

September 7, 1961

Baptists In Miami  
Aid Cuban Refugees

By Adon Taft

MIAMI (BP)--One Cuban refugee has come to Miami every 30 minutes for the past 31 months. The influx has swelled to nearly 100,000 the number of Spanish-speaking residents now to be found in this metropolitan area of one million people.

Three-fourths of the refugees are escaping church affiliation here, however. Yet twice as many are coming under Christian influence in Miami as ever did in their native Cuba.

If the refugees are a good cross-section of the Cuban population, at least 24 of the average of 48 who have come here each day profess no religious affiliation at all.

Probably 19 of them are Spiritists--half of whom are nominally Roman Catholic. No more than four of them ever took any active part in a Roman service in their homeland. And maybe one of them is a Protestant or evangelical Christian.

However, since the refugees are not a real cross-section of the Cuban population--more of the wealthy and upper middle classes are among the escapees--the percentage of Catholics streaming to this land of opportunity and religious freedom probably is greater.

Bear in mind, too, the current rate of influx of Cuban refugees is much higher than the average since Fidel Castro stamped the hammer and sickle on America's island neighbor. The rate is now figured to be 215 a day, or one every 7-1/2 minutes.

Protestant and evangelical churches are not reaching as many as Catholics numerically, but are doing better, percentagewise, than they have done in Cuba itself.

By far the most energetic program emanating from this group is that of Southern Baptists. About 3000 Spanish-speaking Miamians are reached through 15 Baptist congregations of Latin extraction. In that program can be seen an important fact about Protestant work among the Spanish-speaking here.

Of the Baptist congregations, one is made up completely of Puerto Ricans. Another is half Puerto Rican and half Cuban. A third is half Puerto Rican and half Mexican.

Only two of the congregations have been established since the Cuban situation developed and neither of them was started specifically to meet the need of refugees. Two more Spanish-language congregations are in the planning stage by Baptists and, while the refugee situation has some bearing, the churches are not being considered especially for fleeing Cubans.

Pastors for those contemplated congregations will be Cuban refugees, but only one of the Baptist congregations now is served by a refugee pastor although six of the ministers are Cubans. Another is Spanish, one is Italian and the rest are Americans.

Milton S. Leach Jr., who directs the Spanish program for Baptists, believes Spanish-speaking are here to stay and should be integrated into regular American congregations.

Consequently, 10 Spanish congregations are a department of an existing Baptist church. They meet simultaneously with the English-speaking groups and as the Cubans and others become more familiar with English, they begin to pass on into the activities of the main church.

It takes an average of three to four years for this progress, Leach said, but more Latins are achieving places of leadership in churches. One Cuban, for example, is a deacon at Flagler Street Baptist Church.

An interesting social development has arisen almost unnoticed directly because of this influx of Cubans. Racial barriers have been lowered without any problem where Cubans--some of whom are Negroes--have been integrated into American congregations.

While Baptists do operate an aid program to provide food, clothing and shelter for the refugees, it is not too extensive, perhaps because English-language churches have not shown enough interest, Leach declared. He said at least 125 refugees a day seek aid from Spanish pastors who often cannot provide it.

Most of the Cubans who attend Baptist churches are not reached through the aid program, though, Leach said. They are contacted through regular visitation programs by the pastors. Many of them were connected with churches in Cuba, of course, but perhaps half of them are being reached with the gospel for the first time.

While Miami churches are generally split on the policy of integrating Spanish-speaking or keeping them as separate congregations, they agree that if Cubans are active in churches here they are likely to stay active if and when they return to their homeland.

They also agree there is vast missionary opportunity among refugees. Many formerly wealthy Cubans are turning to the church for the first time because for the first time they are realizing their need both for spiritual and physical help.

Those leading Spanish work also concur that American churches are not doing enough to take advantage of the need and the opportunity presented by the Cuban refugee situation. Unfortunately, evangelicals have done the least to meet the challenge.

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Editors: You may wish to use this and a companion report from Cuba proper as complimentary articles in the same issue.

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Baptist Editor Exposes  
Georgia Gambling Crowd

(9-7-61)

ATLANTA (BP)--Four pages of the weekly Christian Index were devoted to listing 667 firms and individuals in Georgia that own federal gambling stamps despite state laws which make gambling in any form illegal.

Editor John J. Hurt Jr. of Atlanta cited specific Georgia laws dealing with the illegality of gambling and quoted the state revenue commissioner as saying enforcement of the state laws is up to local law enforcement officials in each county.

Veterans organizations, clubs and "animal-named" groups, such as Elks, Moose, Eagles, etc., dominate the organizations in the 667 names.

Editor Hurt, in an editorial in the next issue, called on citizens in each county to "demand action by the grand juries," claiming that the people and firms earning the federal gambling stamps (evidently) "are not afraid of the local police and sheriffs."

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Georgia Baptist Paper  
Hikes Subscription

(9-7-61)

ATLANTA (BP)--For the first time in over 40 years, the subscription price for the Christian Index, weekly newsmagazine of the Georgia Baptist Convention, is being raised for churches using the church budget plan.

Effective Jan. 1, the annual rate will go from \$1.25 to \$1.50 per subscription for churches which send the paper to every family with the church paying for the subscription.

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The club plan price, which allows a reduced rate for groups of five subscribers and also applies during annual associational meetings, went from \$1.50 to \$1.75 last January. Editor John J. Hurt Jr. of Atlanta said individual subscriptions remain at \$2, where they have been for about 100 years.

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Each Seminary To Use  
Bible Knowledge Tests

(9-7-61)

CLINTON, Miss. (BP)--Each of the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries plans to use Bible knowledge tests for incoming ministerial students this year, according to a report here.

Frank Stagg of the faculty of New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary presented the report to the Association of Baptist Professors of Religion here.

Sitting in with the association as guests were members of the Southwest Baptist Teachers Association. The meeting was official for one association, but not for the Southwest Teachers group. The Association of Baptist Professors of Religion is predominantly of Southeastern membership.

The tests were developed through the association, adopted last summer and offered to the seminaries for their use.

Stagg said the tests were in an experimental stage and several revisions would likely be made before they were perfected.

He reported that each seminary would use tests in its own way, without any suggestions from the association.

He said further even new courses in Bible may be included by seminaries as a result of the tests.

It was pointed out in discussion the tests would not only serve to correlate the courses between seminaries and colleges but would tend to correlate courses among Baptist colleges themselves.

Upon questioning, Stagg revealed that results of the courses would be kept strictly confidential. Information would be given to any college regarding only its own students, upon request.

The outgoing president stated the principal project of the association this coming year would be stressing the correlation of work in colleges and seminaries in the field of religious education. He was O. William Rhodenhiser of Richmond, Va.

He emphasized the most immediate problem in religious education is "the lack of prepared people."

The association appointed a committee last year to survey what Baptist colleges and seminaries are doing in religious education, and to suggest how the association can help to correlate work in this field. The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention was asked to collaborate in this survey.

This committee is to make a complete report in 1962.

He said it was the association's belief the colleges could make a great contribution by seeking to enlist young people in religious education.

Rhodenhiser further suggested distinctive terminology might be used, distinguishing between those of college training and those of graduate training level.

A motion carried that each association appoint a separate committee to meet together and investigate the advisability of preparing adequate textbooks for New Testament and Old Testament survey courses. The SBC Education Commission would be contacted for assistance.

The Baptist professors group will meet in 1962 at Ridgecrest, N. C., with time to be set by association's executive committee.

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New officers are: president, John Ed Steely, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C.; vice-president, W. W. Stevens, Mississippi College here; secretary, Eugene Stockstill, of Judson College, Marion, Ala.

The Southwest group will meet in January, 1962 in Dallas. It took no action since this was not its official meeting. It plans to meet occasionally with Baptist professors from the East but no definite dates were set for another joint session.

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Florida Baptists Vote  
On New Budget Plan

(9-7-61)

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Florida Baptist Convention's State Mission Board voted here to recommend a basic change in the way its 1962 budget funds are handled.

It will ask the Convention in November to change from a dual budget to a single one. It would, if passed, eliminate preferred items--deducted before regular budget needs are allocated--and capital funds, which are paid out after the regular budget items have been fully met. These would be met through the regular budget, not separately.

The board recommended a 1962 budget through the Cooperative Program of \$2.6 million, up \$100,000 over this year's. The new percentage distribution, based on the budget change, would be 65 per cent to remain for work in Florida and 35 per cent to the Southern Baptist Convention for national and world missions.

The major increase in the budget over 1961's is the allocation to Stetson University, Baptist-related college at DeLand, Fla.

The State Mission Board also heard, for information only at this time, a report from a special Baptist education survey done in the state.

A group headed by Doak S. Campbell, former president of Florida State University, Tallahassee, and former Baptist college executive, conducted it.

It will recommend to the Convention proper later this year:

1. That continued support be given Stetson, at least \$200 for each full-time student on the main DeLand campus and in the law school in St. Petersburg, Fla.
2. That another Baptist college be established in Florida within the decade.
3. That Florida Baptists not establish a college near Dunedin, Fla., on an 80-acre tract. The size of the property, its topography, and the creation of two new senior colleges within 30 miles of the site make it unfeasible at the present time, the consultants said.

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Folks and Facts.....

(9-7-61)

.....President Herschel H. Hobbs of Oklahoma City represented the Southern Baptist Convention at the annual session of the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc., in Kansas City. Vice-President W. Herschel Ford of El Paso, Tex., represented the SBC at the annual meeting of the National Baptist Convention of America in San Francisco. Both Conventions met the same week. (BP)

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Cutlines to Baptist World Alliance feature

Baptist Press

STRONG STONES--Stones from 52 nations were sealed in the hearth of this Baptist youth retreat in Japan, symbol of the countries where Baptists live. Youth at the dedication, shown here, came from India, Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, Ceylon, Thailand and the United States. The Baptist World Alliance above is made of wrought iron. (BP) Photo.

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FROM REGIONAL OFFICE

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September 7, 1961

Editor Urges Appointment  
Of SBC Negro Missionaries

DALLAS (BP)--A change in the Southern Baptist Constitution that would permit Negroes to serve as Southern Baptist Foreign Missionaries was proposed here editorially by the Baptist Standard, weekly Texas Baptist newspaper.

Editor E. S. James said there is no doubt that some Negro missionaries could do far more good in Africa and elsewhere than white people.

James explained, however, that the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board could not appoint any Negro missionaries because of a clause in Article VII of the Convention constitution, which says:

"Church membership: officers of the Convention, all officers and members of all boards, and all missionaries of the Convention appointed by its boards shall be members of regular Baptist churches cooperating with this Convention."

The editor suggested changing the last phrase of the clause, adding "...and all missionaries of the convention appointed by its boards shall be members of such churches, except in the case of those mission volunteers in other Baptist churches whose devotion, commitment, ability and nature especially qualify them to serve with unusual effectiveness in certain areas of missionary endeavor."

Editor James told the Baptist Press that he had no definite plans to present the constitution change to the Southern Baptist Executive Committee for consideration, but that he was throwing the idea out to the public for discussion with the hopes that someone would present the proposal. "If somebody else doesn't," he said, "then I might."

James said that the editorial was prompted by the National (Negro) Baptist Convention's appointment of a white man to serve as a missionary in Liberia. In an earlier editorial, the editor said that the Negro Baptists were setting a pattern their white brethren might do well to follow.

Under present constitutional requirements, however, the Foreign Mission Board cannot appoint anyone except members of Southern Baptist churches and very few churches in this Convention have Negroes in their fellowship.

"We will never be able to appoint them," said James, "until a change shall be made in the Convention's constitution, or until more Negro families shall be welcomed into white congregations."

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Folks and facts.....

.....Gil Stricklin, former public information officer for the 63rd Troop Carrier, Donaldson Air Force Base, S.C., has been named news editor for the department of public relations at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth. A graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex., Stricklin will be enrolled in the seminary in addition to helping direct the seminary's press relations and serving as assistant editor of "Southwestern News," monthly alumni publication. He succeeds Billy Keith, recently appointed Southern Baptist missionary to Japan. (BP)

Trading Stamps Help  
Churches Build Units

ABILENE, Tex. (BP)--A 72-year-old preacher who "got tired of being re-tired" has found a new occupation and a means of opening doors of the unenlisted here.

Scott W. Hickey of Abilene gathers trading stamps from door to door and exchanges them for church building materials and equipment.

"Opportunities are abundant," says Hickey, "when you knock on doors and pray for direction."

Hickey's first project was obtaining concrete blocks for a church building. In three weeks he had collected 70 books of stamps, enough to buy 700 blocks.

At the present, Hickey is working on three projects. One church wants 500 concrete blocks to finish their Sunday School building walls, and another wants 100 song books.

The third project is on behalf of a young woman who was seriously injured in a car accident and has been unconscious for nine months. Two months ago she gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Hickey is gathering trading stamps to help with the growing medical expenses.

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House Passes Minimum  
Education Aid Bill

(9-7-61)

WASHINGTON (BP)--The House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted (378-32) to extend for two years the federally impacted areas school bill and the National Defense Education Act of 1958.

Rep. Adam Clayton Powell (D., N.Y.), chairman of the House committee on education and labor and author of the bill, said that it was the maximum education bill possible this year. The impacted areas bill is for public schools only, while the NDEA of 1958 contains limited aids to private schools.

The new education bill was offered under the suspension of the rules procedure, which limits debate, prohibits amendments, and requires a two-thirds majority to pass. Powell had secured approval of leaders of both parties before presentation of his bill. It was the only education bill this year that had a chance of getting through the House of Representatives.

During debate on the House floor the "religious issue" (federal aid to parochial schools) was mentioned several times. Rep. Roman C. Pucinski (D., Ill.) said he was opposed to the bill because under the procedure being followed he was unable to offer amendments to extend loans to private schools from 10 years to 40 years, and for classroom construction as well as for equipment. He also favored 50 per cent forgiveness of student loans to those teaching in parochial schools. At present forgiveness of student loans is limited to those teaching in public schools.

Rep. Edith Green (D., Ore.) bitterly attacked the limited scope of the bill and the two year extension, virtually ruling out amendments next year. She said that the House could not overlook the fact that the "religious issue" had been a major obstacle in education legislation this year.

Mrs. Green further pointed out that the "religious issue" was not being avoided in the new bill because the present NDEA includes various aids to private schools (examples are loans for equipment to teach science, mathematics, and foreign languages, omission of private school teachers from the loan forgiveness provision and from assistance in training institutes).

Objectors to the Powell bill bitterly attacked it on three counts: (1) its two year extension; (2) this feature had not been considered by the House committee on education and labor; and (3) they were unable to amend it to include more generous provisions for federal aid to education.

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Proponents of the bill pushed it as the only hope for aid to education this year. They reasoned that it would give two years of relief from controversy over the "religious issue" in education. It also has the effect of delaying general federal aid to education.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where it or a similar bill will be considered almost immediately. Observers in Washington expect the Senate to go along with the House bill, but amendments and further compromises are possible.

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Compromise Aid Bill  
Knocks Out Hospitals

(9-7-61)

WASHINGTON (BP)--The compromise foreign aid bill that passed congress and that was signed by the president eliminated development grant funds to American-sponsored hospitals abroad.

The little-noticed provision was found in the House version of the foreign aid bill. The conference committee with the Senate killed the proposal.

There are more than 1,000 American hospitals abroad, many of which are operated by United States church groups. The provision as passed by the House would have made available to these hospitals large sums of foreign aid funds.

The reason given by the conference committee in eliminating aid to hospitals abroad was "that their needs and their relative importance in furthering U.S. foreign policy objectives have not been adequately studied and evaluated." Therefore, the committee said, "The authorization of assistance to such hospitals is premature."

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