The Northern Baptist Convention was formed officially in 1907. Those who pressed for a theological shift to the left managed to gain control of the key agencies of the Convention from its infancy, as was later admitted by Shailer Matthews. (See Robert G. Delnay's doctoral dissertation presented to the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary entitled, A History of the Baptist Bible Union, p. 11). From their positions of leadership, the modernists managed to control the disbursement of mission monies, and to emphasize the teachings of Rauschenbusch relative to the social gospel. Of course, greater controls meant diminished autonomy for local churches. Conflict was inevitable.

FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST ORIGINS
To confront the rising tide of modernism, pre-convention conferences were held from 1920 on to plan fundamentalist strategy. Jasper Massee was designated spokesman in these efforts. By 1922, Robert Neighbor and Oliver W. Van Osdel called for a meeting to establish a protest organization. They prevailed on William Pettingill, William B. Riley and J. Frank Norris to join them in Executive Committee to plan for that meeting of fundamental Baptists. Meeting in a tent borrowed from Dr. Walter Wilson, they organized in Kansas City in 1923 as the Baptist Bible Union, and they adopted the New Hampshire Confession of Faith with a premillennial interpretation of eschatology. Thomas T. Shields was chosen as the first President of the Union. Neighbor, Van Osdel and Norris were for separation from the Northern Baptist Convention, but Riley, Pettingill and Shields were not so inclined. Riley successfully turned the Union from its separational leanings by the start of the 1923 Kansas City meeting, though he admitted by 1925 that the purging of the Northern Baptist Convention had become impossible (See Delnay, pp. 53, 107).

In the next issue we will discover what God did in California.