

January 10, 1963

**Kennedy Visits Baptist
Church For Kerr Rites**

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Oklahoma Baptist leaders and national and state government officials assembled in First Baptist Church here to pay last respects to a Baptist layman, Sen. Robert S. Kerr.

Kerr died Jan. 1 in Washington.

The national prominence of Kerr, who was recognized as one of the most powerful figures in Congress, was evidenced by the presence at the funeral of President John F. Kennedy. Vice-president Lyndon B. Johnson, 28 senators, Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon and several other national leaders also attended.

President Kennedy flew here from Palm Beach, Fla., to attend the funeral. On his three-hour visit the President was driven directly to the church for the funeral, then to Rose Hill Cemetery. Then he returned to his plane. Kerr will be interred here for a while and then moved to his family's home site near Ada.

Herschel H. Hobbs, pastor of First Church, where Kerr had been a member since 1931, greeted the President on his arrival at the church. Hobbs, Southern Baptist Convention president, had met Kennedy in Washington last year in a meeting arranged by Kerr.

Assisting Hobbs in the funeral service were Frederic Brown Harris, U. S. Senate chaplain, and John W. Raley, chancellor of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, wh was a close friend of the late senator.

The entire 1,300-seat auditorium of the church was reserved to accommodate government officials, business associates, Baptist leaders and others associated closely with Kerr. One section was reserved for members of the Sunday school class Kerr taught at First Church for several years.

Fifty Oklahoma Baptist leaders were seated in the choir loft. The auditorium was banked with flowers, though Kerr's family had requested that instead of flowers money be contributed to the current expansion drive for Baptist Memorial Hospital here, in which Kerr was playing an active role.

Despite a light rain which fell throughout most of the service, several hundred persons lined the streets near the church to pay their respects, as well as to catch a glimpse of the dignitaries arriving. Loud speakers carried the service to other areas of the church building and to the crowd outside.

Kerr's interest in the growth of Baptist institutions was evidenced by large contributions for the construction of a cottage at Oklahoma Baptist Children's City, dedicated to the memory of his father, and the Mrs. W. S. Kerr Memorial women's dormitory at Oklahoma Baptist University, honoring his mother.

In 1949 Sen. Kerr was elected vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention and later named to the Radio and Television Commission of the Convention. He was vice-president of the board of directors of the Oklahoma Baptist Foundation before his election as its president in 1960.

The senator carried his Bible wherever he traveled. His personal secretary, Lucie Christiansen, relates one specific incident in which she discovered him reading the Bible to a man in his office. She recalls that he was reading 91st Psalm and asked the office visitor pointedly, "Do you believe that?"

The secretary remembers he asked this question three times and added, "If you do, you have to live it."

His church was a very personal matter. He once said, "I give my money to my church but I do not control it. I let them decide how they want to use it."

During the last 10 years of his life Sen. Kerr's philanthropies included more than \$1 million in gifts to Oklahoma Baptist University.

A teetotaler, the senator often startled people at Washington parties by booming out, "Alcohol has cost more, destroyed more property, killed more people and created more ill health and misery than all the wars in the entire history of the human race."

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Balcony Tests Staged
To Insure Its Safety

(1-10-63)

JEFFERSON CITY, Tenn. (BP)--Construction tests with extra heavy weight loadings are being carried out to insure the safety of a balcony in the First Baptist Church here.

A portion of the balcony fell during a Christmas program being conducted by Carson-Newman College (Baptist), which used the church auditorium for its chapel services.

About 100 students were in the falling section but only 25 received minor injuries.

College officials said 70,000 pounds of sand would be loaded on the balcony. A measuring device would show a sag as slight as 1/1000 of an inch.

Construction company officials said additional steel bracing would make the replaced balcony able to withstand five times the normal weight load when the balcony is filled to capacity with people.

Carson-Newman President D. Harley Fite said he mailed letters to parents of college students explaining the work being done to insure safety. The letter included a drawing showing the new steel bracing being installed.

Fite said chapel programs will be held in the church again after the balcony is repaired.

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Wayland College Names
McClung New President

(1-10-63)

PLAINVIEW, Tex. (BP)--The pastor of the First Baptist Church of Plainview, Roy C. McClung, has been elected as the eighth president of Wayland Baptist College here.

McClung, a native of Oklahoma and former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Ada, Okla., will assume the Wayland presidency July 1.

He will succeed A. Hope Owen, who retires June 30 after 10 years as president of the Texas Baptist school. Owen will become president emeritus of Wayland.

McClung, 41, has been pastor of the 3,400-member church here for the past four years. He was pastor in Ada from 1954-1958 and pastor of the Ninth and O Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., 1947-1954.

A graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, McClung holds the doctor of theology degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

He is a member of the executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Wayland board of trustees, and is president of district nine of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

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Baptists Ask Report
On Persecution Charges

WASHINGTON (BP)--Officials of the Baptist World Alliance asked the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to invite an impartial international committee to investigate charges of religious persecution in the Soviet Union.

At the same time a letter was sent to Secretary of State Dean Rusk asking clarification of incidents in which 32 Siberian Christians were turned away from the United States Embassy in Moscow.

In a letter delivered to the Russian ambassador in Washington, Josef Nordenhaug, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, and C. Emanuel Carlson, chairman of the alliance's commission on religious liberty and human rights, referred to news reports about evangelical Christians appearing at the U. S. Embassy in Moscow, "voicing their sense of religious persecution."

The Baptist leaders suggested that the investigating committee be composed of representatives of the United Nations, the World Council of Churches and the Red Cross. They would report back "to world Christendom and the governments of the United Nations."

The Baptist World Alliance is a fellowship organization of 24 million Baptists in 100 countries. It lists 540,000 members in the Soviet Union.

Nordenhaug's letter to Rusk said:

"We also respectfully request a clarification of the reasons why the United States Embassy in Moscow was not in a position to render these people more substantial aid than has been reported."

The letter, which Nordenhaug and Carlson took personally to the Russian Embassy, made four points:

1. "We have been deeply disturbed by the news reports about the evangelical Christians' appearing at the U. S. Embassy in Moscow voicing their sense of religious persecution.

2. "We understand that these evangelical Christians have been included for government purposes with the Baptists, but reports indicate that they are not members of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists which hold membership in the Baptist World Alliance.

3. "Regardless of their precise religious convictions, the Baptist World Alliance desires to express its deep sympathy with them in their feeling of religious oppression and to express the concern that religious liberty be accorded to all people of various religious convictions in every nation. The Baptist World Alliance has always stood for full religious liberty for everyone, which includes the right not only to worship according to the dictates of one's conscience, but also the right to propagate one's religious faith, and practice one's religion without civic disability.

4. "In numerous meetings with Baptist leaders from Russia, and in extended visits with Baptists in Russia we have observed their patriotic commitment to their home land and their deep concern for international good will and peace. This leads us to desire more information regarding the beliefs and practices of the evangelical Christians who came to the United States Embassy in Moscow and regarding the pressures of policies which brought them to undertake the long trip from their homes.

"The USSR Constitution guarantees the Soviet citizens the right to religious worship. We would be interested to know from the secretariat for religious affairs in Moscow whether some local authority may have violated this guarantee in the case of these evangelical Christians.

"Accordingly it is our wish that a group of known and responsible leaders from international organizations of governments and of churches might be given free access to the facts and the people involved. The United Nations maintains a commission on human rights, the Red Cross deals constantly with human plight, and the World Council of Churches supports a special agency, the commission of the churches on international affairs. Respected leaders from these organizations could constitute a fact-finding group.

"We respectfully through the channels of your government request the secretariat for religious affairs in Moscow to invite several leaders from these organizations to visit the known areas of the evangelical Christians and to bring together full report which can be shared with world Christendom and the governments of the United Nations."

The letter concluded, "It is our hope that the serious tensions represented in the recent incidents may be found to arise out of misunderstandings or grievances which can be remedied. Such findings could serve significantly to build international confidence and to further the peace aspirations of all people of good will."

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5 Agencies Get Over
\$1 Million In 1962

(1-10-63)

NASHVILLE (BP)--Five Southern Baptist Convention agencies received more than \$1 million during 1962.

Reports from Treasurer Porter Routh here indicate the SBC Foreign Mission Board received \$19,053,302 and the Home Mission Board got \$6,212,041. The total disbursed was \$32.6 million.

Three Convention theological seminaries--Southern, Southwestern and Midwestern--received slightly more than \$1 million.

The Foreign Mission Board's total included \$9,251,789 through the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, conducted under sponsorship of Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the SBC.

It received \$8,452,410 through the SBC financial plan, the Cooperative Program. The balance was in miscellaneous special gifts.

The Home Mission Board received \$2,860,043 through another Woman's Missionary Union specially conducted fund-raising program, the Annie Armstrong Offering. The Cooperative Program supplied \$3,127,156 and other designations furnished the rest of the total.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, largest of six SBC seminaries in enrolment, received \$1,318,220 with only \$8842 of that in designations.

Of the \$1,026,340 disbursed to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, the oldest of the six, \$1,024,265 came through the Cooperative Program.

The newest SBC seminary, Midwestern at Kansas City, Mo., received \$1,008,326, all but \$1632 through the Cooperative Program.

Agencies receiving over \$500,000, with the portion of it through the Cooperative Program indicated in parentheses, were:

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, \$875,500 (\$864,047); Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C., \$786,267 (\$783,555); and Radio and Television Commission, Fort Worth, \$687,290 (\$681,623).

Those above \$250,000, with the same information, were:

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., \$437,934 (\$437,474), and Annuity Board, Dallas, \$255,187 (\$250,000).

None of the other agencies exceeded \$1000 in income through designations. Only total amounts received, nearly all through the Cooperative Program, are reported below:

SBC budget fund, \$200,514; Brotherhood Commission, Memphis, \$188,479; Carver School of Missions and Social Work, Louisville, \$160,358; American Baptist Theological Seminary, Nashville, jointly operated by Negro Baptists, \$113,492.

Southern Baptist Hospital, maintaining institutions in New Orleans and Jacksonville, Fla., \$75,900; Education Commission, Nashville, \$62,078; Public Affairs Committee, which helps operate the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, \$60,091.

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Historical Commission, Nashville, \$44,569; Southern Baptist Foundation, Nashville, \$40,560; and Christian Life Commission, Nashville, \$37,362.

The Baptist World Alliance, with offices in Washington, received \$70,000 through the SBC operating budget and \$575 in designated gifts. To the Woman's Missionary Union, not supported by the Convention proper, was passed along \$344 in designated gifts.

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Reid Will Continue
As Temporary Head

(1-10-63)

MONTGOMERY (BP)--A. Hamilton Reid, executive secretary of the Alabama Baptist State Executive Board, will continue to serve temporarily in the top Baptist executive position.

According to J. R. White, Montgomery, chairman of the executive board, Reid officially began retirement Jan. 1, after 18 years as executive secretary.

"The executive board has asked Dr. Reid to continue his service to the denomination for an indefinite period until his successor has been chosen. We are grateful that Dr. Reid has consented to postpone his retirement so that he may render this service to Alabama Baptists," said White.

White reported that a committee headed by Alvin H. Hopson of Huntsville is at work to name the new executive secretary. "The committee has no report to make at this time," stated White, "and in the meantime, we continue to look to Dr. Reid for his excellent leadership of Alabama Baptists."

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