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Watterson, Gene L. (1969)

Pastors of First Baptist Shelby

11-9-1989

Newspaper -The Cleveland Times - Nov 9 1989- Gene Watterson

D. G. Cooper

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Politics Versus Theology?



Dr. Gene Watterson, Pastor of First Baptist Church in Shelby anticipates N.C. Baptist Convention.

By D.G. Cooper

Dr. Gene Watterson, Pastor of Shelby's First Baptist Church, admits he enjoys a full-time job with the church, but "I have solid church backing in my bid for North Carolina Convention President." Dr. Watterson spoke with the Cleveland Times this week regarding his interest in what could be a hotly contested election at the Baptist Convention November 13th through 15th. Watterson's opponent is Eugene Ridley, pastor of Long Leaf Baptist Church, Wilmington, N.C.

"This is a battle of fundamentalist versus conservative," said Watterson. Watterson has been described by many as a moderate and he says the dividing question - inerrancy of the Bible and ordination of women in the church - are political, not theological questions.

"Most mainstream conservatives believe that we should not try to dictate to God. God is free to call anyone in any capacity. Not believing in inerrancy does not mean that a person does not believe in the Bible. We absolutely hold the Bible to be authoritative in all matters of faith and order." Conservatives or moderates have controlled the N.C. Convention presidency of the 1.1 million-member state group for the past ten years. The 14.8-member Southern Baptist Convention is ruled

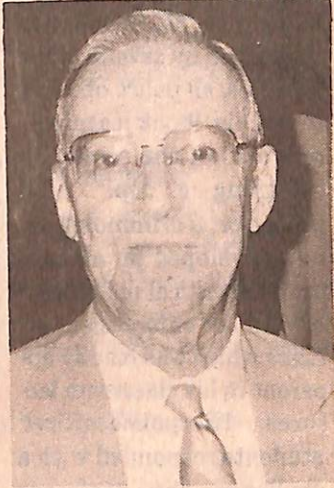
by fundamentalists.

"Inerrancy is a battle cry of the fundamentalists," said Watterson. "It's a political slogan. I want us (the church) to get back to basics together...we need a return to our first love, which is spiritual matters within the church."

Dr. Watterson pointed out Bible verses which establish women as full partners in the church as far back as the first century. "Read Romans 16:1," said Watterson. "Women were deacons in the early church. You could also read Galatians 3:18, which shows the equality of God's grace."

Watterson stated that his belief in the equal treatment of women by the church rests on solid Bible scripture. "Who am I to say, or anyone else for that matter, that a woman is not called to the ministry? That would mean, in effect, a dictate to God that he can't call a woman to the ministry. The Bible teaches me that we are equal."

The largest turnout ever is expected for the three-day convention with about 7,000 attendees. Only elected church messengers will vote in the election. The number of messengers from each participating church is determined by the membership.



**Ralph Sullivan:
"Commercial Landscaping Equals Shelby's Pride!"**

Kings Mountain Notice
There will be a Special Council Meeting on Monday, November 13, 1989 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall in Kings Mountain. The agenda will include utility and gas concerns.