

# OTTAWA PRESIDENT HEADS AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES 1974-1975



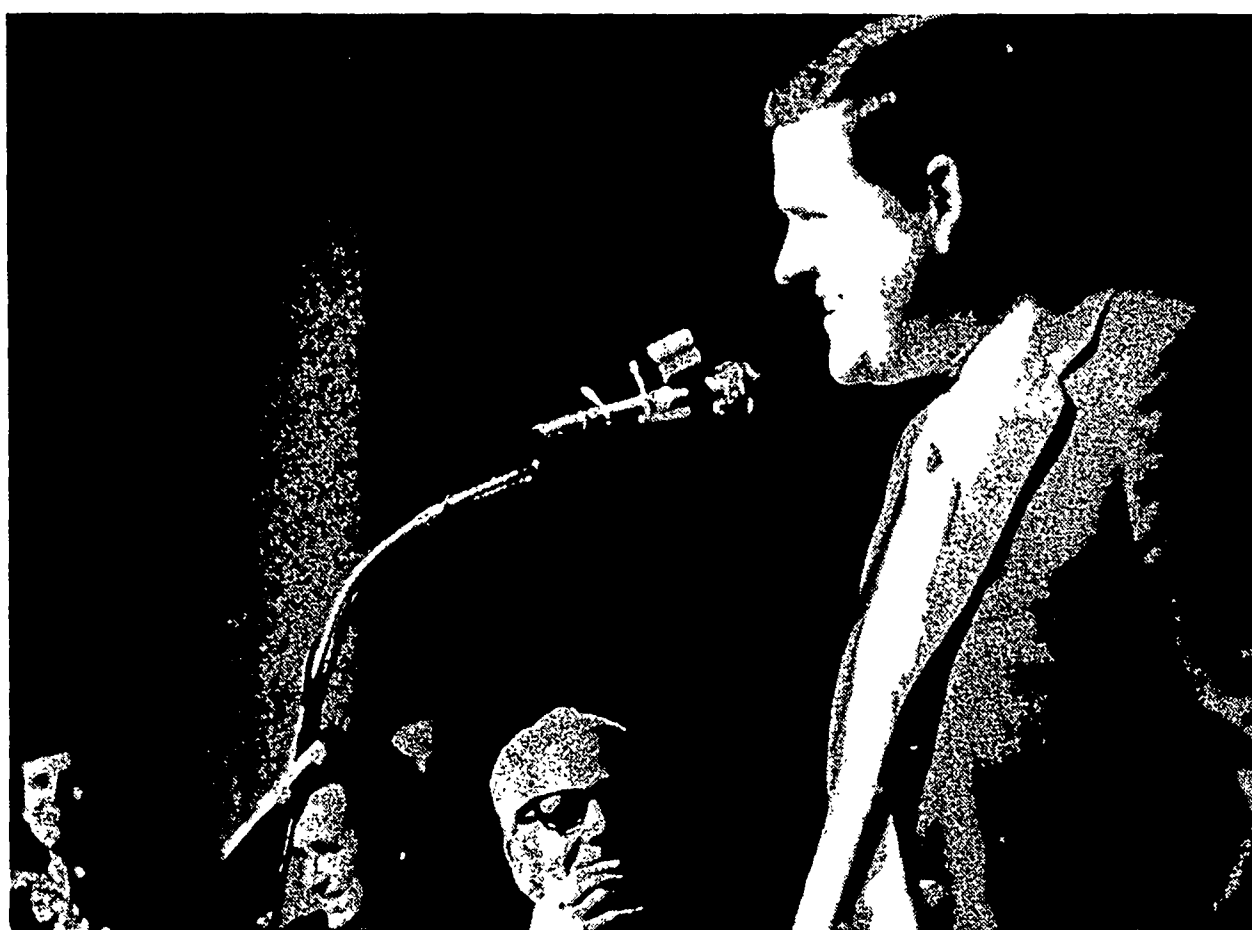
"Our colleges exist in one of the most important mission fields that we have as a denomination; namely, our mission to young people."

Ottawa University has always had a major involvement in the life of American Baptist churches in Kansas and throughout the United States. This historic relationship has never been symbolized more dramatically than last month in Lincoln, Nebraska, when 3,000 delegates to the annual convention of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. elected Ottawa's president Dr. Peter H. Armacost, to head the denomination for the next two years.

While at 37 he will be one of the youngest presidents to serve the 1.5 million American Baptists, Dr. Armacost is no newcomer to denominational service. He has served on various committees in recent years related to the educational and general ministries of American Baptists.

In accepting the election as president of the denomination, Dr. Armacost said:

This is an exciting time to be an American Baptist. After a year of implementation of our new denominational structure I believe that we are ready to move beyond organi-



*President Peter H. Armacost addressing the luncheon meeting of the American Baptist Men at the Convention at Lincoln in May.*

zational problems and procedures to the continuing fundamental tasks of both spiritual renewal and responsible substantive involvement as Christians with the moral, ethical, and religious issues which confront us as we seek to do God's will in the midst of a rapidly changing world. I sense a hunger among our membership, certainly among the college students with whom I work, for spiritual renewal. I would hope that we can capitalize on the impetus of Key '73 to nurture the basic personal encounter with Christ of each American Baptist in such a way that it will enable us to understand so thoroughly the fundamentals of our faith which do not change that we can and will communicate it, by word and example, in an age which does change.

The new president of the denomination stressed the importance of American Baptists dealing with "real" ethical issues in ways that build fellowship and trust within the denomination. He pointed to the continuing importance of an "educated and committed laity."

Turning to issues close to his interests as a layman-educator, Dr. Armacost told the convention delegates and guests:

I am equally concerned that we continue to focus attention on the educational ministries of American Baptists. Understandably, I am especially concerned that we attend to the role and the relationships of our American Baptist colleges and seminaries within the life of our denomination. We have valuable educational resources which can and must be used more effectively as we seek to address the major issues which confront the church. Moreover, our colleges exist in one of the most important mission fields that we have as a denomination; namely, our mission to young people. If we are unable in this generation to present the gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way as to stimulate the imagination and capture the loyalty of our youth, the essential missionary tasks of our National Ministries and International Ministries are greatly endangered a generation hence.

As president of the denomination, Dr. Armacost will represent the denomination in activities with other denominations, will preside over various denominational meetings between national meetings, will speak in numerous American Baptist churches and institutions, and will preside over the next national convention of the denomination in Atlantic City in June, 1975. He will serve also as a major spokesman for American Baptist churches on issues in our society about which the churches are concerned. In discussing the time requirements of the position, President Armacost noted that he planned to limit his speaking and working commitments to educational associations and other professional organizations during the next two years in order that his total time away from the campus will not be greater than heretofore.

There are approximately 6,200 cooperating churches in the convention located in 47 states and Puerto Rico. The denomination was organized in 1907.