

February 4, 1961

Pollard 'Unalarmed,'
Says Baptists Strong

MEMPHIS--(BP)--President Ramsey Pollard of the Southern Baptist Convention declared here the denomination is not losing its strength.

"There's no need to hit the panic button," he said, when asked his own personal opinion about a reported "recession" in the Convention.

Those who have claimed a "recession" have pointed to fewer converts this year than last, and to fewer commitments by young people to the ministry and other church-related vocations.

They also have said that giving has not met goals.

"Those things fluctuate," the Memphis minister said. "They always will." He was referring to the variation in these statistics from year to year.

"I wouldn't like one of the deacons in my church getting up in church business meeting with a sour face and a crying towel just because the offering fell off one Sunday," Pollard said.

"Churches don't stay on an even keel; the Convention doesn't stay on an even keel because it is made up of churches," he added.

Pollard made his remarks in appearing before the Baptist Public Relations Association here. The association was conducting its annual conference and workshop. To this workshop came public relations staff from Baptist hospitals, colleges, seminaries, children's homes, executive boards, and other agencies.

The Convention president said it wasn't "good public relations" to take the front pages to report the recession, to give the idea that "Southern Baptists were falling apart."

"God's still on his throne; our churches are all right; we're still strong," he announced. "In spite of our worries, our people gave more through the Cooperative Program last year than ever before."

Although Southern Baptists gave a record amount for home and foreign work of their denomination, it was still short of the hoped-for goal in 1960.

Pollard gave this explanation for declining commitments to the ministry. Partially it was because many of the student ministers who swelled seminary enrollments in recent years made their commitments during the war while in the military service.

Pollard also said perhaps "we're calling some of these people ourselves, and God hasn't called them."

He told the public relations group the most difficult issues facing him in his two-year term as Convention president were: (1) the race issue, "which has been boiling all through my term," and (2) the Presidential campaign last year, in which Pollard was outspoken on church-state issues.

He said his stand on the campaign "religious issue"--he was a severe critic of Roman Catholic Church policies and practices in church-state affairs--had brought in "multiplied thousands" of letters.

Asked would he be as vocal again on this campaign issue if he could repeat history, Pollard said, "yes."

"Although he was elected President by a narrow margin, he is our President and we ought to support him," he said. "This doesn't mean we should close our eyes, or seal our lips. Right or wrong, though, we should pray for Kennedy."

Pollard did not elaborate on the race issue. His remarks were in answer to questions from the floor in a demonstration press conference for the association.

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Survey Reveals Baptist
Growth In Colorado

(2-4-61)

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.--(BP)--In 10 years Southern Baptists have become the fourth largest Protestant denomination in Colorado Springs. The report was made after a survey of the city by the department of survey and special studies of the denomination's Home Mission Board in Atlanta, Ga., in cooperation with Colorado churches.

Leonard G. Irwin of Atlanta, associate secretary of the department, directed the Colorado Springs survey and one in nearby Pueblo. He said that all the evangelical groups cooperated in providing 490 workers to reach 58,910 people in Colorado Springs and 655 workers to reach 64,630 in Pueblo.

Presbyterian and Methodist are the largest Protestant denominations in Colorado Springs where Southern Baptists have only seven churches but rank fourth in membership with 937 members. Lutheran and Nazarene churches are the outstanding growing Protestant groups, other than Southern Baptists, Irwin said. Roman Catholics are the largest group in both cities, with 21 per cent in Colorado Springs and 33 per cent in Pueblo.

Irwin attributes Southern Baptists' rapid growth in Colorado Springs to 1) the leadership, 2) increase in military personnel, and 3) support by churches in more established Southern Baptist states by sponsoring missions and helping with church buildings.

The average length of residence is six years in this town of 80,000 with three military installations and a university. Thousands of tourists flock here yearly to view Pike's Peak.

In nearby Pueblo, an industrial city with outlying agricultural areas and a population of 117,000, the average length of residence is 18.6 years. This, in part, accounts for Southern Baptists' growth there, Irwin says.

Other reasons given were that work was started late. Most Southern Baptists who had moved into the area had already been absorbed into local groups. With only three exceptions, pastors of Southern Baptist churches in Pueblo must supplement their salaries with secular employment.

A more than 92 per cent-complete survey of assigned areas in both cities showed that each is above the national average in church membership. Irwin reported a church membership of more than 70 per cent in both cities.

One-fourth of the people in both the Colorado cities are unchurched and a small per cent of church members not affiliated with local groups.

"Both Colorado Springs and Pueblo are very promising for future Southern Baptist growth," said Irwin.

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Jim Sapp President
Of Publicity Group

(2-4-61)

MEMPHIS--(BP)--James M. Sapp, promotion director, Baptist Brotherhood Commission here, is the new president of the Baptist Public Relations Association.

He succeeds Badgett Dillard of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. The association includes men and women who prepare news, films, radio and T V programs, posters, and other communications devices for Southern Baptists.

William C. Bolton, public relations director for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisiana, is the new program vice-president. Lloyd Wright of

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Dallas, director of public relations for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, is membership vice-president.

The association reelected Harry R. Koontz, of the public relations staff at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., as secretary-treasurer.

R. T. McCartney, director of public relations for Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, will edit the association's monthly newsletter.

The association elected officers at its annual conference and workshop, held in Memphis this year with the Brotherhood Commission and Bellevue Baptist Church as hosts.

New Orleans Seminary and the Southern Baptist Hospital at New Orleans will be host to the 1962 workshop Jan. 29-31.

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Arizona Leases Yuma
Parkview Hospital

(2-4-61)

YUMA, Ariz.--(BP)--The Baptist Hospital Association of Arizona, Inc., and Yuma County Hospital Board agreed to a leasing of Parkview Hospital here by the Baptist agency.

The agency is part of the Baptist General Convention of Arizona (cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention).

The lease agreement for the two-year-old hospital calls for \$55,000 a year lease payment. Parkview is the only hospital in Yuma and is the only hospital operated by Southern Baptists in the state.

Officials of both groups announced that the transition to the new management will be made in such a way that no slow-up in the hospital operation will be caused. The present hospital administrator will be retained.

The hospital cost an estimated \$1-1/2 million.

The Baptist hospital corporation is separate from but under the direction of the Baptist general convention. Members of its board will be elected by the convention.

The board reported that the name of the hospital will be changed to include the word "Baptist."

Charles L. McKay, executive secretary of the general convention, Phoenix, added, "This will be a self-supporting work. It should not affect our Cooperative Program allocations to agencies.:"

The hospital administrator, Talton L. Francis, is a member of the First Southern Baptist Church of Yuma. He came to Yuma from DeRidder, La., where he administered Beauregard Memorial Baptist Hospital.

Chairman of the hospital board for the Baptist group is Millard Box, pastor of First Southern Church, Yuma.

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Brotherhood Asks
More Campcraft

(2-4-61)

MEMPHIS, Tenn.--(BP)--An accelerated camping program for boys was recommended by the promotion committee of the Baptist Brotherhood Commission at its annual meeting here.

The committee suggested that the Brotherhood Commission provide the faculty members, State Brotherhood leaders would arrange the sites and provide the men to

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be trained.

The men trained in the state camps will hold similar training sessions for church Royal Ambassador Counselors on the associational level.

Camcraft is an important part of the new program for Royal Ambassadors which is being introduced Oct. 1 to Royal Ambassador chapters throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. The Ambassadors are a missionary group for boys.

Frank Black, assistant secretary of the Brotherhood Commission here, said the next course on camcraft techniques will be taught May 1-6 at Mount Lebanon Baptist Assembly near Dallas, Tex.

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January Income Pic
Shows Gifts Are Less

(2-4-61)

NASHVILLE--(BP)--The news about January receipts for the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program isn't good.

The Convention's share of receipts is only \$1,397,480 compared with \$1,555,469 coming in during January, 1960. The 1961 annual budget of the Convention is, of course, higher than the 1960 budget.

Even designated receipts--boosted in January by Lottie Moon Christmas Offering income--are down over January, 1960. Total designated receipts for January, 1961 are \$2,091,336 compared with the previous January's \$2,255,838.

The report from Convention Treasurer Porter Routh here includes only that part of Cooperative Program and designated receipts going to agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention. Funds kept for state projects and local church activities are not counted.

Although most Lottie Moon foreign mission offering money is contributed in the churches in December, it is reflected in Southern Baptist Convention designated receipts during the early months of the following year. Churches forward their money to their state Baptist treasurer, who in turn forwards to the Southern Baptist Convention treasurer amounts due it.

Fourteen state conventions sent in more to the Cooperative Program in January, 1961 than during the previous January, but 14 states sent in less. The 14 states sending in less money overcame the gains from the 14 sending in more.

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T V Social Revolution
Being Used By Churches

MEMPHIS--(BP)--T V sets are outnumbering bathtubs.

This social revolution is not without its impact on the churches. Already star-studded evening dramas on television are reducing attendance at Sunday night worship services.

Many churches are answering this challenge rather than surrendering to what may seem overwhelming odds. These churches are using T V to increase Godliness.

Such a church is Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis. It's the second largest congregation in the Southern Baptist Convention and largest east of the Mississippi River. Its membership nears 10,000.

Three years ago, this church, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its eminent pastor--Dr. R. G. Lee--bought between \$50,000 and \$60,000 worth of T V equipment. It began telecasting its Sunday morning worship hour.

Dr. Lee has since retired, although he appears in the pulpit occasionally at the request of his successor, Ramsey Pollard.

The fact that Dr. Lee was for three years president of the Southern Baptist Convention and is famed world over for his sermon, "Pay Day Some Day," doubtless made Bellevue a photogenic church.

This was continued with the calling of Ramsey Pollard during his two-year tenure as S B C president to succeed Lee.

Its chandeliered auditorium; its massive, robed choir, its large attendance--even on Sunday evenings--add to its T V charms and high audience ratings. The church is second only to First Baptist Church of Dallas in membership.

Bellevue Church is not by a long shot the only Southern Baptist church telecasting its services. But it has gained recognition by buying the very latest in equipment, even having some which commercial T V stations here do not possess. For example, a telephoto lens 25 inches long that shows Pollard's head and shoulders close-up although the camera is in the rear of the balcony, far from the pulpit.

The church is highly pleased with the T V activity, and so is the station (W H B Q-T V, Memphis) which carries it from 10:45 a.m. to noon every Sunday. This is the report from a man who is both a member of Bellevue and a member of the T V station's staff.

The church pays \$200 per Sunday for this time, a reduced rate, according to Bob Lewis, the person recounting Bellevue's T V experience. It is reduced rate because the church has its own equipment and because it has trained four of its young men to operate the cameras. Then, too, the station doesn't have to shuttle cameras back and forth each week.

One of the miracles about getting on the air was that an expected six months' red tape in securing permits from authorities was cut to only 30 days.

The church feels it has a bargain in the T V program, Lewis said. Lewis and one other professional in T V production are consultants. The four cameramen give their time as a service to their church. They were picked because of their interest in photography.

How else could a preacher reach from 23,000 to 75,000 persons every Sunday morning as effectively and personally for \$200? He asked. The audience statistics are based on a New York research firm's data on the least and most persons who have tuned in Bellevue on any given Sunday.

The church has a full-time visitor on its staff. Many of his contacts are a

follow-through on "fan" mail to the church and the station because of the T V program, Lewis said.

Many of these people are interested in becoming members of the church; still others have spiritual problems and wish personal counsel. Many are led to professions of faith in Christ in follow-through counsel, Lewis noted.

The Sunday service reaches many who can not come to church. One home for aging women in another city reported the ladies dress in their Sunday best, and come to the home's sun parlor to participate in Bellevue's Sunday morning worship.

Participation and not simply viewing is the emphasis by Bellevue in reaching its T V thousands, Lewis continued.

Success of the Sunday telecast led the church to branch out in its television ministry. The church makes frequent use of 10-second and 20-second "spot" announcements, or short commercials, on T V.

Consider the time the renowned Dr. Lee was retiring. The T V "spots" (25 of them) the week before his final Sunday as pastor showed Dr. Lee's picture on the screen. The announcer said, "Come hear Dr. R. G. Lee preach his final sermon as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church."

The very next week, the church used 25 more "spots" to urge viewers to hear Ramsey Pollard's first sermon as the new pastor. It flashed Pollard's picture across the picture tube. These "spots" followed or preceded popular evening T V dramas on week nights, when viewing would be at its peak.

Other T V ventures have included the large choir singing "The Messiah" two successive Christmases, and providing Thanksgiving music and other specials.

Labor problems over non-union cameramen (such as the four young men picked to man the camera) have not cropped up at Bellevue. But other Baptist churches in other cities have reported this to be a barrier to launching similar T V ventures. The churches can't afford the going rate per hour to employ union operators.