MR. ALLEN A. BAILEY

Mr. Bailey is a North Carolinian and a graduate of Wake Forest School of Law. He has served as a trial lawyer for the past twenty three years in Charlotte, North Carolina.

He is a member of the First Baptist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina where he has served in almost every position. Mr. Bailey has served as Vice Chairman of Trustees, Campbell, member of General Board, and the Executive Committee of North Carolina and Southern Baptist Convention. He is Chairman of the Legislative Commission for revising criminal laws in North Carolina. He is a member of North Carolina Bar Association and First Vice President of North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers. He is serving at present as President of North Carolina Baptist Convention.

DR. HOWARD J. FORD

Dr. Ford was born in Alexander County, North Carolina. He graduated from Wake Forest University, Southwestern Theological Seminary with a Th.M. degree and received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Wake Forest University. Dr. Ford has served as pastor in North Carolina for more than twenty years. Seventeen years at First Baptist Church, Elkin, North Carolina and five years at Winter Park Baptist Church, Wilmington, North Carolina.

He has served as Trustee of Meredith and Campbell Colleges, member of Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, and on the General and Executive Boards of North Carolina Baptist. He has served as Director of Mission Ministries for the North Carolina Baptist State Convention since 1966.
Baptist Leader Lauds Heritage of Freedom, Flexibility

By Virtie Strop
Staff Religion Reporter

ASHEVILLE - In decisions over the past two years, North Carolina Baptists have repeatedly affirmed their Baptist "heritage of freedom and flexibility," Allen A. Bailey, the retiring president of the Baptist State Convention, said here last night at the opening convention session.

Bailey, a Charlotte lawyer, reminded the messengers (delegates), "We have refused to turn the convention into a 'super-church,' one based on creeds or other statements of doctrine."

For example, he said, "We have correctly seen the baptism issue ... as one threatening our cherished principles of church autonomy. We have been able to separate prolonged rhetoric from thoughtful reasoning. We have taken a stand."

The genius of the convention is its democracy which seeks the will of the majority, Bailey said.

He said the convention must go a step further, working not for personal causes and campaigns but seeking "the leadership of the Lord," which is not "convenient 'God-talk' ... (but) Baptist belief."

"We should never revel in majority victories at the expense of the other side," he said.

Bailey said three elements should characterize "our work together: faith, freedom and fraternal love," as spelled out 25 years ago by Dr. J. B. Weatherspoon, a North Carolina Baptist seminary professor.

These elements run through every progressive chapter of Baptist history, Bailey said, and if "we lose any of them, our ranks are broken and our strength dissipated."

He said Baptist faith is in Christ, not in ordinances, creeds or practices. Baptist freedom is belief that each individual has the right "to hold, exercise and formulate his faith freely ... (as a part of) our God-given inheritance;" and Baptist love "contains the answer at which we work together."

"Our faith can become dogmatic, demanding uniformity; our freedom, if left unchecked, can become a powerful force making true cooperation impossible, but our fraternal love -- this sense of belonging together -- can magnify our basic agreements and tolerate our differences. We can agree to disagree without making our disagreements a test of fellowship."

On other matters, Bailey told the messengers that:

• Black and white Baptists in the state make up more than one-half of the state church population. Therefore, "good relations between black and white Baptists could well be a path to good race relations throughout the state."

• The nominee for general secretary-treasurer of the convention, the Rev. Cecil Ray of Texas, is the right man for the job.

Bailey praised the work of Dr. W. Perry Crouch, who will retire at the end of the year after 12 years as general secretary-treasurer.

He also praised the Baptists for their 11 per cent increase in mission gifts, 15 per cent increase in state missions and 21 per cent increase in Cooperative Program (budget) funds during his office.

Bailey praised them for responding to a call to relieve world hunger through a special offering launched by Crouch last January. The total offering is now $200,000, more than twice the original goal.

"And what is even more amazing is that all of this happened in one of the biggest economic setbacks of recent times ... but it was obviously the Lord's time and His people responding in a marvelous way."

Bailey's successor will be elected this afternoon.