

BAPTIST FEATURES

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Editor's Note: K. Owen White, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, is the subject of this 11th Baptist Press feature in a series on SBC leaders.

(Picture sent: cutlines separate)

Methodists Gave Early
Influence to White

By Melvin Steakley
For Baptist Press

K. Owen White and the former Pearl Woodworth had very few dates before they were married, but almost every day now when he's not away from Houston they have lunch together.

"Since the children are gone from home, this usually is our big meal of the day. We like cafeterias, and that's where we usually eat," White said.

During their courtship in Los Angeles, White was working at night as a "car carder" with Pacific Electric Railway. That means he changed advertising cards in the trolleys.

White's habit may be a tipoff on weight control, for at 146 he weighs within five pounds of his weight over 30 years.

Breakfast is a light meal at the White household. He gets up about 7 a.m., helps put together coffee, juice and toast and scans the morning newspaper at the table. By 8 to 8:15 a.m. he's in the church office.

Pastor of the 3500-member Houston First Baptist Church for 10 years, White is the only man in history to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist General Convention of Texas at the same time.

Always a pastor, White says opportunities to teach and be an administrator held no attraction. "The pastorate was my call," he says simply.

Another "first" for White is the fact that he was born in London, England (Aug. 29, 1902). All other SBC presidents have been born in the United States.

Although a physician and surgeon, his father chafed at the confining schedule of a general practitioner, and fretted at the hardship irregular hours forced on his wife.

So the elder White heard the blandishments of recruiters seeking immigrants to Canada, and in 1907 moved his family to a 160-acre "ranch" 46 miles from Kamloops, British Columbia.

The acreage was devoted to growing hay, grain, fruit and potatoes, but never produced much more than a marginal living for the parents and three sons.

"It was close," White says, recalling his father's instructions that the boys could have bread and butter or bread and jam, but not bread, butter and jam.

Later the elder White, a lay Methodist preacher, moved his family to Vernon, a city of 2500. There the future Southern Baptist Convention president began "a man's work" at 14 after finishing grade school.

Conversion came because of a special Sunday night choir program where all the hymns "centered on the cross of Christ."

"They gave no invitation," White said, "but the impact of the songs and slides put me under conviction. I went home, got on my knees and asked the Lord to forgive me and save me."

A Methodist Sunday school teacher first suggested the ministry as a vocation. This suggestion bore fruit as White entered the Bible Institute of Los Angeles in 1921.

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There he became a Baptist, and met the future Mrs. White. His father, unhappy over the Methodist merger with Presbyterians and Congregationalists into the United Church of Canada, later became a Baptist also, and was ordained as a Baptist minister.

After three years at the Los Angeles school, White went to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, and after two years returned to California for three years in the pastorate.

Then he went back to Louisville to attend 3 schools, support his wife and children and help his parents. White studied algebra and plain geometry at nights at the YMCA, took an examination to get into the University of Louisville without a high school diploma while picking up studies again at Southern Seminary.

This hard work brought bachelor of arts, master of theology and a doctorate.

After the seminary he was pastor of churches in Georgia, Little Rock, Ark., and Washington, D. C. before coming to Houston. During the past 10 years White led the 122-year-old church in the pivotal decision to stay downtown rather than move to the suburbs.

White takes his pastoral obligations seriously and humbly, too. He and Mrs. White "do a lot of calling together" at night.

During the days, he's always available for conferences.

"I've never set up a strict schedule for sermon preparation, because when people need to talk to their pastor, that's when they need to talk to him."

This means he almost always has to finish his sermon preparation on Saturday. Currently White is preaching his way through the Old and New Testaments at alternate services. In five years he's come to Psalms and to I Corinthians.

Once a fisherman and still a sometime golfer, White's only hobby "besides our work" is operating a 16-mm movie camera, and a projector and a film splicer which were gifts from the church.

He brought back film from the Japan Baptist New Life Crusade, which he helped to spearhead, for showing at church functions.

Then there are four grandchildren to "shoot," the offspring of his son, Stanley White, pastor of the Weatherford, Tex., First Baptist Church; and daughter, Mrs. Jack Marslender of Tucson, Ariz.

The author of studies on Jeremiah and Hosea, White hopes to finish by May, 1964 a manuscript on Nehemiah begun eight years ago at the request of the Sunday School Board.

FROM REGIONAL OFFICE

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September 20, 1963

Texas Baptist Churches
Slowly Accepting Negroes

DALLAS (BP)--Southern Baptist Churches in Texas are slowly and quietly beginning to adopt policies that would permit Negroes to attend worship services or join the church, a survey of churches within the Baptist General Convention of Texas has revealed.

A total of 1,259 churches in Texas--about one-third of the 4,000 Texas Baptist churches, replied to the state-wide survey conducted by the Texas Baptist Public Relations Office.

The survey revealed that 747 Baptist churches in Texas have an official or informal policy that would allow Negroes to attend worship services.

A total of 234 Baptist churches in Texas said their policies would permit Negroes to join the church as a member.

Most of the churches, however, had no official policies on (1) allowing Negroes to attend worship services or (2) permitting Negroes to join the church as members.

The survey gives the first accurate picture of racial policies of Texas Baptist churches. All policies are established by local autonomous congregations, not by a denominational hierarchy.

A total of 894 churches had some kind of policy--either informal or official--on Negro attendance. Eighty-four per cent said they would permit Negro attendance.

A total of 412 churches had some kind of policy on accepting or rejecting Negroes as members. About 57 per cent said they would permit Negroes to join the church.

One hundred forty-seven congregations stated they would not allow a Negro to attend worship services, while 178 churches said they would refuse to admit a Negro as a church member.

Most of the churches adopted the policies this year when the racial crisis was at its peak.

Twice as many churches took some kind of stand on the racial issue during 1963 than had adopted policies in all other years prior to 1963.

Generally, the churches adopted racial policies without publicity. Nearly 675 churches said their policies on Negro attendance are known only to the congregation or minister, while only 174 churches reported the community as a whole had been informed.

A total of 237 churches stated they would consider a Negro who sought church membership just like any other person who seeks to join the church regardless of race.

Eighty-five churches said they would refer all applicants--white and colored alike--to a screening committee before submitting the applicant's name to the church. Another 181 churches stated they would refer all Negro applicants to the deacons.

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A tabulation of the survey based on the size of churches revealed that generally the larger churches in the cities are more likely to accept Negroes than the smaller, rural churches.

Ninety-three per cent of the 135 churches with more than 1,200 members answering the questionnaire said they would permit Negroes to attend worship services. Only eight of the big churches would not allow Negro attendance.

Of the 400 small Baptist churches with less than 300 members which stated they had some policy on Negro attendance, 294 congregations said they would seat Negro worshipers, compared to 96 churches which would refuse it.

The churches with fewer than 300 members accounted for the only membership bracket in the survey in which the number of churches which would refuse Negroes as members outnumbered those which would accept Negroes. A total of 101 churches of this size would exclude Negroes, while 91 would accept them as members.

The survey, an anonymous type, did not ask for the name of the church returning the questionnaire.

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Nation Is Stirred By
Birmingham Bombing

(9-20-63)

WASHINGTON (BP)--The bombing of a Negro Baptist church in Birmingham, Ala., which killed four young girls, brought strong criticism of the American people and churches from a number of sources here.

Members of Congress, religious leaders, and Washington papers spoke sharply against such violence. All expressed the guilt of the American people for creating the climate in which such an incident could take place. Much of their criticism was directed toward the churches.

Sen. Philip A. Hart (D., Mich.), in remarks on the Senate floor, asked citizens in Birmingham and in all the country who have failed to protest when they attended segregated churches or sent their children to segregated Sunday schools, to examine their conscience in light of what happened at the Birmingham church.

"I think everyone who has stood silent...should plead guilty," Senator Hart said.

The Washington Post, a leading newspaper here, asked in an editorial, "What kind of creature is it that would snuff out the lives of children innocently at church on Sunday morning?"

The editorial blamed all citizens as well as Alabama leaders. It called for a new kind of "Southern manifesto--a manifesto proclaiming to all the world that Jim Crow is dead in Alabama, that Negroes will henceforth be recognized there as full citizens of the United States and as children of a common God."

Sharp criticism came from a Birmingham attorney, Charles Morgan Jr. in an article appearing in the Washington Post, Morgan said Birmingham is the only city in America where police chief and sheriff in the school crisis "had to call our local ministers together to tell them to do their duty."

"The ministers of Birmingham who have done so little for Christianity call for prayer at high noon in a city of lawlessness," the Birmingham lawyer said, "and, in the same breath, speak of our city's 'image.'"

The attorney questioned:

"Did those ministers visit the families of the Negroes in their hour of travail? Did any of them go to the homes of their brothers and express their regret in person or pray with the crying relatives? Do they admit Negroes into their ranks at the church?"

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Various church groups expressed regret at the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. They also expressed determination to help prevent such incidents from occurring again.

The American Baptist Convention, Valley Forge, Pa., sent a telegram to John H. Cross, pastor of the Birmingham church.

The telegram pledged "our continued and strengthened support in the struggle for justice, freedom and civil rights for persons of all races. May these who have died bring the nation to realize that racial discrimination and segregation can no longer be tolerated. We covet your prayers that the rift which divides the people in this country may be healed."

Proponents of the civil rights bill see the Birmingham incident as underscoring the need for legislative action. Rep. John W. McCormack (D., Mass.), speaker of the House of Representative, said the bombing added strength to the administration's drive for civil rights legislation.

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Howard Payne Awards
Doctorate to Governor

(9-20-63)

BROWNWOOD, Tex. (BP)--John B. Connally, governor of the state of Texas, has been awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree at Howard Payne College (Baptist) here.

The degree was conferred upon the Texas governor during the dedication services for the city of Brownwood's new \$650,000 coliseum.

Presenting the degree was Guy D. Newman, Howard Payne president, C. E. McCarver, administrative vice president, and Forrest Agee, acting dean for the Baptist school.

Gov. Connally presented the formal dedication address for the new 4,500-seat coliseum.

Following opening events for the coliseum, the Brown County Baptist Association sponsored a county-wide revival meeting in the coliseum. The revival was led by Baptist evangelists Dick and Bo Baker of Dallas.

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Baptist Radio Interviews
Published in New Book

NEW YORK (BP)--A New York publisher, E. P. Dutton and Co., has compiled and published a volume of inspirational interviews from the Southern Baptist radio program, "MasterControl*."

Interviews with 60 well-known Americans who have appeared on the weekly radio program have been edited for publication by Roland Gammon, former Life magazine writer and now a communications consultant.

Each person whose interview appears in the book, "Faith Is a Star," tells the part faith and spiritual experience have played in their personal story of success.

Included in the book are interviews with Dr. Ralph Sockman, Walt Disney, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Charlton Heston, Billy Graham, J. Edgar Hoover, John Glen, Carl Sandburg, Lowell Thomas, Mahalia Jackson, Jerome Hines, Bobby Richardson, Catherine Marshall, Douglas Mac Arthur, and a host of others.

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"Faith Is a Star," a selection of the Christian Herald Family Book Club, will have an initial printing of more than 50,000 copies.

"MasterControl*," the radio program from which the book was adapted, is produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth.

The program was originated on five stations in 1959. Today it is carried weekly by 275 stations in the United States, and in 13 foreign countries.

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Baptist Hospital Leader Dies of Heart Attack

ROCKPORT, Tex. (BP)--John G. Dudley, 54, executive director of the Memorial Baptist Hospital of Houston, died of a heart attack while on vacation here.

Funeral services were set at Houston's South Main Baptist Church where he was a deacon. Burial was at Forest Park West Cemetery of Houston.

Dudley is survived by his wife Melba; a son, John Richard Dudley of Waco, Tex.; three daughters, Mrs. Joe E. Yeary, Mrs. John R. Culver and Susan Dudley, all of Houston; and six grandchildren.

He came to the Houston hospital as administrator in 1946 and was named executive director in 1957. Previously he had been administrator of the Arkansas Baptist Hospital at Little Rock after serving as assistant administrator of the South Carolina Baptist Hospital in Columbia.

Dudley was born in Fort Smith, Ark., and attended the University of Arkansas. He was past president of the Texas Hospital Association and the American Protestant Hospital Association, was a member of the American College of Hospital Administrators and served on the board of Blue Cross--Blue Shield group hospital service for Texas.

During his tenure at Memorial Baptist Hospital, the institution's bed capacity increased to 546 and the first "satellite" hospital system was begun with the opening of a branch unit in a Houston suburb.

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Non-Addicting Pain Killer Discovered at Baylor

HOUSTON(BP)--A drug which exhibits all the pain-killing characteristics of morphine, but which is non-addicting may soon be introduced, said a research scientist at Baylor University College of Medicine here.

Dr. Arthur S. Keats, head of the division of anesthesiology at Baylor, said that studies in his laboratory since 1955 indicate that a new drug designated as WIN 20,228 may fill the age-old need for a drug that will relieve pain and not cause the patient to become a physical and mental slave to it.

Dr. Keates made the statements in a scientific paper at an American Chemical Society meeting in New York.

Studies in the Baptist school's laboratories revealed that the drug does not cause psychic dependence on withdrawal symptoms even after long usage, and is therefore non-addicting.

Dr. Keats said that he looks on WIN 20,228 as a major advance in the treatment of disease since the drug is as potent a pain killer as morphine, and yet does not result in addiction or other psychic disorders.

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Smith To Head New
Baptist Radio Section

FORT WORTH (BP)--John Cobb Smith, radio engineer for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission here, has been named head of a new section of the commission which will produce special radio programs as a service to the broadcasting industry.

Smith, who has been employed by the commission for the past eight years, will program Baptist radio shows for special seasonal events such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, Labor Day, etc.

A native of Atlanta, Ga., Smith is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex. He also attended Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N. C., and Decatur Boys' High.

He served in the army from 1957 to 1959, stationed in Germany. He is now a first lieutenant in the 217th Quartermaster Battalion, USAR.

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"How To Study" Course
At Academy Accredited

(9-20-63)

SAN MARCOS, Tex. (BP)--San Marcos Baptist Academy's unique course on "How-to-Study" has been accredited by the Texas Education Agency.

The academy has four full classes on the subject this semester. "How-to-Study" classes are aimed at guiding the student to organize his studies so that he may use his time effectively, Academy officials stated.

Covered in the course are such things as proper study environment, use of the library and source materials, development of interest and concentration, and preparation for college.

With Texas Education Agency approval, the course will give students a half-unit of credit towards a high school diploma.

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Hong Kong Seminary
Head is Guest Prof

(9-20-63)

FORT WORTH (BP)--James D. Belote, president of Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary, is serving as guest professor of missions this year at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

A native of Washington, D. C., he is a graduate of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill. and received the Th.M degree from Columbia Bible College, S. C. and the Th.D degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Belote is teaching the history of missions and the missionary message of the Bible while at Southwestern.

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