:16-20

When one is regenerated by God's grace, he is transferred from the state of nature to the state of grace, and is made a different kind of person. He has a new perspective.

The saved person has a new faith, joy, affection, allegiance, hope, song and outlook on life. He sees, thinks, feels and acts differently from what he did before he became a Christian.

According to verse 18, God is the one who has reconciled us unto himself through the substitutionary death of his Son on the cross. God rightfully expects all who have been reconciled to him to be ministers of reconciliation.

The office of ambassador of Christ is one of distinguished honor and of great trust. The ambassadors of Christ are sent to deliver to others a message which they have received from the Lord Jesus. Effective ambassadors must be devoted and faithful.

Verse 21 sets forth three tremendous wonders. One of them is the sinless Saviour, Christ Jesus. A second great wonder was that of a substitutionary sacrifice. Christ voluntarily took sin upon himself and stood in the place of guilty sinners. Since God was satisfied with the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, we ought to be. The third wonder in this verse is that of a saved sinner.



H. C. Chiles Murray, Ky.

Life and Work Series

The Cry for Freedom

Exodus 1:7-14, 22

The new monarch of Egypt neither knew Joseph nor loved the Hebrews. He was filled with suspicion and fear because of the great numerical increase of the Israelites who were in bondage within his country. The refusal of the Israelites to turn to Egyptian idolatry convinced the monarch that they were retaining their national spirit. He was apprehensive that their phenomenal increase might result in a revolt against the established government. To prevent this the monarch subjected the Israelites to the most rigorous tyranny. By this oppression they hoped to destroy the physical strength of the Israelites, break their courageous spirit, diminish their birth rate and make them so wretched that they would put their children to death rather than permit them to be subjected to such a hard life.

This servitude was a fulfillment of Gen. 15:13. But the scheme of Pharaoh was not successful. When men meddle with God's affairs, he always takes a hand in the matter. God was displeased with the satanic effort to throttle his chosen people, so he thwarted Pharaoh.

As is often the case, affliction weaned God's people from the world and drew them closer to God. He intended to glorify his name through them and the very hardships which they endured became the channels through which his great blessings reached them.

Pharaoh ordered all of his people to cast into the Nile River any Hebrew male children of whose birth they possessed knowledge. Fortunately, the Egyptians refused to obey such an inhuman mandate. Sometimes even the most debased rebel at murder.

Exodus 2:10

Upon his reaching the age of three months, it was no longer possible for the parents of Moses to keep him hidden. This precious boy was placed in an ark of bulrushes and launched on the tides of the providences of God. When he was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter, her compassion kept her from permitting anyone to destroy the life of the baby. She took him into the house of Pharaoh and saw to it that he was reared and educated as an Egyptian.

Exodus 2:23-25

While the Israelites were being persecuted unmercifully, God was preparing for their deliverance. God knew all about the unmercifulness of their taskmasters, and the terrible sufferings through which his people were passing.

When God's children truly pray, he hears and answers them, as is taught in this passage. His answers may not be exactly what they think they should be but he knows far better than his children what is best.

Viewpoint

Using Freedom Responsibly Isn't Easy

by Charles W. Deweese and A. Ronald Tonks

Third in a Series

Freedom is not an automatic and inevitable achievement for Americans. Men and women have died in many wars to acquire and preserve freedom for the United States of America.

Colonial America witnessed the beatings of scores of people who endured dehumanizing treatment rather than conform to a state church.

The U. S. provides as many freedoms for its citizens as any country in the world—an affirmative note worth celebrating. Such freedom is not a worldwide reality, with millions of people still struggling for liberty.

Three principles are cited that will, hopefully, help generate wholesome understanding and constructive uses of freedom, followed by several guidelines on dealing creatively with religious liberty and the right to individual interpretation of scripture.

The first principle: "Persistent and sacrificial effort must be employed to gain and retain freedom." Aggressive action has been essential both to the procurement and maintenance of liberty. A word of caution for the future is in order, however. Present freedoms won't remain intact and new freedoms will never come into existence without constant work.

The second principle states, "Freedom is legitimate only when exercised within the context of authority and certain limitations."

The desire for freedom can never become such an obsession that it abandons necessary restrictions. Otherwise, laws are broken, social customs violated and moral codes set aside. Further, factionalism results when the desire for freedom overextends itself.

Freedom can never be so free that it exists apart from authority. Typical constraints on freedom include the laws of the land, cultural patterns, institutional requirements and biblical mandates, among others. Psychologically, physically, morally, spiritually, socially and politically, it is essential that freedom operate within boundaries.

Consider, for example, a recent Tennessee Supreme Court ruling that made

it illegal for a church to continue the practice of snake-handling as part of its religious services. The court's belief was that its ruling didn't violate separation of church and state but, rather, was designed to protect the church's members.

The five judges' mandate stressed that even religious liberty must be practiced with certain conditions and restrictions. In this instance, the authority of personal and social health took precedence over the continuing exercise of a dangerous form of freedom.

Further, to become free is to assume responsibility for the rights of others, not only self. For the U. S., this includes the rights of other nations, of minorities; for corporations, the rights of consumers; for individuals, the rights of other individuals.

Principle three declares: "Genuine freedom originates with God and makes sense only if related to the achievement of purpose in life."

God's identification of himself as "... the Lord your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; and I have broken the bars of your yoke and make you walk erect" (Lev. 26:13, RSV), makes explicit that liberation for the Israelites evolved directly out of God's initiative. The concept of walking erect suggests this freedom created a conducive environment in which the Israelites could fulfil God's intentions and purposes for them.

American beginnings were saturated with biblical imagery which conveyed that freedom for the new nation was God's gift and that he had a holy calling for the country. The former concept frequently became twisted both in the failure to acknowledge God as the source of liberty and in the temptation to insert human ingenuity in God's place.

The latter concept often deteriorated into the belief that America's cause was always God's cause, resulting in misplaced priorities. Some other guidelines to remember and heed in the continuing struggle for religious liberty and free-

dom are cited:

—Realize the battle to maintain the separation of church and state and religious freedom will be a permanent feature of American life and, therefore, deserves constant support of all who favor it; fulfil the demands and opportunities of religious liberty; acknowledge that disagreement over doctrinal issues always has been and continues to be a legitimate feature of Baptist life; recognize that Baptists are non-creedal; realize that the individuality, background and prejudices of each Baptist are different; remember that every person is created in God's image but God does not expect that all be alike.

The examination of one's origin, reason for being, the basis for his doctrinal stances and the future are just a few of the timeless considerations of mankind. Baptists would be remiss in discouraging their peers from engaging in the freedom of creative spiritual thought, even if the results of such reflection vary.

A proper appreciation of the worth of fellow Baptists and the value of their ideals is an integral feature of the priesthood of all believers.

—Work graciously but firmly against the efforts of dominant personalities who try to force their interpretations on others. A passive acceptance of the doctrinal pronouncements of a person(s) who appear(s) overly aggressive and far too definitive is a disservice on two counts.

One does disservice to self by being so dependent on the thinking of another that he or she never engages individual intellectual and spiritual capacities in the area of Baptist beliefs.

Second, the person who pretends to have the ultimate answer to every question does disservice to himself or herself in assuming a characteristic reserved for God alone.

One can learn much from fellow Baptists in Sunday school and Training Union classes, in worship services and in other church meetings. But each Baptist must learn the fine art of thinking for self, in depth, seeking the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

A multitude of new insights are available for a responsible encounter with the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and the Baptist heritage. The freedom—to think and interpret—must be guarded by every Baptist.