

FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE
W. BARRY GARRETT, REGIONAL EDITOR
1628--16th St., N. W., Washington, 9, D. C.
Telephone: ADams 2-1760

November 19, 1959

Washington Paper Debunks
Alabama Baptist Resolution

WASHINGTON--(BP)--An Alabama Baptist State Convention resolution on a Catholic candidate for President and on President Eisenhower's forthcoming visit to Pope John XXIII has been debunked by the Washington Post-Times Herald, prominent daily newspaper here.

Alabama Baptists in their annual convention, according to a Baptist Press report, said, "it is our thought that any Roman Catholic serving as President, as a matter of course, would be subject to varied types of strong pressures to give favoritism to the Roman Catholic Church regardless of his personal desires and public commitment."

The Alabama resolution based its position on the charge that "the Roman Catholic Church has political objectives which, of themselves, inject serious problems about separation of church and state" and that the Roman Catholic Church desires "to establish itself as the state church whenever and wherever it can be done."

Eisenhower's visit to the Pope was hit by Alabama Baptists as "favoritism to a church group seeking political power."

The Post editorial criticized the Baptist action by saying that "the separation of church and state is an important principle, but there are times when it seems to boil down to a question of what church is being separated from what state."

The editorial interpreted the Alabama Baptist action as an attack on Sen. John Kennedy "because he happens to be a member of the Roman Catholic Church." It went on to say that Sen. Kennedy has indicated that he is not committed to the Catholic position on church and state, but, the Post said, "that did not deter the politicking in this religious body."

Pointing out that the Baptist body wound up criticizing President Eisenhower for his visits to the Pope and to Moscow, the Post concluded, "for a body that believes in keeping religion and government in their respective places, this was quite a field day."

The Washington Post-Times Herald is the same newspaper that recently called for the pressure of world opinion to demand the easing of persecution of Baptists and other evangelical groups in Catholic-dominated Spain.

Two Baptist Leaders
Feel No Competition

WASHINGTON--(BP)--Two prominent Baptist leaders, one from the North and one from the South, agreed here that there should be no feeling of competition or "invasion" in the expansion of the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Convention.

In a press conference Porter Routh, executive secretary of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Herbert J. Gezork, president of Andover Newton Theological School and president of the American Baptist Convention, agreed that if the churches of one convention can meet the needs of certain people better than the churches of another convention, they should be free to do so.

Gezork expressed no resentment of the so-called Southern Baptist "invasion" of the North, and said that Southern Baptists were justified in following their people wherever they went because they did not feel at home in the churches of the American Baptist Convention.

Likewise, Routh commented on the recent action of the General Council of the American Baptist Convention authorizing the American Baptist Home Mission Society to be the agency to deal with churches in the South seeking affiliation with the American Convention. He said, "If they can reach people that we can't, they are welcome."

Both men commented that the kingdom of God is greater than any convention, North or South, and that "we should all work together" in a spirit of harmony. "There is more than enough work for both conventions," the two leaders agreed, "and both should be happy with the success of the other."

It was pointed out in the conference that the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Baptist Jubilee Advance program had done much to restore the lines of communication between the two conventions. Routh expressed the hope that communication between the two groups would continue in an effective manner and he said that the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs could help greatly in maintaining these lines.

-30-

Capital Baptists Asked
To Focus on DC Needs

(11-19-59)

WASHINGTON--(BP)--A fervent appeal for Baptists to minister to the spiritual needs of the Nation's capital city was heard by the messengers to the annual session of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention here.

Pointing out the trend of the D. C. Convention to establish churches and minister to the spiritual needs in the suburban areas in surrounding Maryland, S. Lewis Morgan, Jr., convention president, in his address emphasized that the federal city itself should be the focal point of the Baptist witness. He said that "if the inner city is sick, the suburbs cannot long remain well."

Giving major attention to the social phenomenon of 400,000 Negro people who have moved into the District of Columbia, Morgan said that the Negro Baptist churches "are utterly unprepared to make the needed spiritual impact on this flood of Negroes suddenly thrust into our midst....We cannot send missionaries to Africa and ignore the spiritual needs in the District of Columbia."

"We have been so frightened by the idea of integration," Morgan declared, "that we have been blinded to the possibility that there might be something else we could do in a Christian spirit to assist our Negro brethren." He then proposed conferences with Negro Baptist leaders, and asked for help from the leadership of the Department of Negro Work of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Referring again to the "flight to the suburbs" Morgan concluded that "if we of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention should increasingly turn our backs upon the political entity which brought us into existence, and leave the

-more-

federal city to the Negroes and to the Roman Catholics, who are not leaving, we shall live to rue this day."

Other types of ministry to the needs of Washington, emphasized by the D. C. Convention president, included the thousands of Government employees, Christian Centers, ministry to the aging, solutions to the juvenile delinquency problem, development of the children's home, and church extension in the suburbs.

-30-

D. C. Convention Elects
Layman, Expands Paper

(11-19-59)

WASHINGTON--(BP)--A layman was elected president and plans for an expanded Baptist program in the nation's capital were made in the annual session of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention here.

John M. Firmin, a construction engineer and former president of the D. C. Baptist Brotherhood, was named president to succeed S. Lewis Morgan, Jr. Other officers are Frank K. Brasington, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Silver Spring, Md., vice president, Lee M. Clarke of Brookland Baptist Church, treasurer, and Clinton Hemmings, Takoma Park Baptist Church, secretary. M. Chandler Stith is the executive secretary.

A new department of stewardship and promotion was created. One of the major responsibilities of the new position will be the development and editing of the Capital Baptist, official publication of the D. C. Convention.

The editing of the Capital Baptist and general promotion work for the Convention has been done on a part-time basis by James O. Duncan, pastor of the Hillandale Baptist Church. Stewardship promotion has been done through the Religious Education department. This will be transferred to the new department of Stewardship and Promotion. The executive board hopes to have a man in this new position by the first of the year.

An increased budget over last year was approved by the Convention. The \$259,376 budget will be divided 70 per cent for mission work in the District of Columbia and 30 per cent for world missions. The 30 per cent will be divided equally between the American and Southern Baptist Conventions, since the D. C. Convention is dually aligned.

The convention received two new churches into its fellowship, while it spent a major portion of time considering the expulsion of another. The Convention unanimously approved a resolution from its executive board that the Temple Hill Baptist Church, Bethesda, Md., of which William B. Adams is pastor, be given until April, 1960, to show satisfactory reasons why membership in the convention should not be terminated.

The church claims that the convention owes it \$7,500 in back payments for operation expenses. Also Pastor Adams has filed a libel suit asking for \$750,000 damages against the convention officers, S. Lewis Morgan, Jr., former president, John M. Firmin, former vice president and now president, and M. Chandler Stith, executive secretary. In another libel suit against the convention's attorney, Alvin O. West, Adams is asking \$75,000 damages.

The convention unanimously approved a recommendation of its executive board to ratify all previous actions of the board in respect to the Temple Hill church and to make provision for defense in the libel suit against the convention officers.

In its resolutions the D. C. Convention asked Congress to make provision for additional judges for the Juvenile Court of the District of Columbia in order to help curb the increasing crime rate. The convention also asked its Christian Life Committee to give special attention to the matter of church property taxation during the coming year.

Following an appeal from the convention president a resolution was passed calling on the convention leadership "by every possible means to foster a continued improvement of understanding among the races represented in our community." An effort will be made to work with Negro Baptist leadership in reaching th more than 400,000 Negroes in the District of Columbia.

-30-

November 19, 1959

Baptist Press

Baptist Leader Flies
High, Puts 'Em To Sleep

WASHINGTON--(BP)--Mix-ups occur so unexpectedly!

In his opening remarks to the District of Columbia Baptist Convention Porter W. Routh, executive secretary of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, told of a recent conversation with a restaurant waitress. He was in a town for a church dedication. The same day the community was dedicating its airport and its hospital.

"Are you here for the dedication?" the waitress asked as she served his breakfast.

"Yes," Routh answered.

"And how high do you fly?" the query continued.

Just what connection might flying high have to do with his message, Routh wondered, as he explained that he was not in town for the airport dedication. Many preachers fly high while they preach, but he didn't think he was guilty.

"I hope you don't have to put anybody to sleep before the dedication!" the waitress then quipped, assuming that he might be a visiting doctor.

He does have an honorary doctor's degree, but not in the field of medicine.

"You see, I am not here for the dedication of either the airport or the hospital but for the auditorium of the First Baptist Church," he explained.

"Oh!" groaned the waitress. She was now in real doubt as to whether he would fly high or put somebody to sleep.

BAPTIST PRESS

1628-16TH ST. N.W.
WASHINGTON 9, D. C.



Theo Sommerkamp
Executive Committee
127 Ninth Avenue, North
Nashville, Tennessee

X

THE WASHINGTON OFFICE OF THE BAPTIST PRESS

WATCH FOR THE (BP) CREDIT