

April 20, 1963

5 Negroes Seated In Alabama Church

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--Five Negroes who worshipped Easter Sunday in the white First Baptist Church here got a hand-shake from the pastor as they left and were greeted by several other church members.

Three arrived about five minutes before the 11 o'clock service began and the other two about five minutes after the service had started, Pastor Earl Stallings reported.

They included four girls whom Stallings said appeared to be college coeds around 18 to 22 years old and a man whom the New York Times identified as an associate of Martin Luther King, Negro Baptist minister and leader of Negro street demonstrations here.

As the Negroes entered the church, they received visitors' cards and the five were seated together on a pew about four or five rows from the back of the church, according to Stallings. Two girls wrote on the cards they belonged to Baptist churches.

"They did not notify us they were coming. The press and television called us about 10 o'clock to advise us they were coming," the pastor commented. "We had expected about a dozen to come to each of the churches involved."

Five or six churches were visited by the Negroes. They were seated also at First Presbyterian Church but turned away at the other churches.

As they left, one of the five handed Stallings a sealed envelope. It contained a mimeographed letter of Easter greetings "to our brethren in Christ." It explained they chose to "kneel-in" on Easter Sunday "as a day of new beginnings."

Stallings said he knew of no rebuke or unkind word spoken to the Negroes by the church members. He said if they came to church again, they would have the same reception.

"We had intended to seat them for years," Stallings declared.

Just before Easter, Stallings joined with clergymen of Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant denominations in Birmingham in saying of the new demonstrations by Negroes:

"We do not believe that these days of new hope are days when extreme measures are justified in Birmingham."

To the local Negro community, these clergymen said:

"We strongly urge our own Negro community to withdraw support from these demonstrations, and to unite locally in working peacefully for a better Birmingham.

"When rights are consistently denied, a cause should be pressed in the courts and negotiations among local leaders, and not in the streets."

Typhoon Karen Blows
Good Wind For SBC

By the Baptist Press

Typhoon Karen blew a windfall for the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program.

When the storm raged across the Pacific island of Guam, it knocked Calvary Baptist Church off its foundation and moved the building eight feet, the church treasurer reported.

The insurance company paid the church on the basis of a total loss and said the church could have salvage rights to the building.

The man employed by the church to put the building together again said it "just seemed to fall into place as he worked," the church wrote the office of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee in Nashville.

Enclosed with the letter was a check for \$1216 to the SBC Cooperative Program. A small part of the money will work its way back to Baptist missions on Guam, sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board, which gets the major share of Cooperative Program funds when they are divided among SBC agencies.

Apparently the successful rebuilding of the Guam church enabled it to meet its Cooperative Program payment. Calvary Church is giving 11 per cent of its budget through the Cooperative Program, compared with 10 per cent last year.

Not only that, but the church also sent along 11 per cent of what was received from the insurance damage payment.

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Fire Guts Apartment
At New Orleans School

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A fire has gutted one efficiency apartment at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here. Before it was put out, it damaged three other apartments.

The apartment occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Robin A. Thomas, Miami, Fla., was a total loss. Neither of the Thomases was at home when the fire struck. Thomas was at work and his wife was studying at the seminary library.

Couples living in the three apartments which suffered smoke and water damage include the David Hulseys, Hattiesburg, Miss.; The Bill Towns', Eunice, La., and the Victor Johnsons, Mendenhall, Miss.

Cause of the fire and total extent of damage was not immediately determined.

The couples were moved next day to other apartments. The student council is conducting a canvas of the student body to help the couples replace damaged and lost property. The faculty and administration are considering ways in which they can be of help to the affected students.

Already, some furniture and groceries have been replaced.

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Folks and Facts.....

(4-20-63)

.....Dr. William Marion Whiteside, 87, retired superintendent of the South Carolina Baptist Hospital, died April 13 at the hospital in Columbia. Dr. Whiteside served the hospital for 39 years beginning in December, 1918. He retired in May, 1957. (BP)

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Georgia Governor
Kills Pinball Bill

ATLANTA (BP)--The governor of Georgia has vetoed here a controversial "pinball bill" which opponents said would have opened the floodgates to legalized gambling if he had signed it into law.

Governor Carl E. Sanders, a Baptist Sunday school teacher, said the proposed law "would have the effect of the state of Georgia legalizing, sanctioning and licensing a certain class of devices which would lend themselves readily to gambling, namely, pinball machines. This, in my opinion, would have harmful moral effects in our state. It would be deleterious to our youth and damaging to the general public welfare."

The bill would have legalized pinball machines which allowed up to 20 free games as prizes. It was passed in the closing hours of the state general assembly and would have become law if the governor had not vetoed it.

The governor's press secretary said a flood of mail urging Gov. Sanders to veto the bill "helped the governor to determine in his own mind that the pinball bill was not in the best interests of the general public."

Over 850 persons opposed the bill in writing, while about 100 favored letting it become law.

The governor's office said an editorial campaign by the Christian Index, Georgia Baptist weekly newspaper, was a major factor in the volume of protest against the bill.

Index Editor John J. Hurt urged Baptists to wire or write the governor to protest the bill. Over 500 protests were received within a week after the editorial was published.

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Virginians Testify
On Mission Offerings

(4-20-63)

RICHMOND (BP)--The Virginia Baptist General Board heard 2-1/2 hours of testimony here on whether two annual mission offerings should be churchwide or be limited to sponsorship of Woman's Missionary Union.

400 persons showed up for the board meeting at which they had been told individuals could air their views. The board allowed five minutes per person and 28 persons expressed opinions.

Observers said the testimony was about evenly divided between the two manners of taking the offerings, used to support Southern Baptist Convention foreign and home mission programs.

The testimony of the individuals was recorded for further study before the general board acts on the issue. The chairman, however, declined to release excerpts of the arguments pro and con for use in news stories.

Through the years, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and another, the Annie Armstrong Offering for home missions, have remained as promotions of the Woman's Missionary Union, a Baptist women's auxiliary.

Some form of action on the special offerings is expected at the meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia this fall, it was reported.

The general board also received a gift of \$125,00 from Howard Sigmon, Roanoke, Va., businessman, to use in erecting a children's building at Eagle Eyrie, the year-round Baptist assembly grounds near Lynchburg.

The building will have the latest facilities and equipment, the board was told.

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