

May 22, 1963

McClain Answers 30
Critics At Detroit

By James O. Duncan

DETROIT (BP)--A Southern Baptist pastor from Atlanta, here to deliver chapel messages to the American Baptist Convention, ran into opposition from about 30 ministers over the race issue.

Roy O. McClain, pastor, First Baptist Church, Atlanta, agreed to meet with the pastors, most of them Negroes, who were disturbed by reports Negroes had not been allowed to worship in the Atlanta church.

The 30 pastors did not constitute any formal organization in the American Baptist Convention or its associated groups, here for their 1963 sessions. They were led by J. C. Herrin of Chapel Hill, N. C., a white American Baptist minister active in interracial and student affairs for his denomination in the South.

McClain told his critics the Atlanta church has no policy on integration or segregation. He said he's had meetings with groups in the church trying to develop a better climate where integration can take place.

"As far as I am personally concerned," McClain said, "I am for integration."

The 30 ministers, who came from all parts of the country, had asked the program committee of the American Convention to remove McClain from the program, but the committee declined.

McClain later delivered the first of three chapel talks to about 5000 Convention delegates. It was a devotional talk entitled, "The Greatest Among You." No reference to the race issue was made by McClain or others when he appeared.

The attendance for McClain's talk was described as normal for this part on the program. There were no boycotts, no one walked out, and no one picketed his appearance.

McClain was asked, when he met with the group, to explain an experience in which a young student was removed from the Atlanta First Church.

The Georgia minister said the incident was perpetrated when a Negro student used his arm to shove aside an usher. Later, two ushers escorted the Negro from the church.

McClain told them the following Sunday he (McClain) said, "I apologize to the whole human race because of the incident." McClain reported Negroes have been worshipping in the Atlanta church for the past 10 years.

McClain said he also had handled the campaign to raise funds for three Negro churches burned in Georgia during racial bitterness.

Martin Luther King Sr., Atlanta Baptist pastor and father of the famed Negro integration leader and minister, classified McClain as the leading pastor in Atlanta, with more influence than any other pastor.

King, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, affiliated with the American Convention, also declared McClain could do more for integration than he is doing. Ebenezer Church is also aligned with Negro Baptist bodies.

In a later meeting, with McClain not present, King said there was "no point in trying to focus attention on McClain when this problem is present in almost everyone of our churches (meaning American Convention churches)."

Clarence Jordan of Koinonia Farms, Americus, Ga., was asked to make a statement to the 30 ministers. Jordan said the racial issue is not the only issue with which the church is faced.

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"If you throw stones at McClain and the race issue, he can throw stones at you on finances," he said.

"Why is it," Jordan asked, "that you preachers always choose those members who drive big, black Cadillacs as your deacons? Jesus said more about a man's possessions than he did about race."

In the Convention proper, a special offering was taken for the Negroes in Birmingham. It amounted to \$4000 and joined \$1000 already earmarked by the American Baptist Convention world relief fund. It was reported most of the money will be used to rebuild the bombed home of D. A. King, brother of Martin Luther King Jr., leader of Birmingham Negro demonstrators.

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Mercer Selects 4
For Honoraries

(5-22-63)

MACON, Ga. (BP)--Hoke Smith Greene, vice-president and dean of faculties at the University of Cincinnati, was to be Mercer University commencement speaker here. Four honorary degrees were to be awarded.

The degrees were to be presented to Greene, Samuel Ernest Vandiver, Roy Oliver McClain, and James Thornton Williams.

The announcement by President Rufus C. Harris also said James William Waters of Macon would get the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award.

Greene, a native of Gray, Ga., and alumnus of this Georgia Baptist school, was named for the honorary doctor of science degree in recognition of his distinguished career as a chemist, educator and university administrator.

In his 29 years at the University of Cincinnati, he has risen steadily in rank from assistant professor of chemical engineering to vice-president and dean of faculties.

The honorary doctor of laws degree was to be conferred upon former Georgia Gov. Vandiver, who, during his tenure as governor, was vice-chairman of the Southern Governors' Conference.

The honorary doctor of divinity degree was selected for Williams, president of the Georgia Baptist Convention and pastor of the First Baptist Church, LaGrange, and McClain, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta.

Williams, recognized for his "leadership in the denomination and his religious activities," was the speaker at the closing exercises of the Mercer University extension department of Christian education.

McClain has served as president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference and been listed by a national weekly magazine as one of the 10 greatest preachers in America.

Waters, pastor of the Mabel White Memorial Baptist Church, Macon, was chosen for the Algernon Sydney Sullivan medallion for "distinguished public service."

He is vice-president of the Georgia Baptist Convention. He serves as chaplain of the Peace Officers Association of Georgia and the fire and police departments of Macon, and is radio chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Radio and Television Commission.

Waters also is an alumnus of Mercer University.

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Titsworth Named
Mountain Minister

(5-22-63)

PINEVILLE, KY. (BP)--Floyd Titsworth, pastor of Mousie (Ky.) Baptist Church, has been chosen as the mountain minister of the year by Clear Creek Baptist School here.

J. Edward Cunningham, Lexington, who directs the mountain mission program for Kentucky Baptist Convention, presented the award.

Titsworth, a native of Arkansas, is prominent in civic and religious affairs and has led his church in a program of planned recreation for the community. Under his leadership, the Mousie Baptist Church has established missions at Caney and at Decoy.

Mousie was named as one of the outstanding rural churches in the state last year by the University of Kentucky.

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American Convention
Explores 4-Way Union

(5-22-63)

DETROIT (BP)--The General Council of the American Baptist Convention voted here to name a six-member committee "to explore merger talks with the Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference, the Disciples of Christ, and the Church of the Brethren."

The committee members were not immediately appointed. There was no indication when the committee would be asked to make a report.

The American Baptist Convention spent the years 1949-1952 discussing merger with the Disciples of Christ but came to no agreement. However, many American Baptist churches use a hymnbook jointly edited by the two denominations. They also held simultaneous conventions in one city at the same time during this period.

The Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference is one of the bodies taking part, along with the American Baptists and five other Conventions, in the Baptist Jubilee Advance.

It follows Baptist doctrines, but differs with other Baptist bodies mainly over the day of weekly worship. The Seventh-Day Conference worships on Saturday.

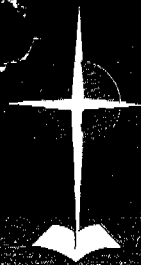
The Church of the Brethren follows autonomy in congregational affairs, a practice of Baptists. It is less formal in church structure and worship format than most Baptist churches.

The American Baptist Convention has 1,521,052 members of 6272 affiliated churches. The Disciples of Christ, also known as the International Convention Christian Churches, has 1,797,466 members in 7968 churches.

The Church of the Brethren has 200,788 members in 1070 churches and the Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference has 61 churches with a total of 5803 members.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION



Executive Committee

May 22, 1963

Subject: CONVENTION ADDRESSES REQUESTED

Dear Editor:

By vote the messengers at the Kansas City meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention requested Baptist Press to distribute three addresses:

(1) The address of Dr. Rabun L. Brantley, which has already been mailed to you.

(2) Dr. Grady Cothen's Friday night address during the Home Mission Board program. It is being mailed to you from Atlanta.

(3) Dr. O. T. Binkley's address on behalf of the seminaries will be mailed from Southeastern Seminary.

It was a pleasure to work with you and your publication during the Convention.

Sincerely,


W. C. Fields

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