

FROM ATLANTA OFFICE

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Agency Executive Proof  
Training Union Success

ATLANTA, Ga.--(BP)--If you want proof of the success of Baptist Training Union, consider the example of a Baptist leader in Nashville. The agency he heads today directs the Training Union program in the Southern Baptist Convention.

James L. Sullivan of Nashville, executive secretary, Baptist Sunday School Board, unfolded some of his childhood Training Union experiences in a small Mississippi church while speaking to over 4000 assembled here for a Baptist Training Union Convention.

The board is sponsoring the three-day meeting.

Sullivan said that the first time he led in public prayer, he was in Training Union.

"I could hardly wait for my ninth birthday so I could join the old B.Y.P.U., as it was called then" he said. (B.Y.P.U. stood for Baptist Young People's Union, forerunner of the Baptist Training Union.)

"At that time," Sullivan continued, "there was no organization for anyone under nine." Baptist Training Union, a church training movement which meets prior to Sunday night services in Southern Baptist churches, today has a nursery through adult program.

"The first organization I was ever president of was a Training Union," Sullivan said. The Baptist agency he now directs publishes hundreds of quarterlies and books for religious education in the churches. It is the largest of about 20 Southern Baptist agencies.

"The queen of my life (Mrs. Sullivan) was an Intermediate girl who sat across the room in Training Union. My first denominational office was in the old B.Y.P.U.," he continued.

The theme of the convention here is the theme of Training Union itself--training to become better church members. It provides studies in church practice, Baptist doctrine, church history, and related activities.

Speaking a few minutes before her husband's keynote address, Mrs. Sullivan told the 4000 persons what daily Bible reading--one of the main emphases of Training Union--has meant to the Sullivan family. They have three children.

She said daily Bible reading helped provide a sense of family unity. "We've always had Scripture reading and prayer at the breakfast table. To us, this was as necessary as the bacon and eggs," Mrs. Sullivan explained.

Because the daily Bible reading selections are printed in quarterlies used by all members of the family, each reads the same passage each day. This is true even if the family members are separated.

Mrs. Sullivan told of their daughter writing home how much it meant to her, in a distant city, to be reading the same passage of the Bible that her parents were reading at home.

Bible Called Standard  
For Baptist Decisions

12/29.59

ATLANTA, Ga.--(BP)--The Bible is the standard on which Baptists base their doctrines, methods, and church programs, 4000 Training Union Conventioneers here were told.

James L. Sullivan, Nashville, executive secretary of the Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, explained that from the Bible Baptists derive:

---The importance of the individual soul in God's sight.

---Their emphasis on stewardship as the plan of God for carrying on his world-wide program.

---The fact that God wants Christians to have fellowship together, and to worship and pray.

---An emphasis on study of the Bible.

---Their desire to work, putting the teachings of the Bible into practice.

---Their magnifying of the church "because God does."

Sullivan declared that "our generation is in danger of facing an open book--open because our forefathers died to make it so---with closed eyes."

He added that the Bible is "not just a book of the month. It is a book of the ages."

The Training Union Convention, a three-day gathering, is sponsored by the Sunday School Board.

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Southern Baptists Accent  
Quality Church Members

12/29/59

ATLANTA, Ga.--(BP)--Members of the Southern Baptist Convention's more than 31,000 affiliated churches evidenced interest here in becoming better church members.

More than 10,000 Baptists dropped in on Atlanta for a three-day nationwide Baptist Training Union Convention, the first of this magnitude. They hailed from virtually every state in the Union with Alaska and Hawaii represented.

In a day when emphasis sometimes appears to be on the quantity--which in church circles means the number of members gained each year--this convention demonstrated a companion interest in quality--church members who train themselves to be better Christians.

The purpose of the Baptist Training Union, an evening education program conducted in Southern Baptist churches on Sundays, is to train for better church membership through study of doctrine, history, denominational methods, and Christian principles.

This convention had as its purpose training the leaders of the Training Union--a kind of teacher training school. The 10,000 leaders who were here will return to their churches to conduct classes locally, instilling the information learned while in Atlanta.

The Baptist leaders left for their home towns in time to be there for New Year's Eve watchnight prayer services, ushering in the 1960 year of emphasis on teaching and training among about 18 million Baptists in America.

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This year is one of six in a Baptist Jubilee Advance, leading to the 150th anniversary of nationally-organized Baptist work. Goals for the year of teaching and training were stressed during the Training Union Convention, and one of the convention's main purposes was to launch this year.

Baptist Training Union goals for 1960 include enlistment of more members in Bible reading and prayer each day; organizing Training Unions in 3000 more Southern Baptist churches; every Baptist family in Training Union; better leadership, and greater evangelism and missionary spirit and giving through the Training Union.

Latest reports indicated there are 23,758 Southern Baptist churches with Training Union out of a total of 31,498 churches. Training Union aggregate membership is 2,503,920 out of 9,206,758 members of Southern Baptist churches.

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Pastors to Receive  
Revival Plan Books

12/29/59

DALLAS, Tex.--(BP)--Revival plan book for 1960 will be mailed to Southern Baptist pastors according to Vernon Yearby, Dallas, associate in the Home Mission Board's division of evangelism.

Good reception of the 40,000 copies of the first edition in 1959 led to the revision and distribution of the new book. New features such as leaflet reprints for local church committees and direct pieces will give pastors and churches additional assistance.

The revival plan book faces three dangers according to Yearby: depending on methods without the power of the Holy Spirit, taking short-cuts assuming that the methods are unworkable, and using part of the suggestions but omitting key ones.

The 1961 edition will include a year's evangelism program for the local church and can be employed for several years with the use of annual supplements Yearby said.

The idea of distributing detailed revival plans which would "take the 'gadget' out of evangelism and give an orderly and complete program of preparation and promotion" started when Yearby was a pastor in 1950.

Later, as secretary of evangelism in Alabama, he prepared plan books for local churches, and distributed them at a meeting of state secretaries of evangelism. Yearby's first assignment after joining the evangelism staff in 1958 was the development of a revival plan book for the Southern Baptist Convention.

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