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REPORT OF
THE CONFERENCE ON BAPTIST UNITY
held at
CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
WASHINGTON, D.C.
on
October 26 - 27, 1962.

INCLUDED:

- Addresses by Conference leaders.
- Reports of Discussion groups.
- The General Panel Discussion.

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I. THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

SOME THOUGHTS ON BAPTIST LIFE IN THE MODERN WORLD

Samuel S. Hill, Jr.

As Protestants, of the second wave of the Reformation coming to life on English soil in 1609-10, Baptists glory in the "Protestant principle" that there must be no earthly absolutizing of divine truth and that the Body of Christ is always free and responsible to examine itself. We are called by our Lord continually to subject our institutions, our methods, even our doctrines, to the divine searchlight where they may be scrutinized in proper perspective. On the whole there has been rather too little self-examination and criticism among Protestants, though recently the force of the Protestant principle has begun to strike at many vulnerable parts of American Protestant life. For example, the theme, the renewal of the church, informs our life at an increasing number of points. Also, inner-city ministries and the "suburban captivity of the churches" are matters receiving widespread attention currently. And one somewhat extraneous fact, that many of the renewals began before general institutional decline set in, suggests that Protestants are open to hear and heed God's judgment upon their inauthentic service.

Of course even this principle must not be absolutized, for self-criticism can bespeak excessive self-consciousness, or a form of hypochondria, or lack of trust in God. It is always possible to make a fetish of the Protestant principle. Father Gustave Weigel's words in this vein are worth listening to:

"Today's Protestant seems to be proud of his fallibility and points to it as the best argument for his belief. It avoids the necessity of being certainly right. He will gladly say that infallibility is something devoutly to be wished, but alas!, it is impossible. You do the best you can with the utmost sincerity of which man is capable and then trust in God. This is comforting doctrine. But it stems from or leads to relativism and skepticism."

(An American Dialogue, p. 180.)

This paper represents an effort to precipitate thought on the nature of the church, the peculiar Baptist ecclesiological slant, the aspects of our ecclesiology which facilitate or inhibit unity, the special problems which face the Baptist tradition in the post-modern age, and related matters. Engagement with our special problems, one may hope, will make possible a more relevant ministry and show up implications of our doctrines and practices which need heavier accent or serious modification.

All particular Christian institutions are expendable in theory -- though I would myself decline the invitation to put any of them to death. The Methodist or Baptist or Presbyterian, or all denominations, as such,

INTRODUCTION.

An important Conference on Baptist unity was held on October 26 and 27 at the Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. This Conference was planned and called by the Baptist Survey and Study Committee, a volunteer group of pastors and laymen from both the American Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. 76 persons were registered at the Conference, with the breakdown by states as follows:

Delaware	9	New Jersey	9	Texas	2
D.C.	11	New York	3	Virginia	<u>12</u>
Florida	1	North Carolina	13		
Maryland	5	Pennsylvania	11	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>76</u>

These figures indicate that representation at the Conference from North and South was about equal.

The keynote address was given by Dr. Samuel S. Hill, Chairman of the Department of Religion of the University of North Carolina. There followed two addresses on the theme, "What Seems to Divide Us." The American Baptist view was presented by Dr. Norman Maring of the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Southern Baptist view was given by Dr. James Tull of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Two addresses were then presented on the theme, "What Unites Us". Dr. Edward H. Pruden of the First Baptist Church of Washington presented the American Baptist view. The Southern Baptist view was given by Dr. William Lumpkin of the Freemason Street Baptist Church of Norfolk, Virginia.

During the evening hour on October 26 discussion groups were held on the following four themes: (1) Baptist Unity on a Local Level, (2) Theological Differences, (3) The Ecumenical Movement, (4) Cultural Differences. Reports from the discussion groups were presented during the session the following morning. A panel discussion on Baptist Unity followed, chaired by Rev. Howard Stewart of the First Baptist Church of Dover, Delaware. Mr. Stewart has been serving as temporary chairman of the Baptist Survey and Study Committee. Members of the panel were Dr. Maring, Dr. Hill, Dr. Tull and Dr. Lumpkin.

The Conference was brought to a close by a worship period conducted by the host pastor, Dr. Clarence Cranford. The Lord's Supper was then observed, presided over by Rev. Leland Higginbotham of the Calvary Baptist Church of Towson, Maryland.

At the close of the Conference the Sponsoring Committee met briefly to plan for an evaluation and planning session to be held on January 26, 1963 in Washington, D.C. All persons interested and willing to assist the Committee in its future work are invited to attend this meeting.

could disappear. Not that institutionalization would or should disappear, however, for we must always have this treasure in earthen vessels. One suspects that the early Baptist movement was in intention and fact an uninstitutional institution, but without being anti-institutional. Besides we have seen that whatever anti-institutional ecclesiastical character may have been desired has not been maintained, and is barely if at all possible in our age. I shall contend in this paper both that our institutional expression of Protestant Christianity is legitimate, and that the un-institutional animus of the early Baptists has a place in the modern framework.

Baptists should continually inquire into the validity and role of their denomination of Protestant Christianity, if for no other reason than that the world of the 1960's is not that of seventeenth century England. This alone makes it conceivable that we have served our purpose and outlived our usefulness. We originated as part of a movement characteristic of that era: a movement against absolutism in the political and ecclesiastical realms; a movement against external authority in religion; a movement toward individual liberty. Concerning the last Wheeler Robinson described Baptists as Protestant of the Protestants, "the very lance-head of the Reformation impact."

The Baptists were unconventional even in the innovation-ridden seventeenth century, and this was part of their vigor. They were with the new tide, to be sure, but in the early years and to an extreme degree. Their message was inherently a prophetic one in that they were endeavoring to affirm themes of gospel truth which had gone relatively unattended for centuries.

Baptists were radicals then, but we could be reactionaries now. The point we were trying to make has been generally made -- at least the old forms of absolutism and externality have been supplanted -- and we played a large part in the making of it. (By the same token and as a companion movement, the point of the political revolutionaries has been made -- at least the old forms of absolutism have been displaced.)

The founders of our tradition insisted upon and exemplified the ultimate in universal priesthood among believers. First, the importance of each man was stressed. Second, the accessibility of the spirit of each man to God directly was made fundamental. Wheeler Robinson states the Baptist position tersely when he writes that "any human priesthood seems an irrelevance if not an impertinence for those who have experienced God's grace in its direct simplicity." (Life and Faith of the Baptists, p. 19). Third, each is called to make a deliberate and direct commitment to God, and only such as do comprise the church. Fellowship with God, which each Baptist claims, has as its chief content moral holiness. We are called to be saints -- terminology probably no more popular in 1610 than now. So integral to Baptist life has personal ethical purity been that it is not at all strange that we have been champions of certain individualistic ethical programs such as prohibition and total abstinence. The ethical character of the Baptist outlook is

well expressed in John Smyth's covenant wherein Baptists are encouraged to "walk in all Christ's ways made known, according to their best endeavors, whatsoever it should cost them."

I repeat: this point has been made, and though it bears continual reiteration, it is not novel and is in significant ways less urgent now. The individual is important; the individual may approach God directly, immediately. This needed to be said, and a good many Christians have been influenced by our saying it. In addition, many have recognized how greatly the Baptists have contributed to the ideas of liberty and toleration, and to the practice of the priesthood of all.

Granting that there is profound and perduring truth in this classical Baptist witness, are we not now called to acknowledge the other dimension of the universal priesthood doctrine. Our (proper) emphasis on the immediacy of the individual's relationship to God, the vertical dimension, has had the effect of blocking our vision of the second, and intrinsic, dimension of priesthood, namely, that we are priests, ministers, servants to all others, with our ministry including much more than verbal witness to the gospel. At least in the South the horizontal dimension of priesthood has been obscured -- and it seems to me that the Southern Baptist course in this regard reflects a built-in liability of the classical Baptist stress, that it is a predictable, logical kind of deviation from the fuller concept of priesthood.

Can there be any serious denial that one's life with God and responsible service to God always involve other persons? Individuals we are, with direct access to God, but we are not and cannot be Christians in isolation from other individuals. (Let us take care to notice, by the way, that the early Baptists did not deny this.) Faith comes to us through others. One can hardly live out the Christian life without the encouragement and support of other Christians. Moreover in a basic sense the Christian knows that being Christian means loving others.

A great note now being struck by Protestantism, which needs so desperately badly to be struck, is that we are Christians in community. For one thing, we are rediscovering this about the nature of the church. For another, this Christian truth is the essence of relevance in our age inasmuch as the primary thrust of the Christian message to the lonely, despairing, unloving, and unloved is that Christ and his earthly community love, accept, and offer healing and meaning.

Now there is no apparent reason why Baptists cannot affirm and exemplify this social dimension of the priesthood of all believers. As a matter of fact this was characteristic of the early Baptist communities and is still of a number of Baptist churches. Our predecessors did revolt against institutional salvation and so do we. But this is not the same as maintaining that there can be full-orbed Christian life apart from community. As a matter of fact we have grounds for saying that the church, the company of believers, exists

not only because objectively Christ instituted it, but because actually this is the only form through which the Christian way can be affirmed and lived. (Perhaps much of the difficulty would vanish if we saw clearly that the church instead of being an institution one joins is a fellowship one helps constitute.) By uniting himself with the local church the Baptist too enters a social experience of the Christian faith. To borrow again from Robinson's insights, the Baptist un-institutional institutionalism may fail to do justice to "the august and majestic conceptions of the Epistle to the Romans" (p. 85), but it does retain one vital element of the New Testament pattern, that the church is a family with vital warmth of human fellowship. A local Baptist church at its best is a real community of love and mutual service. However, with candor we recognize that in practice this has not been our historical raison d'etre or our forte to the degree that vertical priesthood has been. It is in this connection that I say, we may be reactionaries in the contemporary world, making much ado about the vertical priesthood and overlooking the inherent and much needed horizontal priesthood concept.

Perhaps our vocation in this age is to be reactionary; if this is God's task for us we should be neither surprised nor disobedient. To keep "the doctrine of the soul's competency in religion under God" before the world in this age of stress on the corporate and inter-personal, when the nature of the church as community is being so heavily accentuated, could be a most important mission.

Yet, I hope, and believe, that God has a more significant calling for the people called Baptists, a matter with which I shall want to conclude this paper. But let us move toward that conclusion by noting first that it has always been a bit peculiar, a bit suspect, and a bit dangerous to be a Baptist. We were not middle-of-the-road Protestant Christians in the seventeenth century, nor are we now. We are a curious lot, intriguing, bewildering, and scandalizing many outside the denomination. In some ways we are the most colorful group in Protestantism, always provocative and conversation-worthy, sometimes exasperating. What is there about us and our beliefs which prompt unusual and often negative reactions?

Primary in this respect are two Baptist affirmations. The first is that in theory we acknowledge no external authority except the Bible. Now it is an axiom of human life that all men yearn for authority, some reliable source on which one's life may be based, to which one may repair for certainty, and that social and individual well-being require authority. Besides this, the Christian faith as Baptists believe it does have content and thus appears to have need for a defining authority. Certain positions are affirmed and others denied: God is in broad ways describable; he acts according to certain values, love, mercy, righteousness, moral purpose; God became man in Jesus of Nazareth; and so on. Christian faith is much more than vague, formless feeling. We proclaim something quite particular because the Bible and our experience tell us

God is this way and not that way. Therefore because of the practical necessity of authority, and because the Christian faith has content which needs to be formed, some agency for developing guidelines toward definition seems requisite.

The Baptist agency is of course the Bible as the Holy Spirit guides the reading of it. Given the facts that we recognize the Bible as the only objective authority, and that our people have by and large not been subjected to nor made capable of handling Biblical criticism, it is hardly shocking that we have tended to absolutize the Bible. Acknowledging nothing else we have absolutized what we do acknowledge. (Is it too heretical to suggest that government by the Bible needs its system of checks and balances?) Literalism has thus quite naturally dominated the Baptist hermeneutic. This is a troublesome fact of our tradition inasmuch as we have framed an epistemological irreconcilability by calling for commitment to the Bible in addition to our more basic commitment to the living Lord in regenerate relationship.

Despite all that is right in our being people of the Book, it becomes increasingly clear that the Bible taken by itself is an insufficient defining authority. Interpretation of it always occurs through more media than the Holy Spirit, however reliant upon the Spirit the interpreter may endeavor to be. Since each brings to his study of the Bible certain views of truth, history, epistemology, etc., the raw Bible is frankly a dangerous authority, or at least so it seems to many who regard the Baptist absence of recognized agencies to point the way in interpretation as unrealistic and pernicious. (Their suspicions are often confirmed, by the way, by a prevailing unilateralism.) The kind of irresponsibility found in some varieties of the early Anabaptist tradition which fell into the hands of leaders whom Roland Bainton describes as the "less balanced spirits," is a continuing possibility in Baptist life. As a matter of fact those of us from the South are seeing how traditional beliefs and an almost compulsive desire for institutional unity and aggrandizement have become the criteria by which the Scriptures are understood. Despite the Baptist refusal to concede rights to any persons or groups to formulate theology for the rest, interpretation and formulation of dogma are always entrusted to some persons or groups, often to agents meagerly equipped to assume such important responsibility. Many would ask, is insistence on the immediacy of the Spirit's leading in disclosing Scriptural truth, though a high ideal, worth the risk of grossly inadequate or even flagrantly spurious interpretation?

Patently our theoretical authority-less-ness makes for problems within our life and for some disrepute outside. Outside, the denomination has not been strong in the area of apologetics, partly because we have not accorded to Biblical scholars and theologians the primary responsibility for shaping Christian truth, on the contention that all are more or less equally competent to describe Christian experience in theological terms. Our cherished doctrine of soul competency in religion, so authentic in terms of fellowship with God, is very

dangerous indeed at the point of doctrinal statement. The Spirit may come directly to each, but hardly the comprehensive and profound, often subtle and paradoxical, tenets of Christian theology. We have not been especially effective apologists to those for whom there are intellectual barriers to faith precisely for this reason. The development of a "reasoned case for theism" has not on the whole lain within our province. From the standpoint of the apologetical demands of our age, Baptists are likely to remain a generally ineffective witness. In an effort to counteract this ineffectiveness, and to produce the intelligence and clear thinking needed by democratic bodies especially, we should undertake to train theologians in both ministerial and lay ranks.

But there is another Baptist characteristic which contributes to our relative ineffectiveness with reflective persons outside the Christian faith, namely, our classic subjective orientation in religious experience. Just how subjectively oriented we are is clearly seen in the insistence that the church comprises only the regenerate. When a tradition gives as much place to the subjective as ours does, it is natural that it should give some less attention to objective statement and description. We have historically been more concerned to be instruments and embodiments of regeneracy than skilled spokesmen of and for the faith. It is true, however, that the early English Baptists were nurtured in Calvinism, so that theological consideration has figured more prominently in our denomination than, say, in the continental Anabaptist movement which on the whole treated theology rather lightly.

The truth is that for the reasons mentioned, and others, Baptists have been relatively unreflective people and have made little appeal to the more intellectually inclined. Parenthetically, one of the contributions we have made to the universal church is providing those who are constrained to leave the Baptist fold for other denominations with strong and proper subjectivism. Baptist churches lose a number of reflective persons, but those who leave often take with them something which they may find somewhat lacking in the new setting. In sum, the absence of a shaping authority and the stress on Christian experience have weakened our efforts to speak a comprehensive and relevant word to the sophisticated in secular society.

In addition, the absence of authority appears unrealistic and impracticable with respect to polity in this age of growth, complex organization and bureaucracy. Paul Harrison in *AUTHORITY AND POWER IN THE FREE CHURCH TRADITION* concludes that the organizational structure of the American Baptist Convention often contradicts Baptist ecclesiology. Is this not unavoidable so long as the Baptist movement remains expansive, centralized, and institutionally self-conscious? The Baptist ideal of a local congregation of persons who love and serve God and their fellows in the congregation, with interdependence at the associational and higher levels a matter of secondary importance, and with all higher decisions less than binding in character, seems far removed from the complex structures of the modern Baptist movement with its large, highly institutional local churches, and its considerable centralization

of power. A realistic assessment of the present situation reveals that vested interests are too great to permit any hope for a recovery of the original Baptist pattern. Anyway, who would say that the replacement of the new complexity by an old simplicity would be on balance a good thing? Yet I venture two suggestions in this regard. First, we should modify our self-description as a composite of local churches each with complete autonomy, so as to take account of our considerable (and rather essential) centralization, that is, we should acknowledge that the original Baptist ideal has to be compromised to a degree. Let us hold fast to local church emphasis by encouraging strong fellowship and deep spiritual life within, and by preserving belief in the power of the Spirit's activity within the local fellowship. But let us at the same time admit that a power higher than each local congregation should be made responsible for stated areas of concern, such as, for example, social pronouncements, and the question of unity of bodies which is before this conference. Would we not be well advised to alter our institutional theory so as to provide for a representative democracy? As it is, in the complex modern world where the church must address itself to many social issues, our denomination is restricted and sometimes virtually paralyzed when it adheres strictly to the theory that only the local congregation can speak its mind. The structure needs to be changed so that Baptist commissions, instead of being merely advisory, can be commissions with power. If absolute local church autonomy is observed, the question of the unity of American and Southern Baptists is not even negotiable. In practice the American Convention has relaxed the autonomy principle at various points such as committing the body as a whole to membership in the National Council of Churches. Should not the American Convention openly declare itself as having liberalized its ecclesiology in some respects? The Southern Convention too has committed its body as a whole, for instance in its membership in the Baptist World Alliance, but it needs to do more than acknowledge that it does not observe its announced ecclesiology with consistency. The Southern Convention needs to consider authorizing the vesting of some authority in other than local church bodies. In practice power does reside in the pressure to adopt whatever consensus view is abroad. To be labeled "uncooperative" is an act of disfavor and castigation in the Southern Convention's life. Yet this kind of pressure and power, though real, is unofficial and would be denied by much of the body's leadership.

My second suggestion is that we treat with appreciation and encouragement such local churches as choose to major on building community and to resist pressures that they become more institutional. After all a small company of believers, a veritable conventicle, can claim a noble Biblical and Baptist heritage, and can justify its existence in the light of the great contemporary need for men to find in the local church a genuine community of worship, love, and acceptance. There is some truth in the statements that a large Baptist church is a contradiction in terms, that Baptist bureaucracy is a contradiction in terms. Yet these are here to stay and we ought to redefine Baptist ecclesiology to accord with these realities in preference to deceiving ourselves and misrepresenting ourselves to the world. At the same time, may we not wish for and strive

toward a recovery of the church as an intimate local community. If institutional efficiency and solidarity alone are our hallmarks, we have ceased to be Baptist. Perhaps Baptists are in as good a position as any modern Protestant group to implement the rediscovered insights, that the church must always be local and that the true local church is a community of those bound to God and to one another in God.

The second Baptist distinctive which makes our witness as significant as it is troublesome is the belief that the church is composed of the regenerate. This it was which prompted R. Newton Flew of Cambridge, a foremost contributor to discussions on the nature of the church, to say to me one day in 1955 that the Baptist doctrine of the church was the only one which he could not understand and for which he had no basic respect. Our ecclesiology has always been scandalous. For one thing it seems an impracticable ideal. Few would dare to assert that Baptist churches are conspicuously better than other churches. For another, our practice of believers' baptism seems less evangelical than infant baptism. Though believers' baptism has the weight of New Testament practice behind it, it may obscure or even subvert the real message of the New Testament which focuses on the gospel itself, and on the priority of God's grace, rather than on men's experience of the gospel. Paedo-baptism affirms that God's grace is "there," offered to us, long before we are aware of it or receive it. We only confirm it, own it, at the time of personal responsibility. A strong case is made against our ecclesiology by those who maintain that we turn the spotlight onto the derived rather than the primary reality.

The third and most telling objection to the Baptist ideal of regenerate church membership is related to the long-prevalent popular theology which has it that regenerate, regeneracy, refer to how one stands with God conceived primarily as a judge, in terms of status, with particular implications for after-death destiny. On this view, for a man to say he is regenerate (and that is exactly what one says by belonging to a Baptist church) indicates to the public at large that he claims to know with certainty that he has been granted a positive status with God. Although the regenerate usually intend to point to God by their testimony to regeneracy, their testimony is often otherwise interpreted, and their certainty not infrequently causes them to be victimized by attitudes of smugness, self-consciousness, and condescension toward the unregenerate. Since the view that God is essentially judge who requires that the sin-debt be paid for one to enter heaven underlies this understanding of regeneracy, the Baptist is declaring to the world, simply by being a Baptist, that he knows his sins have been satisfactorily paid for and that he has been vouchsafed a positive destiny. Main-line Protestants recoil at this, for Calvin asserted that God alone knows, glorious assurance to Calvin, and Luther was concerned to know God himself and trust all the rest, including after-death destiny, to the utterly trustworthy God of Jesus Christ.

The traditional conception of regeneracy in terms of status before God has produced the feeling that Baptists claim much for themselves

and are a presumptuous people. It is charged that a person who belongs to the Baptist church is by that fact calling attention to himself, that he is making too sharp and self-conscious a distinction between himself and those outside the church, and that he is certain of spiritual things in a way which is contrary to the Bible's rather different kind of certainty. From the standpoint of the traditional definition of regeneracy, the charges have some merit.

In this connection Baptists need to correct for their own and others' understanding the meaning of regeneracy, or at least they need to indicate clearly the primary force of the concept. Should we not mean by "regenerate church" a company of those who having experienced God's forgiving, life-giving grace in repentance, now wholly, deliberately, publicly commit themselves to Jesus Christ as Lord? The Baptist declares by his coming into the church, that he is so sure of God's grace acting in his own life that he is sure he wants to respond with his life, endeavoring to call attention by his life to Jesus Christ. To be a Baptist means that one has accepted God's grace and calling, is willing to put his life on the line, to declare himself an open book, to announce publicly that he knows God's grace and desires to respond totally. In theory, Baptists accept God's challenge to be radical disciples more explicitly than most. We risk disclosing our commitment to the world and invite the world to see if we measure up to our confession so boldly made -- though of course without a chip on the shoulder. Possibly we make others uneasy by our regenerate church concept not so much because we are presumptuous as because our stated intention to be radically committed to Christ is a judgment and a threat.

Thus the Baptist's testimony is far from being, "Hallelujah, I'm saved, what a relief," for it is in marked contrast, Jesus Christ is Lord. The Baptist calls attention to Jesus Christ his acknowledged Lord, with his experience of God's saving grace implicit in and responsible for his bold declaration. My theologian friend was not altogether justified in his recent scornful attack on Baptists for singing, "Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine," for he failed to perceive that there is a commitment-centered way to sing that hymn. Yet his was a salutary criticism for we ought always to sing a hymn with the effect of "I Am Thine, O Lord" before and after "Blessed Assurance," with both following proclamation of the gospel itself in word and song.

The Baptist doctrine of the church magnifies serious churchmanship. Beyond all people Baptists ought to view membership in the Body of Christ with sober thought and devout heart. There is a proper radicalism in this ecclesiology. It should move us to take the lead in ethical movements inasmuch as the commitment which each of us makes is ethical to the core -- and our ethical responsibility must include social action as well as that individual scrupulosity for which we have long been notorious. It should produce an abundance of Christian fellowship in our churches. It should posit demanding entrance requirements. All of these are important Baptist witnesses in this age. But one wonders if our most singular vocation is not that of being living apologists for the

Christian faith. Short on theological apologetics we are always likely to be. In this respect we are not now at one cutting-edge of the Christian witness for there is great need for honest, astute, and comprehensive apologetical statements. But after all, saintly Christians have always been a most compelling witness, and Baptists are unusually well adapted by their ecclesiology for an apologetical ministry of this sort.

As for unity more directly considered, we must acknowledge the "giver" of our faith, so intensely Biblical in nature, that Christ has one church. To whatever degree local church autonomy impedes unity it should be sacrificed. But its real value would not be sacrificed by the delegation of issues and decisions like Baptist unity to representative groups of knowledgeable and responsible people.

It seems to me that unity is of the essence of our life, first of all, but that from practical considerations it is necessary to our spiritual health. Baptists need other Christians, and Baptist conventions need other Baptist conventions, since our Biblicism and ecclesiology so easily lead to provincialism and absolutization. The judgment of God makes its way to us Baptists with more difficulty than to most, so self-contained do we tend to be with an uncritical Biblicism and our local church autonomy, and so open is our subjectivism to acculturating influences.

God has given us a great tradition. Let us submit it to his judgment, modify it to his greater service, and implement its truths to His glory.

I. THE APPARENT AND THE REAL

Progress toward Christian unity must always proceed slowly, for foundations must be theologically sound. If organic union of denominational bodies is formed simply for the sake of expediency, they may become power combinations which are worse than the multiplicity of denominations. Union must be prepared for by humble self-examination and candid dialogue. There must be a search for the true identity of the groups, as seen under the exposure of the searchlights of history and the scriptures. One part of this process is a consideration of the reasons for the separate existence of the bodies concerned.

II. WHAT SEEMS TO DIVIDE US -- AMERICAN BAPTIST VIEW

WHAT DIVIDES US? THEOLOGY OR SOCIOLOGY?

Norman H. Maring

Baptist unity is not an altogether new topic for discussion. Just seventy years ago, representative Baptists from North and South met at Philadelphia for the annual gathering of the Baptist Congress. One of the issues which they considered was this question: "Is a Union of the Various Baptist Bodies Feasible?" In 1887 and 1890, they had dealt with larger problems of the organic union of Christians of various denominations. In 1892, they turned to what many considered more relevant, namely the unity of Baptists of the United States. Although speakers referred to Christ's will for the unity of his church, the addresses do not reflect much sense of urgency about achieving any greater degree of unity. The only subsequent step toward a union of Baptists took place nearly twenty years later, when the Free Will Baptists merged with the Northern Baptist Convention.

Once again a heartening concern for Christian unity is evident in our world. Although external pressures have been needed to make Christians conscious of their disunity, yet there has emerged a genuine concern for a fuller realization of the will of Christ for his church. A recovered vision of the Church depicted in the Scriptures has made many people more aware of the scandal of our divisions. Consequently, Protestants have sought better means of cooperating and have considered possibilities of organic union, and the long, cold war between Protestants and the Roman Catholics has thawed a little.

To some extent the renewed concern about the doctrine of the Church and the quest for unity has affected the Baptists, but we have not been very receptive to ideas relative to church union. Indeed, we have not yet manifested much interest in exploring possibilities of union within our Baptist fellowship. If God is speaking through external pressures and through a deepening concern for Christian fellowship, if he is calling upon the Church to make a more united witness to the one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God which are inherent in its vocation, then Baptists should have an ear to hear what the Spirit says.

I. THE APPARENT AND THE REAL

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The great difficulty in such a quest is that we hardly know how to distinguish our rationalizations from real underlying reasons. Human behaviour, whether that of an individual or of a group, is complex, and even those who are participants in such behaviour cannot easily ascertain the real motivating forces which account for it. For example, one has only to read the attempts of historians to explain the Civil War (or War Between the States) to see how differently the same set of data appears to different observers. How can one accurately interpret human conduct, which involves psychological, sociological, economic, political, and other elements?

Churches, although of divine origin, are also human institutions, and they are subject to the forces operative in a given society. Therefore, any attempt to account for existing organizations must look beyond theological disagreements by which they explain themselves. It must also recognize the presence of such factors as inertia, vested interests, prejudice, ignorance, lust for power, and provincialism. Nevertheless, the problems which hinder us from discovering the elusive reasons for our divisions should not prevent our persistent endeavor to understand them. For only as we understand our true situation can we know whether we are being obedient to God or are obstinate roadblocks standing in the way of his purposes.

II. WHAT SEEMS TO DIVIDE US?

It is sometimes asserted that Baptists of the Southern and the American Baptist Conventions are kept apart by their different theological positions. It is, however, impossible to make a strong case for that point of view. The survey made a couple of years ago by persons interested in this conference, although admittedly based upon a limited sampling, certainly raised a question as to how clear are the lines of theological cleavage between us.

The fact is that neither of our Conventions is characterized by any one theological party line. While there is a certain broad consensus among us regarding the core of doctrines which characterize the evangelical tradition, considerable diversity within that framework exists in both Conventions. The recent episode centering around Prof. Elliott's book on Genesis simply brought to the surface some of the differences which have long existed. Baptists of the North have also manifested their differences in public ways, and while progress has been made toward unity there is certainly no uniform theological system which is typically American Baptist. Both of our groups allow room for considerable latitude already, and there is not any simple differentiation between Northern and Southern Baptist theologies which can be compared and contrasted. There must be something deeper than this which divides us.

It is not uncommon for Southern Baptists to charge that American Baptists are cold and are not evangelistic. Many of the latter, on the other hand, consider the type of evangelistic program

carried on by Southern Baptists as high-pressured manipulation of people which has nothing much to do with actual regeneration. Both of these generalizations, of course, are difficult to substantiate on the basis of facts, though the evangelistic approaches of neither are beyond criticism. It is true that in some sections of the North there was a reaction against the revivalistic methods of professional evangelists, which turned into an unwholesome lack of interest in evangelism itself. That condition, however, has not been characteristic of our churches, and on the whole there is evangelistic concern among us. Our Division of Evangelism, during the Baptist Jubilee Advance, has sought to develop an evangelistic approach which would have greater depth and meaning than have some of the more traditional ones. In wide sections of our Convention, however, churches have resisted the new approach and have called for a return to the old ways -- from which, indeed, they had never changed -- and in their practices they are hardly distinguishable from the Southern Baptists. As to the relative degrees of warmth and spirituality, it is difficult to take the temperatures of churches. Having served as pastor of three Southern Baptist churches (and belonged to some others), and having a fairly wide acquaintance with Baptist churches in the North, I know that neither North nor South has a monopoly on indifference and worldliness or spirituality. Sometimes an outward kind of neighborliness has been confused with Christian fellowship and spirituality. So far as I can see, the real issues which separate us are not at these points.

Another argument frequently advanced in opposition to any talk of merger is that such a combination would make us too large and unwieldy. That may very well be the case, unless we were careful to develop a polity which provided for mutual responsibility of churches and their agencies. That danger is not avoided, however, by our present tendencies, and I believe that such a point is more a rationalization than a reason for our divisions. Not long ago, an editorial in a Baptist weekly, captioned "Christian Unity," argued that the "great danger Southern Baptists face today is in becoming too large." In the same editorial, however, it is argued that there should not be any union with American Baptists, since it would be bound to hinder the growth of Southern Baptists. It should also be noted that the fear of getting overgrown does not prevent the Southern Baptists from seeking to develop 30,000 new churches and preaching stations by 1964; and originally statements were published to indicate that most of such expansion would be in the states previously considered American Baptist. Had there not been strong protests, this expansion would have spilled over into Canada before now. These statements are not made in order to point the accusing finger, but simply to indicate that there is no real fear that getting bigger is going to ruin a convention. Of course, the American Baptists do not use such arguments, for because of secessions and internal strife, they have been weakened and have been asking, Why aren't we growing more? If we want an honest answer to the question about our divisions, we shall have to look a little farther.

Some have emphasized the differences in our ecclesiologies.

Historically, there has been some difference between the "society" and the "board" methods of carrying on missionary and other enterprises. Today the process of history has eliminated some of these differences, although some difficult adjustments would be involved in a merger. The biggest problems would grow out of defining relationships between educational institutions and state and national conventions. I am firmly convinced that if there were a will to unite, the ecclesiological differences would be far from insurmountable. One thinks in this connection of the recent merger of the Congregational Churches with the Evangelical and Reformed Church to form the United Church of Christ. Theoretically such a union was an impossibility because the traditions were so different, but a concern for unity which was willing to explore beneath the surface found a way to remove obstacles.

There is more force in the assertion that we are divided by divergent attitudes toward the ecumenical movement. The American Baptist Convention is affiliated with the National Council of Churches of Christ and with the World Council of Churches, while the Southern Baptist Convention refuses to become an official participant in such organizations. While Southern Baptists unofficially attend ecumenical gatherings and cooperate in various interdenominational agencies, they must keep their relationships on an informal level. Apparently, there was once more openness on the part of the Southern Baptists to explore questions of church unity, but according to Dr. W.W. Barnes a changed attitude developed around the end of World War I. Subsequent to about 1920 there has been a growing determination to resist all movement toward affiliation with interdenominational bodies, partly because of a persistent spread of misinformation about these "unionizing" agencies. The Northern Baptist Convention was one of the original members of the Federal Council of Churches, and it was a constituent of the World Council. Yet there is still a substantial minority which looks askance at the participation of their Convention in such bodies, and doubtless a good many more are not well informed or enthusiastic about their work. Any serious discussion of unity would have to face this hurdle before the talks could get very far.

Another issue on which there is a difference is the practice of "open membership." A good many churches in the North do receive, either as associate members or as full members, persons bringing letters from paedobaptist churches, without requiring such persons to be baptized by immersion. This is chiefly a problem of the churches of the North, although it is likely to plague the South eventually. In the North there is, nevertheless, a strong feeling against such practice, and The American Baptist Convention has a rule that persons who have not been immersed upon a profession of faith may not be delegates to the Convention. Probably only a minority make provision for membership on such a basis, but the trend has grown in recent years. Southern Baptists, on the other hand, may even taken an opposite extreme and deny the validity of "alien immersion." Although by no means a universal practice, it is true that churches in some sections have refused to accept the baptism even by Baptist ministers who were not Southern Baptists. Any discussions of

unity would have to deal with these questions, and would have to decide whether such practices can be defended on grounds of Baptist history or in a way consistent with the Biblical meaning of the rite of baptism. These practices are not the basic reasons for our remaining separated brethren.

III. WHAT REALLY DIVIDES US

In my judgment, none of the foregoing matters gets to the heart of the matter. They are all to be listed among the things which seem to divide us, but they are surface matters only. If we press on to get at the things that really divide us, we shall find something more fundamental. For it is the psychological and sociological factors which serve to keep us apart far more than do any theological issues.

Foremost among the real things which separate us is our provincialism. Living in our geographical sections and associating with folks like ourselves, we tend to consider our own ways of doing things as normative. Having inadequate acquaintance with other people who differ from us in some external ways, we have inaccurate information about others, and we consider their customs inferior to our own. That applies to both Northerners and Southerners; it is a trait of all people.

Some years ago there appeared an article entitled "Differences of Northern and Southern Baptists." Among other things the writer said: "Northern Baptists are inclined to be more formal, less aggressive, less devoted to soul-winning. . . Southern Baptist laymen who visit Northern churches while on visits away from the South often complain that their services are 'dead,' that the crowds are small, the singing lifeless, the sermon intellectual but not inspiring. An intangible description perhaps, but certainly accurate. Many Northern Baptist seminaries train their students to emphasize the social rather than the personal gospel. The evangelistic spirit has given place to the priestly spirit. Missionaries of dubious doctrinal convictions go forth to civilize, hospitalize, and agriculturalize, and fewer and fewer go forth to evangelize!" On the other hand, one can easily find Northern Baptist stereotypes of Southern Baptists which are just as distorted. A lady said to the speaker, just after she had come from a trip to the South, "The Southern Baptists seem to me very much like Pentecostals." Not long ago, a Baptist minister who has had some encounters with Southern Baptists on the West Coast, said: "If the only Baptist group to which I could belong were Southern Baptist, I would change to another denomination." Many people in the North picture Southern Baptists as ignorant, backward fundamentalists whose worship is highly emotional and whose behaviour in racial matters shows up their false pretensions to piety. A lack of first-hand acquaintance makes it easy to categorize and stereotype the out-group people, and this is an important factor in our divisions.

Another expression of our provincialism has been a tendency to identify our ways of doing things with the gospel itself. Certain programs, patterns of worship, methods of evangelism, types of hymn or gospel song, and familiar accents typical of our native habitats come to be associated

with our churches and with the very essence of the gospel. In an article in HOME MISSIONS, a writer explains the uniqueness of Southern Baptists as consisting in the development of a uniform Convention-wide program, so that people moving from one place to another expect to find the same patterns in the new locale. And, indeed, he says, "members with such convention affiliation feel lost and on unfamiliar ground in a church without such affiliation--even though both groups accept the same confession of faith." On such a basis he explained the need for Southern Baptist churches in the North and seemed to encourage people to make such identification of program and patterns with the very nature of the Church of Christ. Building a denominational consciousness upon any type of program invites an identification of outward forms with the very gospel which can become dangerous and tragic.

The American Baptist Convention has less uniformity of program, although there is an increasing tendency to provide programs for the churches. It has also a different philosophy of education underlying much of the Church school and other literature. But even without such uniformity and definiteness of organizational structure, there often seems to be a subtle sense of superiority of approach and method, with a consequent tendency to disparage a program which appears more mechanical and pedagogically different. This expression of our provincialism, on both sides, also obscures and distorts the gospel of Christ.

An important consideration for our discussion of separation is the lack of any widespread sense of urgency to find a larger measure of unity. Neither the challenges and threats posed by our society nor the internal constraints implicit in the nature of the Church seem to move us deeply. External pressures should not really be needed to impel Christians to desire a greater measure of unity, but God sometimes works through such means to call his people to repentance. Outward circumstances may greatly affect our awareness of bonds of spiritual kinship with others. Not long ago a missionary spoke in our chapel about his work with Muslims in India. As he walked through the bazaars of a certain city, he said, he felt a pervasive spirit of hostility from these Muslims. In contrast to this experience, he comes to another section of the city, where he feels that there is a different attitude. The people around him share a belief in the basic teachings of the Christian faith, but they are Roman Catholics. When surrounded by Muslims, a Protestant may feel more conscious of his kinship with the Roman Catholic.

Here in the United States, we are not surrounded by people who are hostile, and the threats which exist are not so obvious. If we were truly conscious of the extent to which the pagan world is outdistancing the Christian movement; if we realized how deeply secularism has penetrated the western world, including the church itself; if we were aware of the extent to which Protestantism is being pushed out of the big cities; if we realized the nature and extent of the hostile forces around us, we would be more inclined to see the need for a more united witness. Like the Church of Laodicea, we say that we are rich, we have prospered, and we need nothing; not knowing our own wretched and blind condition. How

can successful people believe that they need anything that they do not have?

Not only is there inadequate sense of the perils around us, but what is vastly more important is the lack of an inner compulsion which a clearer vision of the Church would bring. Early Baptists had a more full-orbed doctrine of the church. They believed in "the holy catholic church," and it was important to manifest this belief in associational life which possessed some authority in a number of areas. That conception of the universal church was whittled away by a rampant individualism which affected both North and South, placing the local, autonomous church in a position which it was never meant to have. The consequence has been that outward unity of churches has sometimes seemed unimportant. As one who represents a smaller Baptist group has put it: "their (the Baptists') doctrine of the Church is not vitally affected by disruption of organized cooperation beyond the local church." To recover a full view of the church which is the people of God, called into being to be his servant people, would give us uneasy consciences. There would be an inner impulse and yearning for a fuller experience of the purpose which Christ wills.

It is imperative that we Baptists* seek a greater measure of unity. So long as we remained in our own geographical sections, there could be some justification for remaining separated. On grounds of convenience and effectiveness, we could say to ourselves that it is better not to become too large and unwieldy. With the removing of boundaries, however, the situation is altered. When Southern Baptists move unbidden into territories hitherto occupied by American Baptists, and when American Baptists encourage churches in the South to affiliate with them, the question is raised about the meaning of our denominational witness. Implicit in the term denomination is the idea that those who bear its name share a common understanding of the gospel, and that they feel impelled to maintain a witness to certain God-given insights which might otherwise be lost. When, therefore, people bearing the same denominational name labor within the same areas, having overlapping congregations, ignoring each other's existence, competing with each other instead of cooperating, the question of relationship is forced upon them. Not only must one face the question, What does it mean to be Christian? but he must ask anew, What does it mean to be a Baptist? Does it mean more to be "Southern" or "American" than it does to be Baptist? Our behavior toward each other testifies that our peculiar programs, our sentimental attachments to our ways of doing things, is of greater significance than that "Baptist witness" about which we speak so bravely on ceremonial occasions.

It simply will not do to say, We are not really competing with each other; we are just serving the world wherever we see a need. It is not enough to say that we have a spiritual unity whether we have any outward unity or not. Cheap unity is no better than cheap grace! If we continue to go our ways, rationalizing our separateness by whatever excuses we find handy, we simply furnish further documentation for the theory that denominations simply reflect socio-economic strata of society. Our present practice is a blatant denial of our claims that the gospel has

power to transcend all of the artificial barriers of class, race, section, and other cultural distinctions which divide men in our society.

CONCLUSION

It seems obvious that there are many things which seem to divide us, which in reality are only smoke-screens by which we hide our real reasons even from ourselves. What really divides us is ultimately the lack of a clear, compelling vision of the Church of Jesus Christ and an openness to the Holy Spirit by whom the Church is animated and sustained. Our divisions have come under the judgment of God, and we are called upon to repent. Certainly we should not hastily bring about some great combination of Baptists; to do so without adequate preparation might lead to something worse even than disunity. But we are called to seek humbly and earnestly for a way to give expression to our unity by other than verbal means. Out of the recovered sense of identity and integrity could issue true unity.

* What is said here applies not only to Southern and American Baptists, but to Negro and other Baptist bodies. In this particular conference, however, we are dealing specifically with the two conventions mentioned.

III. WHAT SEEMS TO DIVIDE US -- SOUTHERN BAPTIST VIEW

THINGS THAT SEEM TO DIVIDE US

James Tull

I understand that my task today is to indicate some of the factors which seem to divide us from each other as different denominations of Baptists. It will be understood, I am sure, that I speak unofficially, with the consciousness that many Southern Baptists would be likely to disagree with one or more of my observations, perhaps all of them.

I assume that all Christians, regardless of denomination, belong to the body of Christ which we designate the Church. I assume that the unity which all Christians should seek is a unity which in principle we already have by belonging to one body. I assume that the unity which we seek is deeper than organizational union; and yet I assume also that conversations concerning our unity will need to consider the factors which divide us organizationally. I assume that the realization of a deeper spiritual unity among us will lead to a searching exploration of what divides us organizationally.

I mention several factors which seem to me to divide us.

1. The Regional Focus of Southern Baptist Life

I should say, first, that we are divided by the regional focus of our denominational life.

Despite the mushrooming character of Southern Baptist growth, and the expanding periphery of the Southern Baptist movement, the name Southern as applied to the Southern Baptist denomination is still a deeply significant term.

As Southern Baptists move into the East, the mid-west, the far-west, Alaska, and other areas, it should be remembered that the heartland of the Southern Baptist Convention is the middle South and Southwest. This heartland may be defined by the states of Tennessee, parts of Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. In this region are located four of our six theological seminaries, many of our colleges, the Home Mission Board, the Sunday school Board, the Executive Committee, and other agencies of the Convention.

In this heartland may be found in many respects the most conservative region of the nation. That this conservatism has profoundly penetrated the minds of Southern Baptists is evident in a hundred ways. As Southern Baptists have moved West, North and East, they have taken with them Southern attitudes, Southern customs, Southern culture. So far the animating impulses of denominational expansion have throbbed out from this vast heartland, whose regional isolation has made it relatively insensitive to the very existence of groups of Baptists who dwell afar off. Regional isolation, psychological and cultural differentiation, seem to me to divide us.

2. The Centralized Structure of Our Denominational Organization

When our denomination was organized in 1845, the denomination from the very first was given a centralized organizational structure. The convention comprised a comprehensive denominational body. Separate boards were named to operate in the discharge of each benevolent task, and placed under the authority of the convention. The convention was set up to represent the whole denomination, including state conventions, associations, and local churches.

The course of Southern Baptist history has seen a solidification of this centralized structure, and an enormous expansion of the causes to which it has given direction.

This course has made the denominational organization an engine of great power. The causes of Southern Baptists have been fitted into a massive system. It has been inevitable that those who supported the causes supported the organizational system. It has been inevitable that those who supported the causes became inexorably enmeshed in the system itself. It has been inevitable that the religious sanction and loyalty which was given to the Gospel causes should be transferred to the system.

Perhaps it was inevitable too that the power which accrued to the denominational organs should develop not only characteristics of inclusion and expansion, but also of exclusion and restriction. That is to say, the loyalty of the denomination's members to their chosen channels of operation excluded interest in and loyalty to other groups outside our own denominational life. So demanding did the requirements of our own denominational commitments become, that the appeal for support was an appeal to support our causes, our institutions, our organizations. The result has been to shut out interest in and even awareness of, what other Christians are doing. We hear about our great task, not yours, our witness, not yours, our denomination, not yours.

The comparative cultural homogeneity of our regional heartland has facilely fused with the expansive, but also exclusive character of our institutional forms. The great masses of our people, and the bulk of our leadership, do not know much about you. We do not know because we have not been told, and when we are told in incidental ways about you, you still seem remote from us.

Our regional isolation, and our concern for the demands of our own program, have combined to form a serious cause of division between us.

3. Ecclesiastical Ideology

In recent years considerable attention has been given to the rise and course of the Landmark Movement among Southern Baptists. This radically sectarian movement was a decisive factor in the shaping of the Southern Baptist mind.

Perhaps the most decisive element in the Landmark system was the Landmark denial of the traditional Baptist doctrine of the universal spiritual church. The universal spiritual church, which in traditional Baptist thought was conceived to embrace all Christian believers, was given outright denial, and the local Baptist church was exalted to a central place.

By denying the universal spiritual church and by defining the local church as exclusively Baptist, the Landmarkers established a powerful barrier against any ecumenical approach towards other denominations of Christians. The church is local. The church is Baptist only. To 'affiliate' (the Landmark term) with other denominations of Christians was to confer sanction upon unauthentic "religious societies"; it was to fraternize with error; indeed it was to construct a bridge of invasion across which the pagan errors of Rome and her Protestant children would penetrate and corrupt the citadel of true Gospel witness.

Moreover, J.R. Graves, the founder and prophet of Landmarkism, taught that the kingdom of God is composed of the aggregate of true Baptist churches. Graves found in this idea a principle of cohesion for the uniting of the Southern Baptist community of churches. It is no wonder that far-seeing Southern Baptist critics of Graves, like J.B. Jeter, R.B.C. Howell, and J. Lansing Burrows affirmed that Graves, after eliminating the universal spiritual church had substituted therefore a doctrine of a universal, visible church which had earned the warmest denunciation of Baptists through much of their history.

While most Southern Baptists today would not go with Graves in his definition of the Kingdom of God, Graves' essential concept of a universal, visible church has left a deep deposit in characteristic Southern Baptist psychology.

What we have today in Southern Baptist life is a concept of a visible church coextensive with the Southern Baptist denomination, a Church composed of its member churches. This concept, I should judge, has found in the centralized organizational structure of the denomination a habitation, a channel of operation, and an instrument of power.

It is in my opinion incorrect to say that Southern Baptists are opposed to ecumenicity. Indeed, they are a profoundly ecumenical people. But their views of ecumenicity have been determined by their conception of what the church is. The ecumenical movement among Southern Baptists has expressed itself in a close cohesion, a tightening connectionalism of the Southern Baptist churches. This ecumenical movement has been expansive, but it has found its outer limits in the defined limits of the Southern Baptist denomination--the denomination's churches, the denomination's witness, the denomination's program, the denomination's organizational structure. Indeed, in a real sense the Southern Baptist counterpart to Protestantism's ecumenical movement is the Southern Baptist cooperative program.

One more factor should be mentioned in this connection. In the Landmark mind, ecclesiological integrity was organically joined with theological orthodoxy. The Landmark mind has been innately suspicious of all other Baptists (to say nothing of other groups of Christians) who have been infected with theological "modernism." Affiliation with other Baptists has tended to be denied for the sake of preserving the purity of faith.

Now, to say that all Southern Baptists are Landmarkers or to say that all Southern Baptists suspect the orthodoxy of all other Baptists would be grossly unfair. There is much more theological pluralism among Southern Baptists than is generally supposed. Yet I should judge that the expanding thrust of Southern Baptists into regions outside Southern territory, while it contains genuine evangelical elements and sometimes a heroic witness, also often contains this suspicion, that other Baptists are not as true to the faith as we are.

I believe that it would be possible to furnish extensive documentation concerning this attitude, but I must be content with only one brief quotation, taken from an article by a man who has labored for some years as a Southern Baptist in the far West.

"The modernism of the North has included not only a retreat from gospel fundamentals but also sound Baptist ecclesiology. Northern, now American, Baptists had 700,000 enrolled in Sunday school in 1894 and have gained only 200,000 in 60 years; but Southern Baptists, numbering 400,000 in Sunday school in 1894, have gained 6,200,000 in the same period."

Joined with the separative character of this particular concern for ecclesiological and theological purity is the curious idea, reflected in the foregoing quotation, that pyramiding statistics are to be interpreted as the smile of God upon the Southern Baptist enterprise. If rapid growth is taken as the sign of divine approval upon the life and faith of the denomination, then to court alliances with other groups is to be disloyal to the Southern Baptist stewardship. Our "success" in going it alone constitutes a divine mandate to continue our single course. If a denomination interprets "success" as divine approval, and then defines "success" in terms of uncriticized norms, it has found a justification for separation and division until such time as this kind of success, perhaps as an act of divine providence, is brought to an end.

I have mentioned some of the things which I believe divide us. But I should not like to close on a negative note.

There are many Southern Baptists who pray for the larger Christian fellowship and who lament the tragic divisions which mar that fellowship. There are many Southern Baptist organizational men who in spirit are much larger than the programs which they espouse with such zeal and self-sacrificing devotion. We have a vast reservoir of secular minded, half-committed laymen who furnish a counterfoil to

fanaticism, and to this group the drum-thumping, band-wagon, program-
pushing zeal of the doctrinaire denominationalists is viewed with
incredulity, if not with amusement. In the multitudes composing this
group there is a great spiritual hunger which leaves them open to a
broader vision of the Gospel than can be held within the framework of
a narrow denominationalism.

With this group should be noted another--the quiet and in-
articulate devout, a host of men and women whose Christian piety is as
genuine as it is naive, and whose spirit of good will enfolds all
Christian brethren, of whatever name. In the Southern Baptist denomina-
tion, as in other groups of Christians, there is much human wastage, but
also a wealth of diverse and impressive attainments and abilities. There
is a growing group of pastors who are courageous, informed, dedicated,
articulate, and irenic in spirit. The Southern Baptist system, whatever
it is, is cross-fertilized, modified, and diversified by other factors
and forces which permeate our people, bringing both errors and authentic
insights in their train.

Best of all, the Lord of the one church calls us to a unity
of spirit and a unity of fellowship which are the birthright and the
challenge of all those who belong to Him and belong to each other as
Christian brethren.

Our problems are great, and perhaps our divisions are deep,
but we can work at their solution with genuine hope.

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IV. WHAT UNITES US -- AMERICAN BAPTIST VIEWTHINGS THAT UNITE US

Edward Hughes Pruden

I come to you today, speaking informally against the background of various experiences, and out of deep conviction regarding this matter. I feel a bit awkward in appearing before you as a representative of the American Baptist Convention since I have been struggling for twenty-five years to be thoroughly loyal to both conventions, and to be an interpreter between the two in the hope that by such interpretation, all of us might be drawn more closely together.

I'm sure that the addresses we have been hearing this afternoon have illustrated some of the things we have in common and some of the things which bind us together, and if the individual speakers had not been introduced and you had not known their names and places of service, you would have had difficulty knowing which came from the North and which from the South. I am quite sure that this is true, not only of this group gathered here, but also true of a much larger group that we represent here this afternoon.

Among the things that we have in common is a wide variety of misconceptions regarding one another to which reference has already been made. Over and over again as I have visited various parts of our country, I have heard these misconceptions expressed, and have sought an opportunity to throw some light upon the situations under discussion, and to create a much more profound understanding of the circumstances out of which such rumors and misconceptions grow. I recall, for instance, that during the days when our American Baptist Convention was having theological difficulties, I attended a session of the Southern Convention in Memphis. Going from my hotel to the convention hall, I shared a cab with some men I did not know. I sat on the front seat and could not help but overhear the conversation of the men in the back seat as they began talking of the controversy in the north. Finally, one of them said, "What is behind it all?", and another replied, "The missionaries do not accept the virgin birth of Christ and neither does the foreign mission board that appoints them." At that point, I felt it necessary to turn around and introduce myself. At that time I was serving on the Foreign Mission Board of the American Baptist Convention and I knew from personal experience something of the situation which had created the controversy which was troubling us. I explained to my traveling companions that the difficulty was not over belief in the virgin birth, but over the matter of signing creeds; that the virgin birth had been a matter about which a great deal has been said, but that this was only one of a number of doctrinal matters included in a creedal statement submitted to all of us on the Foreign Mission Board for our signature. When we met to consider this matter, I distinctly remember that Dr. Latourette of Yale, who was also on the Board, said that as he read the doctrinal statement there was not a great deal with which he would disagree; he might express it differently

here and there; but he said that substantially it expressed his own faith. "However," he said, "if I am going to begin signing creeds, I might as well unite with a creed-signing communion. One of the things," he said, "that has inspired me as a Christian during my years as a teacher, and as a member of our denomination, has been our individual freedom to discover God's truth in His word and to express that truth as we feel led by the Holy Spirit." I also made a similar statement, mentioning that when Jesus sent the seventy out on that historic mission, he gave them very minute instructions as to what they should take with them, what they should leave at home, how they should conduct themselves on the way, and how they should relate themselves to people on the journey. "Now," I said, "by the wildest stretch of your imagination, can you imagine that after they had started to leave, Jesus said, 'Just a moment, I overlooked one point. Do you believe that I was born of a virgin?'" I then added that I had never had difficulty with the doctrine of the virgin birth myself but that since Jesus did not seem to require acceptance of this doctrine as a test of service, I could not conscientiously do so. Most of the candidates going out from our Foreign Mission Boards are young people whose theological opinions are incomplete, and which should be incomplete until they find confirmation in vital personal experience. The matter, then, which almost caused a serious split in our fellowship in the North was not a matter of doctrinal orthodoxy; it was a matter of our historic Baptist principle of freedom and individual responsibility.

I may say on the other hand, that we also have in common an open-minded, teachable spirit among our people which is responsive to the larger and more profound implications of the Christian faith. My congregation is overwhelmingly Southern, as Dr. Cranford's is, and as is true of every Baptist congregation in this city, but I have never encountered any serious difficulty in leading my people in ecumenical cooperation and participation. In fact, some of the most enthusiastic people in my congregation in ecumenical matters are those who have come from southern churches. The same could be said regarding the race question and other matters of social concern. When our deacons felt that the time had come when they should go beyond the clear statements of our church covenant and constitution, and take some definite stand that might not be misunderstood on the reception of members regardless of race, it was a Mississippi deacon who moved that this should be done. Both of our conventions have a vast potential of spiritual growth and expression which we have not yet utilized.

We also have in common the historic Baptist heritage which is not the sole possession of any one branch of our denomination but which belongs to all of us. This past summer while on an extended leave in Europe I was impressed again with the place which men like Bunyan, Carey and MacLaren have in the life of the Christian world, and was reminded that the heritage which they left us is not an American Baptist or Southern Baptist or British Baptist heritage, but a heritage which is our common possession and which should stand always before us as a tremendous inspiration. Dr. Hugh Mackintosh of Edinburgh once said to me that he considered Dr. Alexander MacLaren to have been the most

versatile man he had ever known; that he could have held almost any chair in a university; and that he brought all of this vast knowledge to bear upon his expositions of Holy Scripture. Dr. Mackintosh, who was probably the most able and best known of all English-speaking theologians in his day, said that when he first started out in the ministry, and was ready to prepare a sermon, he would consult MacLaren first, but then he felt helpless to go any further, for it seemed that everything had been said that could be said. Later, he said, he decided to do all that he could do first, and then to consult MacLaren last for any suggestions that he might be able to make. We need to make more of the great heroes of our faith who have made tremendous contributions to the world of Christian thought and biblical interpretation.

We have in common, too, our American beginnings in the Rhode Island colony and the revolutionary principle enunciated by Roger Williams. While Williams may not have remained a Baptist in the sense in which we would use the term today, nevertheless he set in motion an influence which we have counted it our great honor and privilege to defend and perpetuate through the years. Sometime ago the Minister of Cults of the State of Israel visited Washington. As you perhaps know, only the Orthodox Jewish rabbis are permitted to preach in Israel, and yet one of the Reformed rabbis of Washington, Rabbi Gerstenfeld, had this Israeli visitor in his home as a guest, and invited a number of us to meet him. As he went around the room introducing those representing various communions, he finally came to me and said to his guest, "This man is a Baptist". The Israeli minister paused for a moment, and as wrinkles appeared on his brow, he said, "So you're a Baptist"? and I said, "Yes". "Well," he said, "We don't have many Baptists in Israel, but those we have are really giving us a rough time." I said, "In what way?" "By publishing the works of Roger Williams," he replied, "especially those that advocate religious freedom and the separation of church and state; and this is creating lots of dissatisfaction among our people." Rabbi Gerstenfeld said, "Good for them"! And then I recalled that Rabbi Gerstenfeld had named one of his sons Roger Williams Gerstenfeld because he recognized how much this great man of our colonial period had meant to minority groups and their rights in a pluralistic society.

We have in common also our missionary pioneers who are honored today by Christians of all communions. In this period of our Jubilee Celebration, and in our preparation for the Jubilee Year, we have been hearing more and more about Adoniram Judson and his contribution to our early missionary history. Several years ago when I was a student at Yale, I heard Mrs. Honore Wiltsie Morrow tell how she came to write her book on Judson, *SPLENDOR OF GOD*. She was an Episcopalian and a very gifted writer. She was requested by Mrs. George Caleb Moore, who at that time was connected with the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Board, to write a mission study book based on the life of an outstanding home missionary. She gathered together a number of books, put them in a clothes basket, and sent them over to Mrs. Morrow's home. In some strange way, a copy of the life of Judson got into that clothes basket by mistake. When Mrs. Morrow came to that book and began reading the life of Judson,

and saw the steel engraving of his picture, she said that she just couldn't move on to someone else. Judson's life was such a gripping story, and he seemed to be such a tremendous personality, that she completely forgot the request that Mrs. Moore had made for a home missionary book and she began doing research on the life of Judson, research which finally took her to the library of the British Museum in London. She said she had finally come to the conclusion that Adoniram Judson was one of the three or four truly great men that America had produced. She said her grandfather was an intimate friend of Emerson's, and that as a child she remembered Emerson visiting in their home, but she said that Judson had a mind just as great as Emerson's and that he did more with it. This is a part of our heritage which in these days of division should be drawing us more closely together.

We have also in common our Triennial Convention which was organized in 1814 to channel our missionary support to the new missionaries we had adopted. We have the various missionary endeavors which at one time or another have been sponsored jointly by our two conventions. I had the great privilege years ago of teaching for a year at the University of Shanghai which for a generation had been supported jointly by Northern and Southern Baptists. Our publication house at Shanghai was supported by both. There was a feeling of understanding then that we have lost in some areas today, and which we need to recapture.

We have in common the fellowship we enjoy in the Baptist World Alliance, and more and more this organization is drawing our people together from the ends of the earth and helping them to see the unity which, in many instances, they have ignored. We have our Joint Committee on Public Affairs; and now the Jubilee observance which is upon us. We have the dually affiliated congregations in a number of cities across the central portion of the United States. All of the churches in the District of Columbia are working together within our District of Columbia Baptist Convention which is organized as a State Convention, and as a State Convention is affiliated with both of our National Conventions. Technically then, all of our churches in the District of Columbia have a relationship to both of our major conventions. Some, of course, have one type of program and some another, and still others a combination of the two. A few churches designate some of their money, but for the most part we have a harmonious relationship of the two conventions in the District of Columbia. We do not have the rivalry and the feeling of competition which exists in many other areas of our nation; and certainly we have certain obligations and spiritual privileges to perform together which can be done more effectively in unity than they can be done separately.

I was in a meeting not long ago in which a wide variety of Baptist groups were represented, and one layman, with a great deal of earnestness, and without realizing how it sounded to some of the other Baptists who were present, told of a large group of Baptist laymen from

Mississippi who had gone as missionaries up into Montana last summer. As he talked in glowing terms of their experiences, I couldn't help but watch the expression of the American Baptist officials who were present, and the speaker didn't seem to realize that he was saying a thing that was embarrassing to them. Then he said, "Next summer we are going to double the number and see if we can't get twelve to fourteen hundred Mississippi laymen, and other laymen in the southern areas, to go up into the northwestern states." Finally, pointing to Dr. Ernest Payne, the secretary of the British Baptist Union, and, incidentally, the vice-chairman of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, he said, "We have written Dr. Payne to see if we can't send a delegation of Mississippi laymen to England to help them in their work." When he got through, there was a sense of embarrassment on all sides, and after a pause, I suggested that we certainly should encourage our laymen to do everything they could possibly do to serve Christ; we didn't want to throw a cold blanket on any of their enthusiasm or their good intentions; but that any program of helpfulness should be a reciprocal thing, and that if the Mississippi brethren felt that there were ways in which they could help the English brethren, I was quite sure there were also ways in which the English brethren could help some of the Mississippi brethren. This experience points up the fact that there are certain things we can do together, and should be doing together, rather than upon a competitive basis, or in response to a feeling that we have the total answer to all the world's great problems.

While we are thankful to be here, we can't feel too proud of ourselves when we remember that such a meeting as this is long overdue. What a tragedy it is that we should be sitting here on this particular afternoon discussing how Baptists can get together when some of our fellow countrymen are out feverishly gathering together groceries to store up in the event of an atomic war which threatens because of political divisions. If we who are Christians can't show a divided world how to get together, then it seems to me that we have failed in our major responsibility.

WHAT UNITES US -- SOUTHERN BAPTIST VIEWTHE THINGS THAT UNITE US

William Lumpkin

In speaking of the things which unite the Baptists of our land, there is obviously no inclination to gloss over the differences among Baptist churches nor to ignore the remarkable variety of their life. In view of their traditional emphasis upon freedom, individual competency, and local autonomy, it is inevitable that variety should be a feature of their corporate life.

This variety was evident as soon as Baptists began to appear in considerable numbers in 17th century England. Various adjectives were employed to distinguish among the shades of opinions held by Baptists, but these distinctions did not always indicate separate party lines nor barriers to fellowship. There were General Baptists, Particular Baptists, Seventh-Day Baptists, Six-Principle Baptists, Military Baptists, Fifth Monarchy Baptists, and Open Communion Baptists in the London of 1660. They knew how to live together; Particular and Seventh-Day Baptists, e.g., sometimes used the same places of worship. The several groups often collaborated in issuing public statements. Moreover, the several groups were conscious of the inner unity of the Baptist movement. Freedom and a sense of Gospel stewardship were hallmarks of the Baptists from the beginning.

American and Southern Baptists, with less serious differences than those existing among Commonwealth-Period British Baptist groups, ought to be conscious of their larger unity. Any survey of the things that unite us must include the following considerations.

I. OUR COMMON DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

Baptist beginnings in both North and South are traceable to the same or similar sources. By the time of the Revolutionary Period and the beginning of our national life, Baptists were already in possession of a distinct national consciousness. Inter-associational correspondence and the linking of hands in the struggle for religious liberty were two principal features of the denominational spirit. Then, everyone knows how the initiation of the foreign missions movement challenged the interest of our churches in all areas and led to the formation of a general convention of the Baptist denomination in the United States in 1814. When sectional rivalries arose and disagreement appeared concerning policies of the national home and foreign missions societies, in the 1840s, leaders in the South set about to organize a separate Foreign Mission Society. The result was the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention, at Augusta. The Southern leaders sought to form a new convention; they had no intention of forming a new denomination.

The call for a convention in Augusta in 1845 was issued by the

Virginia Baptist Foreign Mission Society and addressed to "the Baptist Denomination of the United States generally." This State Society specifically denied that the call was for "a merely sectional convention." It was designed as a meeting for all who were "aggrieved" by recent decisions of the Foreign Mission Board in Boston. Even when the new convention proved to be regional in character, it did not discourage a free interchange of ministers and members between churches of the North and the South. The marked denominational consciousness which has been developing in recent years, especially in the South, threatens to distort the facts of our common denominational history. Who dares to deny that Roger Williams and Dr. John Clark were spiritual pioneers to whom all American Baptists are indebted? Who can forget that Isaac Backus and John Leland were "Apostles of Liberty" for all of us wherever they lived and labored? Who can deny the fact that the greatest infusion of quickening power ever to bless the South came from Connecticut in the persons of Shubael Stearns, Daniel Marshall, and their followers, all products of the Northern Great Awakening. And who will be so blind as to say that the current surge of Southern Baptist life into the North is simply the result of a desire for denominational expansion and not also the consequence of holy zeal for the salvation of men and the carrying out of the Great Commission?

II. OUR COMMON THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Theological differences may be discerned between Baptists of North and South, but also among Baptists of any particular state. What is more important is that we have a common theological background and heritage. Baptists of the two regions have a common confessional heritage. The great Baptist confession of our early life in America was the Philadelphia Confession, which was essentially the old Assembly Confession of British Particular Baptists of 1689. The popularity of this confession went far toward determining that the dominant theological position of American Baptists would be Calvinistic rather than Arminian in theology. Later, after 1833, in response to a changing theological climate, the New Hampshire Confession became the popular doctrinal summary for churches all over the country. Although fashioned in a northern state, its influence in the South was probably greater than in the North. However, strongly Calvinistic views persisted in the South more than in the North. Still it could be said that Baptists of all sections of the country have generally preferred the Calvinistic framework for their theology, and a modified Calvinistic system. While it is true that the liberal movement in theology made greater progress in the North than in the South during the 1920s and 30s, while the South continued stoutly conservative in that period, it appears today that a reaction against extreme liberalism is fairly general everywhere. But differences of theological opinion can be found in most sections of the land, and unitary views of doctrine cannot be identified with either North or South.

III. OUR COMMON ECCLESIOLOGY

The greatest single contribution of Baptists to the thought life of the Christian Movement may well be in the area of ecclesiology and

church order. Our understanding of the churches as spiritual, voluntary, free, autonomous, interdependent, and missionary is one which the great groups of American Baptists hold in common. Moreover, this is a view of the church which we believe is sorely needed in our time. In the face of grim materialistic and pagan forces which press in upon the churches, all of Christendom needs to know what the church of Jesus Christ is. In both North and South we have resisted tendencies towards centralization of authority and the rise of sacramentalism. We still believe in the Church. We need to share that belief. To be sure, there are differences of organization and procedure among us, but we have a common ecclesiology, based upon the nature of the Church and the significance of the individual believer.

IV. OUR COMMON TASK.

Regionalism has no place when there is need for an overall strategy for ministering the Gospel to our nation and the world. The extraordinary times in which we are living require a grand strategy. We are together engaged in evangelizing the masses and building New Testament churches. We are together concerned to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Baptists North and Baptists South need each other in facing the formidable task of evangelizing the cities of our urbanized society. The great metropolitan areas of America are strongholds of the Roman Catholic church, but they can scarcely be said to be strongholds of Baptist strength. The cities provide cultural, economic, political, and social leadership for the whole country. We cannot afford to give them up. It is the concern of the rural South as well as the industrial North that the cities be won for Christ. At home and in foreign lands there is duplication of effort on the part of the Baptists of our two Conventions. There can be no doubt that greater unity and comprehensiveness would characterize our work if we were one body organizationally.

In 1879 an official messenger of the Southern Convention attended the Northern anniversaries and gave as his apology for the separate existence of the Southern Convention the following: "It is because we can accomplish more for the cause of Christ when left to ourselves." Whatever was the case in 1879, we are convinced that we cannot today accomplish more for the cause of Christ when left to ourselves. Just the opposite is true, according to our understanding.

Beyond these four major areas of unity, several details might be mentioned separately. It is my belief that we are united in our desire for better regional relations between the two Conventions and among the churches of the two areas. Inter-conventional relations have deteriorated during the past two decades. A wall of increasing thickness is rising between the Baptists of the two areas and Conventions. Our people who are thinking about the matter are convinced that this is a sad state of affairs. The name Baptist is enough of a denomination designation. We can only become more widely separated denominationally while one group claims a national title and the other a regional one, neither of which is really accurate.

All of us will agree that the issues of 1845 are gone. We are now united in our need of each other. We need once again a free interchange of ideas and procedural methods. We need a free flow of ideas along reopened channels of communication. We need to stand together with visible solidarity in the struggle for maintenance of religious liberty and separation of church and state. We must do all in our power to see that the Baptist Mission is accomplished in our generation. This mission, we believe, is most likely to be accomplished by striking down the artificial barriers which stand between our two Conventions. The secret of our unity is still that we are one people under God.

The reflections of the group members on these questions seem to indicate a lack of agreement as to the purpose of the Church. There was a strong indication as to an absence of the meaning of the words as the purpose of evangelism as to its practice in some areas. As to the discussion within the group itself, there seemed to be no real consensus factors involved which could not be overcome with a minimum of effort on both questions. The problem that developed here with "how could the two Conventions be brought to face the fact that such problems do exist in areas where ABC and SAC churches exist?"

A suggestion was proposed and generally agreed upon that the "white paper" idea be recommended to both Conventions and that the Basic Organizations of both Conventions do a thorough study of these overlapping situations where they exist; that they report all of the pertinent facts and make these facts available to the constituents of both Conventions. It was also recommended that this study involve not only the members of the administrative area but that it be done in cooperation with the "grass roots" level as well. Furthermore, this work was to be carried out as a collaborative effort.

The spiritual focus of the approach in the entire group was one of healthy "Christian-liberalism." It indicated that the purpose of unity should be the result of the love of God and not from pragmatic needs.

It was generally suggested that the educational materials would go a long way in leading the constituents of both Conventions into a spirit of closer relationship and unity of effort. Here would be opened to constructive dialogue that would maintain an understanding of each other.

There seemed to be a strongly-expressed hope that other conferences could be held to plan together and to bring in contacts of interest where joint action could be taken.

There was a general desire to have more laymen participate in such conferences as these, and to bring the discussions to concrete terms where they would wish to participate. The idea was advanced that perhaps if we expanded our respective Conventions to greater unity, the force of power should be felt at the "grass roots" level. This must be accomplished before we can expect the Conventions to take action.

VI. REPORTS OF DISCUSSION GROUPS

BAPTIST UNITY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

Temple Bennett

This discussion group was begun on the idea of free exchange of opinions regarding the unity problems at the local level. All of the mainstream of thought dealt with the problem of "What can be done to gain better understanding and an improved sense of 'togetherness' when ABC and SBC churches are in the same immediate area?" and "What negotiations are possible?" The reflections of the group members on these questions seem to indicate a lack of agreement as to the purpose of the Church. There was a strong indication as to an absence of the meeting of the minds on the purpose of evangelism as to its practice in some areas. As to the discussion within the group itself, there seemed to be no troublesome factors involved which could not be overcome with a minimum of effort on both questions. The problem that developed dealt with "How could the two Conventions be brought to face the fact that such problems do exist in areas where ABC and SBC churches exist?"

A suggestion was proposed and generally agreed upon that the "white paper" idea be recommended to both Conventions and that the Home Mission organizations of both Conventions do a thorough study of these overlapping situations where they exist; that they report all of the pertinent facts and make these facts available to the constituents of both Conventions. It was also recommended that this study involve not only the eschelons of the administrative area but that it be done in cooperation with the "grass roots" level as well. Furthermore, this work was to be carried out as a collaborate effort.

The spiritual tenor of the approach by the entire group was one of healthy "Christ-likeness." It indicated that the purpose of unity should be the result of the love of Christ and not from pragmatic need.

It was generally suggested that the educational materials could go a long way in leading the constituents of both Conventions into a spirit of closer relationship and unity of effort. Here areas could be opened to constructive dialogue that would nurture an understanding of each other.

There seemed to be a strongly-expressed hope that other conferences could be held to plan together and to bring in centers of interest where joint action could be taken.

There was a general desire to have more laymen participate in such conferences as these, and to bring the discussions to concrete terms where they would wish to participate. The idea was advanced that perhaps if we expected our respective Conventions to create unity, the force of power should be felt at the "grass roots" level. This must be accomplished before we can expect the Conventions to take notice.

All of the discussion was not on an idealistic level. The group was fully aware such an undertaking requires time and edifying preparation. The group members were concerned about how the pastors in both Conventions would take the idea of a committee on unity. They felt an exchange of pulpits across convention lines was essential to promoting this effort.

It appeared that all participating in this discussion group felt that it had been an elevating experience. Many thoughts were expressed concerning which time did not permit further investigation.

As leader of this particular group, I feel that much more can be accomplished by the working out of a planned agenda for discussion and perhaps by having some of the administrative personnel of the respective Conventions present. I believe further exploration to be both possible and beneficial to both Conventions.

As it has been demonstrated within the context of this whole meeting, there are capable men who take what is being done here, in the areas of a better cooperative effort, as a matter of grave concern. If we may take these expressed attitudes as a license to proceed, our time has been well spent, and there is much yet to be done.

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THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

W. Emory Trainham

I begin by observing that if there could be as much agreement among those Southern and American Baptists not attending this Unity Conference as there was agreement among the two discussion groups on theological differences, then organic union of our two major bodies could take place almost immediately.

There seemed to be agreement that we can discern theological differences in each Convention and among all Baptists, but no more than that which exists in any local church of the South and North. It was observed that American Baptists are talking theology and writing it down more now than ever before. Southern Baptists have fewer theological voices, and much less talk. These voices are restricted by intolerance, prejudice, and provincialism. Traditional beliefs and institutional authority have usurped the more wholesome theological voice of the New Testament, and we have purchased a cheap grace and a cheap theology. In the South it is not so much a problem of "what" theology as it is "no" theology.

Neither Convention seems to have a characteristic theological position, no uniform theological system. Southern Baptists may have a slight edge over American Baptists as to the variety of theological positions. As one group member put it: "Southern Baptists have esta-

blished a 45-degree-to-the-right-of-center on everything that comes up." So much of what is done in the South is pragmatic and functional and theology gets pushed aside.

There seems to be much more tolerance, more diversity and more theology in the North. The theology of the North is objective, and the South is subjective. In the South there is a great emphasis on methodology, and man's egotism and economical security seem to make his theology a "front" for sanctioning his actions. He seems to have a real sense of mission, but there has been practically no theological education among the laity to explain this mission theologically.

It was further seriously observed that the "Landmarkism" of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Convention is responsible for the expansion into the North, and has in the name of Evangelism contributed to dissension and separation between the two Conventions.

The one great need to which all agreed is that there be a concerted effort on the part of both Conventions to "find Church;" to educate Baptist constituents concerning the true "nature of the Church." All else, theologically speaking, is dependent upon this re-examination and re-orientation of the mission to which we are committed to witness.

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Southern and American Baptists and
the Ecumenical Movement Today

Thomas G. Harris

Many of the conclusions reached in the discussion on racial integration in our churches to some degree reveal the progress made in ecumenical relationships. Considering the involvements of American and Southern Baptist churches in ecumenical movements, the discussion groups in our conference spoke more of cooperative Christianity than ecumenicity. Although our American Baptist Convention cooperates actively in the National and World Councils of Churches, much of this organizational interest is not reflected in the local congregation, nor in state conventions. To say that all American Baptist churches cooperate in and with the N.C.C. and W.C.C. and all Southern Baptist churches refuse to cooperate in these or any other cooperative organization would be false.

No blame is to be laid at the doors of our Southern Baptist churches because they have refused to unite with super-organizational ecumenical structures. In the states of Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, and others there is cooperation on both the local church and state levels with other Christian bodies. To infer that all American Baptist churches cooperate beyond the point of cooperative movements in local and state councils of churches would be erroneous. Membership by the American Baptist Convention does not mean membership by the convention churches in either the N.C.C. or W.C.C., and in this regard there appears

to be a plateau of equanimity in both conventions. Even as overtures of racial toleration and integration have been made in the northern states without at the same time conveying a true sense of Christian brotherhood, so too in the South, although many of these same overtures have not as yet been heard, there is the same degree of toleration and understanding in the minds and hearts of many. To cooperate in a large organization without first securing a level of cooperative Christianity on the local area of faith is a threat to fine cooperative movements in the future.

Are Baptists so strong that they need no other relationships than with Baptist bodies? Can the cause of Christ be served only by those who cling to the traditions and destiny of the Baptist movement? Even as fears of comity arrangements and "modernism" keep American and Southern Baptists divided, will the fear of super-church and Baptist liberties lost keep our churches without the fold of the ecumenical movement? The sincere feeling of this conference as revealed in discussion was that the Baptists of America should carry their beliefs and doctrines into the ecumenical movements. Means of telling the story of cooperative Christianity in areas where fears of cooperation are deep-rooted should be the task of both Conventions. Participation of the great Baptist laity in ecumenical discussions and considerations should be encouraged.

If this conference has revealed to the members represented here this day that the fears and skeletons of misunderstanding between Baptists of the American and Southern conventions are not sufficient cause to perpetuate future animosity and segregation of ministries, then can we fail in fostering a climate in both of our conventions that will reveal the great need in the ecumenical movement for our Baptist witness? Dr. Norman Maring questioned the discussion group as to their feelings toward the ecumenical movement by stating the Apostle Paul's defense of Christian unity as revealed in I Corinthians 1: 13, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Our reaction to this question, as was the group's, must be assuredly negative. But what of our attitude toward other Christian bodies. . . . or must we describe them as "bodies?" Is Christ divided by our fears and our pride? Let us as Baptists unite first in our common effort to make the Gospel known to all men through our witness, but let us not forget that without our participation, through neglect or default or any other excuse, the body of Christ has been, is, and will be divided.

Cultural Differences

E. Hugh Ragland

A total of 26 people attended the two discussion groups on Cultural Differences. It was pointed out that any discussion of this type should be prefaced by an understanding of the meaning of culture. This was not dealt with technically but time was given to the more basic question, Do Cultural Differences Exist? There was some attempt to list

certain differences followed by limited discussion. It was agreed that cultural differences do exist and these differences enter into the total problem of unity between the American and Southern Conventions. Most valuable help came from those present who had lived in both regions and have been members of churches in both Conventions.

The general cultural life of people cannot be separated from church life especially in the South where there are more rural churches and the church is the social center for family and community life.

Population in the South is more homogeneous which accounts in part for the successful and more spectacular growth of the church. This is in contrast to work among more diverse and multiple ethnic groups in the North.

Cultural interests are frequently reflected in the formality or informality of the worship service. The less formal appearance is generally found in the Southern Churches where the emotional factor is more pronounced. It was brought out that the American Convention has pioneered in new evangelistic efforts while in the average Southern Baptist church the annual revival continues to be the more desired method.

It was felt that there has been a stronger emphasis on a trained and educated ministry in the American Convention which has resulted in less emotionalism and more thorough preaching habits. This same trend was seen developing in the South because of a new emphasis on education in general.

The racial problem cannot be ignored in the cultural patterns of both regions. The color line has been crossed in individual churches in both Conventions. This was viewed as more of a local problem and perhaps not as much of a barrier to unity between the two Conventions as might be expected.

In these discussions perhaps no new truth was discovered or no concrete decisions reached, but the prevailing attitude was that it is good to share our thoughts in hopes they will lead to a greater understanding and appreciation of the concerns and problems among all Baptists.

Cultural Differences

E. Hugh Kagland

A total of 28 people attended the two discussion groups on Cultural Differences. It was pointed out that any discussion of this type should be prefaced by an understanding of the meaning of culture. This was not dealt with technically but time was given to the more basic question, Do Cultural Differences Exist? There was some attempt to list

VII. THE GENERAL PANEL DISCUSSION

1. Dr. Norman Maring:

The first question here is: "Is there no true denominationalism? Are we not united as one body in Christ?" Second: "Why do we need a physical unity or an organizational unity? Are we equating the church with the Kingdom of God?" The third part is: "Will not Protestant mergers lead to other ecumenical mergers making reconciliation with Rome an ultimate?" Four - "Are we not to fear a one world church as we would fear a one world government or should we not fear the latter at all?"

Now those in a sense, I think, are good questions. They are the kinds of questions that people do express when they are a little suspicious, or unacquainted with the ecumenical movement and its various expressions. Is there no such thing as true denominationalism? I should say there is. The place to begin when we talk about the church, though, is to ask ourselves what we understand by the nature of the church as it is portrayed in the scriptures and, as I see it when we go there, the primary thing is the church which is the people of God. Though we have often, and partly under the influence of the Landmarkers, concluded that the local church is the primary thing and you add them up and you get some kind of an abstraction called the church. It seems to me that is not the way the New Testament approaches it. It is talking about a people whom God is calling and sending, and the local churches are expressions of that church in a particular place, but you start with the church and it is one church and it does have one Lord and one Saviour. If you begin with that church, then it has unity. If the church is really one, isn't it as important that it express in its visible institutional forms a unity. Is it enough to say we have a unity even though we don't seem to have one? The effect of the divided church is to confuse people, to give people who are looking for an excuse, just one more excuse for not listening to what we have to say. Now I should say that it is imperative that we have as much of an outward unity as possible. What form that will take may be open to question. Whether it means that we should have one church, I don't know, I rather think not, and that leads to the question - Is there a true denominationalism?

Yes. The term "denomination" implies that we recognize that we are a part of the one church of Christ, but we have come to certain conscientious convictions, insights which we believe have been given to us of God. If we simply merged with other people, we are afraid these might be lost sight of because their emphasis does not allow room for this. Therefore, we have to exist in order to maintain this kind of witness and to be faithful to what we understand to be God's will. That doesn't mean that any one group feels that it has a monopoly on things. Our early Baptist fathers in writing confessions seemed almost apologetic sometimes saying, "We're sorry that we have to pull out and be independent from others in our organization but we are writing these things to show you how much we have in common and to show at the same time the

points of emphasis which we feel that we must preserve as a part of our witness." So there is room for true denominationalism and I should say it would probably be a very dangerous thing to have just one church because of our tendencies to pretension and arrogance. It's a good thing to have somebody else to criticize and judge, but to say there is room for denominations doesn't mean that there is room for 250. There just aren't that many differences for 50 or 25 even - there is room for some basic differences to be expressed, but the number of these basic differences is pretty limited and I think we ought to have as few as possible to maintain these particular points of emphasis; and where there have to be denominations, we feel we must exist as denominations. We ought then to be related to each other in some kind of federation like a national council or world council so that we say that even though we are a denomination, we recognize we are a part of something bigger, and on practical matters we cooperate together and we continue through our study group to explore our differences and our agreements, and we're going to give just as much of a united witness to the world to declare to the world that we are one in Jesus Christ as we possibly can. As to where this would lead eventually, I don't know; whether it would lead to a merger with the Roman Catholic Church, I'm quite sure it wouldn't, though I'm willing to leave that question open and to God's leading us where He will. I know that having had a good many explorations with Roman Catholics in recent years, there is a great deal of misunderstanding among us and I'm glad we're making a beginning, a place where we can talk together and explore differences; but after the differences have been cleared away, you get down to bed-rock and find there are basic fundamental differences that would have to undergo changes that I wouldn't expect to take place. I'm not afraid that this will lead to a merger with the Roman Catholic Church in the foreseeable future, and I don't think we ought to use that kind of fear to keep us out of cooperative endeavors with other Protestants.

2. Dr. Samuel Hill:

My first question is a related one - namely - "What is the relation of the Baptist Church to the Protestant Church?" I suppose it is the Southern Baptist in me that causes me to suggest the question might well be put - What is the relation of the Baptist denomination to the Protestant Church? It was asked so that it would only be a Southern Baptist who would like to split that particular hair and I would not do so with any strong spirit at all. But what is the relation of the Baptist denomination or the Baptist tradition to the Protestant Church?

The term Protestant technically, historically refers only to the Lutherans. The Lutherans were dubbed Protestants in 1529 and it was the term some scorned disapproval in 1529, but virtually all non-Roman Catholic Christians had been willing for this term Protestant to subsume their particular expressions of Protestantism; and among the major non-Roman groups, the Southern Baptists have been about the only ones who have demerged and they had not always demerged. Indeed they had done so only since the full impact of the Landmark movement of the middle nineteenth

century took its toll and of course, to this day in the more liberal states like Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina there are a good many Southern Baptists, in fact most Southern Baptists, who would not object at all to the use of the word Protestant in description of them. Now the relation of the Baptist Church or tradition to the Protestant Church or tradition at large is this: We are simply one big denomination; as Dr. Maring has been saying, one sub-naming, if you will, of the large non-Roman Catholic Christian body and we ought not in any way to be offended by the use of this term. It is quite a proper general term to subsume our group and other groups. We are one variety, one sub-naming, one denomination of Protestants who appeared in England for the first time around 1609-10 and we came into existence not to counteract the Protestant witness, not to be another brand new altogether isolated variety of Christianity. We came into being as one sub-section of the general Protestant tradition. We felt, as Dr. Maring also just pointed out, that we had something worth saying and we were often apologetic about appearing to further divide, but we had something worth saying and so we said it and it took a new denomination of sorts to accomplish our saying this. In short, our relation is an intricate one and there is no historical reason, nor, so far as I can tell, any theological reason for which we should flinch at all at being called Protestants. We are very much a part of this tradition, happily so, and ought to acknowledge this in every possible way.

3. Dr. James Tull:

Now my question is, "What effect will the race problem impose upon this unity?" I don't know exactly which unity here is contemplated. I would say that right now I believe among Southern Baptists the race question has not been insinuated into this particular issue. When I hear Southern Baptists talk about union or unity with American Baptists, and I have not heard much discussion on the question, the race question has not been mentioned. Also, in the writings of some of our extremists among our denomination, the extreme Landmarkers, the issues that are brought out as barriers to union are not located here in the race problem. They are more concerned with what I described yesterday as ecclesiological and theological cures. Now I think that if we do get a move started to unite or to form a deeper unity (let's say between our respective Conventions, respective groups) this issue is quite likely to be brought in.

It's like the old mission movement. There weren't any anti-missionaries until the mission movement got started. As one Baptist historian said, most Baptists were simply old missionaries. I think that one deep psychological factor which we have to contend with all the time is the rationalization of the possessional. If you have opposition crystalized, let's say against unity, then those who defend this separative possession will bring in everything in the world they can find to justify it. I would envision the possibility that this race question will likely be brought in, but right now I don't think it's an issue. It is, of course, a tremendous issue. I would like to say further, however, that one great reason for hope on my part is that all of our six theo-

logical seminaries in the Southern Baptist Convention have been integrated. To be sure, there is only a token integration. We had the most difficult job in our own seminary because Southeastern Seminary is located in a small town and this accentuated the problem. We do have them integrated though, and here you have Southern Baptists taking this action. Furthermore, I would say that the young ministers who are graduating from our seminaries now are pretty overwhelmingly rather liberal on this particular issue. They believe that it doesn't make any sense not to be real brothers in Christ in the fullest sense. Now implementing this in a convention is a different question. Many of them who get out into conservative churches feel pressured, and perhaps succumb to the pressure, but they do have the conviction and it is good for men to have convictions. Furthermore, we are beginning to see among Southern Baptists the relevance of this whole question to the gospel. When I graduated from the seminary at Louisville in 1941, we didn't even have a department of Christian Ethics. We do now, and I think we have Christian ethics taught, not to say, of course, that we didn't have ethical questions discussed before. Many Southern Baptists have never seen the relevance of the race issue to their Christian witness. Southern Baptists repudiated the social gospel movement, and it has only been in recent years that we have come to see that the Gospel is relevant to every social issue. We don't see it fully yet but we're on our way, and the young men who are going through our seminaries are having this fact brought to their attention. Now I still haven't answered the question. - What effect will the race problem impose upon this unity? Perhaps I'd better say I don't know.

4. Dr. William Lumpkin:

I have two questions before me which I believe can be dealt with at once. The first one is rather lengthy in statement. The writer believes "(a) that whatever differences exist in faith, practice, doctrine or theology, are minor; (b) that the great majority of Baptists in both conventions at the church membership level, the clergy level and the leadership level also believe such differences are minor and not fundamental; and (c) that the real reason great strides have not been made towards clearer unity and possible organic unity is the stubborn smugness and reluctance to share control on the part of a few powerful leaders of both conventions. Please have some panel member discuss if they believe this is the reason for no major progress in unity. If not, to what do they attribute the fact that there has been no major progress in unity?" And the second question is: "How can we approach and convince the leadership of both conventions to officially designate a joint body to explore the possibility of organic union of the two conventions."

My answer to the first question is that the reasons for lack of progress to date in the union of Baptist groups in this country are complex and are not to be summed up in a simple statement concerning the reluctance of a few leaders, of a few powerful leaders, to favor this kind of unity. I don't believe that our leaders in either convention

are so jealous of their positions as to despise the idea of unity. I hope this is true; I believe it is, but there are many other factors from the southern side with which I am more familiar. I believe there is a historic and sociological reason for the lack of interest on the part of people generally in the subject of union or unity. That is, we have an inheritance from the War between the States, the period of civil conflict. Southern people, Southern Baptists especially, have held on to the old saying that "the south will rise again," and the comparative growth and progress of Southern Baptists is in the eyes of some justification for this conviction that the new south is rising and we are showing the north a few things about our competence as people and as Baptists. We have a heritage from that era to be sure. We have a sense of self-sufficiency. Nothing succeeds like success and we believe in it; but there are other factors, of course, which account for the lack of zeal on the part of leaders and people in general for the unity movement in which we are interested here. I would answer this question in part by saying that there is no overwhelming conviction that northern or American and Southern Conventions ought to be united. We have a task of educating to do before there is going to be any movement from the grass roots. I believe that in Baptist history new developments have generally come from the people rather than from official leaders or from the organizational structure which stands above the people or beyond them, and it strikes me that this is the way we are going to have to move in connection with any unity movement of the two conventions. We've got to scout with the people, perhaps with the pastors. I've been reading in recent days the accounts of some of the great congresses held by Baptists around 1900-10. These were annual congresses which brought together ministers from the two conventions for theological discussions and study, and I believe these congresses made a great impression (I'm not exactly sure as to why they were broken off or discontinued but maybe Dr. Maring could tell us). At any rate I'd like to see something like this started anew. This would represent a grass roots movement among the classes. If at the same time we could enlist some editors to writing editorials about the desirability of union, then we are still moving at the grass roots level.

The second question which I read proposes that we attempt to convince the leadership of both conventions to officially designate a joint body to explore the possibilities. Well, this may be worth trying; I am not too optimistic about getting an immediate positive response from the southern side at least, but our leaders do respond to pressure of the right sort to grass roots movements, to popular opinion, and this is the angle which it seems to me we can most hopefully work; that is, keeping alive the discussions, conversations through congresses and other meetings and keeping the subject before the people until we get a ground swell of popular interest in the subject of unity. We know we are a minority in meeting here. We are a tiny group, but we represent some ideas which will be well received by the people provided they are presented effectively.

5. Dr. Maring:

Now here is a shorter question: "Will the Conventions really unite in saying, 'I believe in Jesus,' and realize the many blessings?" Can we really go into a different church, kneel and say, "Lord, thy will be done"? Can we really and will we really are two questions. We can, theoretically, certainly go into other churches and say, "Lord, thy will be done," and that is the prior question before all other questions. If somehow we could come to the place where that is our one concern, I should say the answer to the second one would be: Yes, we will really unite in acknowledging Jesus Christ as our Saviour and our Lord, and in following Him in the uniting of our Baptists in the United States; but whether we can come to the place where we humbly seek the will of God and are willing to expose ourselves to the judgments of history and of the Scriptures, I don't know. This is what we are exploring now. How can we bring ourselves to the place where we see there is any need? We could unite, if we felt that it were important, but how can we face the question in a way that we see that there is an imperative here? And that leads to practical questions such as the one Dr. Lumpkin has said has to come up from the grass roots. I'm not sure about that; he may be right, but it doesn't seem to me this is where movements always come from or must come from. I don't believe the voice of the people is the voice of God. I should think that people are conditioned by the kind of information they get from those whom they employ to write their literature, and that the people might get the idea that if there were official points of view that they wanted to express in their church school material - their youth literature and their missionary publications, etc. - but if we wait for the people to direct us to tell us now that we ought to think what we already think, I don't suppose that would be a likely kind of development. One other thing here is to say that this uniting, if we were to unite, simply decide tomorrow to join together and form one big convention, I think it would be a tragedy; we're not prepared to do any such thing at the present and unless we develop the kind of representative church policy, such as was suggested yesterday by Dr. Sam Hill, where there can be communication both ways from bottom to top and from top to bottom so that agencies can really be responsible to local churches, then the only alternative is to have power delegated to certain people, individuals, and executive committees and what not, so that they hold an undefinable power and authority which means bureaucracy and oligarchy and autocracy. So I hope that as we talk about the possibility of merging, we shall realize the necessity of developing a different kind of polity than we now have and one which provides for mutual communication both ways.

6. Dr. Hill:

"What are the possibilities of union between the Southern and American Baptist Conventions?" That's really getting right to the heart of the issue in one short question and it fell my lot to try to answer it. At the present time there are not very strong possibilities. I said yesterday that I did not think this conference would in one sense in the

short run be a success and I think that is the case, and that is something of what Dr. Maring has just said. The possibility at the present time is not very strong and it seems to me that the major reason is that the matter itself is not yet an issue. When the matter becomes an issue, then we will endeavor to find ways in which the issue can become negotiable.

The Southern Baptists are so very successful in terms of the criteria which they have adopted for success, but they are not yet aware that they need self-criticism and self-analysis. They are not yet aware that they belong to or are one with and therefore need others who are, like themselves, the body of Christ, and until (I hate to say this) there is some kind of crisis which strikes the Southern Convention at its tender points, there is not likely to be a real sensitivity to the fact that we are one and therefore must implement the ways in which we can become one.

The racial crisis in the south which all of us (I would hope and pray) deplore in the forms in which it is now moving, is at least a sign that we are joining issues. You see, for so long this was not even a question in a great part of the south. At least the matter is somewhat out in the open now and there is some chance for healing when you have recognized that there is an illness. It seems to me that something of this kind has got to happen, particularly in the south, before we can even consider seriously the fact and implementation of unity. At the present time the Southern Baptist Convention says more or less efficiently there is no way by which unity could be negotiated. Now this in fact is a cover up, this is self deceit, this is rationalization. The Southern Convention finds ways in which to negotiate what it wants to negotiate, such as interests in the Baptist World Alliance, and its own Cooperative Program or what have you, so that this isn't really the problem, and yet we claim on the basis of our Landmark ecclesiology that there is no group which can do this, which can commit our body as a whole to discussions of unity with other Baptist bodies, so I think there is something deeper than this.

Now I deplore also the feeling that I must say this, but here goes - It is possible that there will be further division, official division, within the Southern Convention in the foreseeable future. This is a possibility. What happened in Kansas City yesterday (the resignation of Dr. Elliott) tends to enhance that possibility. I think it is possible that we will have a split, within the Southern Convention in the foreseeable future with the extreme conservatives leaving the main body. I think the liberals won't leave partly because they are liberal and more tolerant of spirit, and that if anybody does leave to form another Baptist Convention, it will be the conservatives and most of them would be west of the Mississippi. Now in one respect I pray God that this will not happen, though institutional unity is not to be identified with the will of God, of course. If this should happen, the main body of Baptists in the south will then be middle of the road for Southern Baptists and the issue of unity would be more nearly negotiable, much more nearly

negotiable, than it is at present. If the extreme conservatives were to leave the main body and develop their own convention, it seems to me that the liberals in the then existing main body of Baptists in the south would tend to remain within that main body or would tend to leave the Baptist denomination for the Presbyterian church in most cases or possibly request unification of some kind with the American Baptist Convention. I do not think, however, that the liberals are likely to form themselves into a convention. If a new convention is formed it will be, in my judgment, the old conservatives of Southern Baptists.

Now I have this to say (and my, what a sour note this is to interject) that unity, I think, is going to be a problem in the south, much less a problem between Baptist bodies, so we've got all kinds of really significant questions stirred here and I think the next five to ten years are going to be quite crucial in determining the future course of Southern Baptists. For my own money, I think what Dr. Tull said yesterday is really right to the point. The heart land of the Southern Baptist Convention is a parallelogram with the northern strip being the Mason-Dixon Line west of the mountains and the southern strip being the southern boundary of Florida and the Rio Grand Valley, and the east and west being South Carolina, Georgia up toward Tennessee and Missouri, Kansas down toward Texas, New Mexico. Now everything outside that, which doesn't leave very much incidentally, some of South Carolina, certainly North Carolina and Virginia and to some degree Maryland, but the heart of the issue of unity or negotiability is a live question or can readily become a live question in that section. But in the heartland (to use Jim Tull's phrase) this isn't yet an issue, and in ways in which Bill Lumpkin has suggested and others, we've got to work harder through state papers, through such literature as can be made available, through the exchange of pulpits.

But hopefully and gratefully one sees a new generation of young Southern Baptists coming on. Excuse me for taking so much time, but this is all very dear to my heart and I'll be done in a minute. It happens that I teach in a state university, a liberal state university in North Carolina. The young Baptists coming through there are very, very much dissatisfied with the Southern Baptist Convention and this is not a dramatic over-statement; this is fact. The young Baptists who are coming through Duke University twelve miles away are very, very much dissatisfied. Now most of them want to stay within the Southern Baptist Convention, but though they see its strength as well as its weaknesses they are really falling away like flies, and this is not a dramatic over-statement. I wish I had statistics to indicate to you how many are leaving the Southern Baptist traditions and this movement is only the beginning. Now a lot, however, will stay within and this is our hope, certainly one of our hopes, for them to stay within and agitate for the reform of the significant points, and if there is enough of this happening at Duke and the University of North Carolina and Vanderbilt, which is over in enemy territory, your conservative territory west of the mountains, and at Emory and Atlanta and some of the other state universities and secular universities, if enough of this happens, then the

issue will come into play and the whole matter will become negotiable.

Well, in short, the present possibilities of union are very, very slight, extremely slight, but there are hopeful signs around and by the grace of God, using whatever skillful techniques we can be led to employ, now there is considerable hope, particularly in the rising younger generation, such as the people who sit in my classes and the classes at Duke and the classes at Vanderbilt and so on across the south. So all is not lost by any means, and I think the very fact that we have gotten together here is in itself an enormous success. This couldn't have happened many years ago and it couldn't happen yet west of the mountains, but it's happening here. Little by little there are hopeful signs emerging.

7. Dr. Tull:

I don't want to discuss my question because I want to discuss what's already been discussed and get in my two cents worth. I do have a question here which is interesting. "A few Southern Baptists moving into northern states will not acclimate themselves to the minor differences in practice, but will attempt to get a southern church of missions started. The Southern Convention proceeds to assist them but in a manner that creates friction by taking the form of invasion. It does not first counsel such persons to overlook the slight differences and consider the major points of Baptist doctrine and to unite with the existing local Baptist church. Before attempting to organize a southern church, it does not consult with the existing local Baptist pastors or associations. Why does the Southern Convention proceed in that manner and how can they be influenced to improve the procedure?"

I don't know what to say in answer to this question. I think the Southern Baptist Convention itself does not have this policy, but that they simply wait for a church to be organized by some southern Baptists, and then the church applies for membership in the Southern Baptist Convention. However, I don't think this is the whole picture. I do think that through our Home Mission Board, which is not operated officially in most cases but is acting perhaps unofficially by encouragements, or the Home Mission Board in other instances is encouraging this kind of thing.

I would like to suggest that one possible hope is a new generation of Southern Baptists growing up in a different environment, let's say in the midwest, and partaking of the convictions and culture of that environment in which they live. This doesn't give us any immediate hope, but it will be interesting to see what Southern Baptist churches will be generations from now. If they continue that line in different environments, I dare say that it will be something very different from what they are now. I think that one of the main things that can be done and should be done is to promote conversations on this subject. I believe we do have desperate interests which we are likely to defend and promote by establishing institutions, and that these desperate interests enter

not only into our consciences but into our sub-conscious, so that we defend these desperate interests without any warning and, as this problem goes from top to bottom, the place to begin is not at the grass roots or official leadership but to begin at both places at the same time. Therefore, if we can promote conversations, if we could encourage these Southern Baptists to talk to these Baptist pastors, and especially if we could get official pressure, say from the Home Mission Board to counsel the Southern Baptist pastors who move into new territories, to counsel with local Baptist pastors, they would be making definite progress. Now the question here is why does the Southern Baptist Convention proceed in this manner and how can they be influenced to improve the procedure? I think the reason why they proceed in this manner unofficially or officially is that they think there aren't enough churches, Baptist churches, anyhow and that they are going forward to establish new churches. I think also that we have a lot of bias, not only toward Roman Catholics and other Protestants but towards what Southern Baptists would call other types of Baptists, but this is a question which has to be considered very much at both levels. We ought to try to put pressure on our Home Mission Board, and I'm convinced that we may be able to talk to some of our Home Mission Board representatives and officials. As I said in one of the discussions last night, there is a group of leaders in our Home Mission Board who are very sympathetic towards a more ecumenical approach and I believe that by conversing around and making others aware of the fact, that we can help this matter.

8. Dr. Lumpkin:

I have a three-fold question here: "Is there more or less difference between east and west of either or both conventions than between north and south." This question can scarcely be answered with a yes or no. One must ask what kind of differences are in mind? Since the differences between north and south are real, but so are social differences of religious outlook as between east and west in the south and east and west in the north, I would say that the upper south, the old south, is very much like the north, the old north, that is the northeastern part of our country in its general outlook, perhaps is increasingly like the north so far as Baptist people are concerned. The southwest has been more affected by the Landmark point of view in Baptist affairs and it has developed a psychology of its own in Baptist life. There are important differences.

"What can be done then," says the second question, "to allow people to discover how alike are some churches across convention lines and how unlike are some churches within a convention?" This is the great problem. In my Baptist history classes at the Louisville Seminary I used to spend one hour each semester attempting to convince my students that northern Baptist churches are not essentially unlike Southern Baptist churches, and I had some convincing to do because many students brought prejudices and misunderstandings, many were convinced that American Baptist churches are essentially different from Southern Baptist churches, also that there are differences in doctrine, that they have a

different theology. Now I feel that I was fairly successful in dissipating these prejudices in our discussions. I think we came to one mind and one conviction concerning the likeness, the essential likeness, of our churches. The trouble is we can't get all the lay people in such a class and engage them in a similar conversation, and so we have to resort to literature and depend upon the testimony of ministers who have been trained in our seminaries. There is no problem in convincing people of the unlikeness of churches in our own community. All we have to do is to do a little visiting and most of them do that occasionally. They see the unlikenesses in neighboring churches, - no problem there I think. But the problem is to demonstrate how churches which are located at some distance from them and in another convention are, in face, one in outlook and mission and general likes.

I'm not sure I answered the first question satisfactorily. Is there more or less difference between east and west than north and south? It's hard to say. Each area of our country has its own viewpoint and outlook, but this is not a basic question. Again, I say, let us have our differences and let us live with them. This is the Baptist way. It has always been so. We've had variety from the very beginning and we shall always have it. Let us get used to it and discover our unity in the midst of our diversity.

9. Dr. Edward H. Pruden:

I wonder if I could take one minute to add a word by ejecting myself into this discussion, by stating one or two things which occurred to me as the panel members were speaking which I thought you would be most interested in hearing?

Speaking now as an American Baptist I think I must, in answer to the question asked Dr. Tull about why some Southern Baptists moving to the north do not join the existing churches, state that we as American Baptists have not provided in some areas the variety of churches that the situation requires. Now unless the situation is changed in the last year or two, there was in Canton, Ohio, a city of 120,000 people, one Baptist church, and when people went there and looked around, it was that church or nothing as far as Baptists were concerned. Now in the average southern Baptist community they have a choice of variety of approach. They can go into an informal church, or they can go into a more dignified situation, and two or three in between, so that every man can find his place and feel perfectly at home. When the southern Baptists coming from a very informal church go into a community like Canton, Ohio, where there is one church, and the minister has on a robe, and the hymns are very stable and are out of a different kind of a book, and the program has not the remotest resemblance to anything he has ever heard of in his life, he simply feels lost and he begins scratching around to find other people who feel as he does and then they organize a church. Now I've been saying this for some years to some of our American Baptist people and I haven't gotten anywhere with it and I don't expect to now, but that is a part of the problem. We don't have

the variety which they do have in the south.

Now the second thing I want to say is that part of the answer to this disinclination which some southern Baptists feel toward unity with the American Convention is due to the fact that so many have fallen prey to the false propaganda and misinformation that has been spread abroad through the mails by our professional disturbers, those who seem to have unlimited funds, those who print voluminous papers and send them free of charge to every minister whose name they can find in the directory. At our Baptist World Alliance executive meeting in Oslo this summer we were discussing whether or not we would send an observer to the Vatican. One of the southern Baptist leaders gave this as his reason for thinking it would be a mistake. He said that in the state of Tennessee recently a survey was taken of the Baptist preachers; that 96% of them felt that immersion was the only proper form of Baptism. It was rather surprising that only 96% of them agreed on this, but that 98% of them were opposed to the ecumenical movement. This Southern Baptist leader said that when more Baptist preachers are against the ecumenical movement than they are in favor of immersion, they ought to be careful. Now there wasn't the slightest indication on his part that he was disturbed over these statistics, that he felt a responsibility for them or that we should do anything to correct them. He simply indicated that Baptists should make their decisions on the basis of prevailing views rather than that we have any responsibility in changing those views or in providing a more enlightening leadership. Now that is exactly why we have difficulty in proposing any kind of Baptist unity, because there is widespread distrust of anyone who is willing to work in cooperation with his fellow Christians.