

FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE
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November 15, 1963

Texas Convention Starts Latin American Crusade

SAN ANTONIO, Tex. (BP)--The Baptist General Convention of Texas, meeting in the heart of the state's Spanish-speaking population here, launched a statewide evangelistic crusade aimed at reaching two million Latin Americans in Texas with the gospel message in 1964.

More than 6000 Baptists attending the 78th annual Texas convention heard plans outlined for the crusade, slated Aug. 30-Oct. 11, in an effort to saturate the state "with the gospel in Spanish."

In major business actions, the convention elected the president of the world's largest Baptist school, Abner V. McCall of Baylor University, Waco, as president of the 1.7 million member state convention.

McCall succeeds K. Owen White, controversial pastor of the First Baptist Church of Houston and president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The election of McCall marked the first time since 1950 Texas Baptists have named a layman as president of the convention.

In other action, the convention adopted a record \$12 million budget for world missions; approved a detailed plan for the future development of Baptist education programs; made sweeping changes in the structure of the state's district missions organization that substitutes 50 "areas" for the 17 districts, and elected more than 300 trustees to state Baptist boards after a floor fight over rotation of trustees with expired terms.

A distinct Latin American flavor, with emphasis on the 1964 crusade, was carried out on the convention program.

For the first time in convention history, a Latin American was elected to a top convention office, and another Latin American was honored as "Pastor of the Year."

Carlos Paredes, pastor of First Mexican Baptist Church in Austin, was elected second vice-president of the convention, and E. L. Flores, pastor of First Mexican Baptist Church in Houston, was presented an engraved plaque as recipient of the Texas Baptist church achievement award.

In other action, the convention approved resolutions opposing the use of textbooks that contain history with a Roman Catholic perspective in state-supported public schools, and condemning the use of alcoholic beverages and efforts to legalize liquor by the drink.

The convention also approved a recommendation from its Christian Life Commission urging Baptists and Christians everywhere "to be peacemakers in these days of racial strife," and expressing "deep sorrow for those, including little children, who have died violently this year because of the vicious behavior of hate-filled men."

Another recommendation opposed legalized race track gambling and urged leaders in the drive "to consider the ultimate consequences of their actions and to abandon these efforts."

Ironically the meeting was held in the home town of state Rep. V. E. R. "Red" Berry, sponsor of many legalized gambling measures in the legislature.

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A major speaker at the convention, W. R. White of Waco, said a national lottery and legalized race track gambling are the first steps towards the moral destruction of the nation.

"We live in a moral twilight zone," the president emeritus of Baylor University said. "It is the twilight just before sunset not the twilight before sunrise." He cited a dozen reasons why he believed race track gambling would hurt the people of Texas.

Two major speakers, both originally from the British Isles, lashed out at theological liberalism, and upheld the Bible "as the absolute, infallible word of God."

In his president's address to the convention, White, who was born in London, criticized the Archbishop of Canterbury for saying he expects to see atheists in heaven, and praised Southern Baptists for showing no interest in the ecumenical movement.

Biggest bombshell of the convention was dropped by a visiting Baptist from Scotland, J. Sidlow Baxter, who stated the election of a Roman Catholic as President of the United States "was the greatest blunder in American history."

Baxter, 60, who has been in the United States for the past nine years after serving as pastor of Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh, Scotland, for 18 years urged the Baptists: "Don't vote Democratic, don't vote Republican, vote Protestant."

He said he had no nasty or ill feeling for Catholic people but lambasted the Roman Catholic system for "its arrogant totalitarianism."

Most of the convention's addresses, however, stuck to the theme of evangelism, with special emphasis on the Latin American crusade in 1964.

"Evangelism must always be the denomination's major emphasis," said E. Hermond Westmoreland of Houston. He chided Baptists for being satisfied with "superficial marks of success" such as mounting memberships, increasing budgets and growing attendance.

An hour-long floor debate erupted when a wealthy oilman from Houston, Earl C. Hankamer, was not renominated to the Baylor Board of Trustees.

He was elected, however, when Westmoreland, a minister, resigned from the Baylor Board and moved Hankamer be elected instead. The motion carried by a big majority.

The convention ended with Southern Baptist missionary Keith Parks of Indonesia stating that America's race problems hurt Baptist mission efforts abroad.

"President Kennedy ought not to have to send troops to the South if preachers would not be afraid to preach what they believe about race relations," he said.

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Florida To Have
Junior College

(11-15-63)

JACKSONVILLE (BP)--By an overwhelming majority, messengers to the Florida Baptist state convention here voted to establish a Baptist junior college.

The convention's Education Commission is authorized to recommend a location for it, and to plan a way to finance it.

The convention's interest in its higher education program was seen in another action. It voted to campaign for \$1.5 million for Stetson University (Baptist), DeLand, in a matching funds effort.

Stetson trustees will raise a like sum. The \$3 million thus raised will be matched by \$1.5 million from the Ford Foundation.

Money will also be raised to support Baptist Bible Institute at Graceville. The institute would receive \$53,333 a year over a three-year span.

The \$160,000 a year for three years for Stetson would join with other funds already available to the University to make up the \$1.5 million in the effort to match the Ford Foundation grant.

Other sources of Stetson money from the convention include \$300,000 a year through the Cooperative Program and \$40,000 a year in endowment funds.

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A Cooperative Program budget of \$2.8 million was adopted for the 1964 fiscal year. Forty-two per cent is allocated the Southern Baptist Convention. (This compares with 41 per cent in the fiscal 1963 budget.)

Convention executive secretary John Maguire was at home here recovering from a heart attack suffered several weeks ago in Heflin, Ala. He was not able to attend convention sessions.

The convention expressed appreciation time after time for his leading, and for the work of assistant executive secretary S. O. Bean of Jacksonville during Maguire's absence.

Homer G. Lindsay, pastor of First Baptist Church here, where the sessions were held, was elected Florida's new president. The convention voted to meet in Tampa next year, Nov. 10-12. It also chose Fort Lauderdale for 1965.

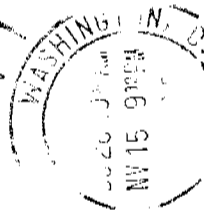
It adopted a goal of 30,000 baptisms of converts in 1964. Another goal is to establish 250 new missions and 35 new churches. There are now over 1300 cooperating churches with close to 550,000 total membership. Concern was expressed over the decline in the number of converts baptized during the past year.

Messengers voted to buy for about \$51,000 another 59 acres for a new Baptist camp site on Lake Yale near Umatilla. This will give the convention 214 acres, on which construction will begin by Jan. 1.

A Girls' Auxiliary camp will launch the new campsite program next June.

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New Catholic Attitudes
Emerging From Council

By W. Barry Garrett

ROME (BP)-- Two major moves to improve relations between Roman Catholics and non-Catholics have been made thus far in the second session of Vatican Council II now meeting here.

They are: (1) Pope Paul VI's appeal for forgiveness for Catholic fault in injuries that may have been inflicted on Protestants thus causing the "separation" of Christians, and (2) public release of the summary of a document that lifts the blame for the crucifixion of Christ from the shoulders of the Jews as a race.

Other steps to improve Christian unity have also been taken by the council, but these two have special import.

In his opening address to the council on September 29, Pope Paul expressed deep grief over the divisions existing among Christian communions. Referring specifically to the division in the 16th century that resulted in the Protestant movement, as well as to earlier separations within Catholicism, the pope said:

"If we are to blame in any way for that separation, we humbly beg God's forgiveness and ask pardon too of our brethren who feel themselves to have been injured by us. For our part, we willingly forgive the injuries which the Catholic Church has suffered, and forget the grief endured during the long history of heresy and schism."

It is reported that this confession and overture for forgiveness by a pope is unprecedented in Roman Catholic history.

Obviously referring to some Orthodox groups, the Baptists and a few others who would not accept an invitation to send observers to the council the pope expressed the hope that "our voice" may also reach them. He then made three points about the Catholic view on unity in order that the observers present "may communicate them with their respective Christian communities."

First, Pope Paul spoke of Catholic motives for unity with other Christians. He said, "Our manner of speaking toward them is friendly, completely sincere and loyal. We lay no snares; we are not motivated by temporal interests."

Next, the pope referred to the common Christian heritage shared alike by Catholics and non-Catholics. He paid tribute to the progress in the knowledge of truth made by all groups and invited a mutual sharing of one another's doctrines.

Then, he acknowledged "the enormous difficulties still in the way of the desired union." The Catholics make it clear that they are under no illusion about the distance that separates them from the rest of the Christian world. In spite of this the pope said, "Should historical reality tend to weaken our hopes, we shall try to recall the comforting words of Christ: 'What is impossible to man's powers is possible to God' (Luke 18:27)."

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The second major move to improve the Catholic image in relation to others took place on November 8 with the release of the draft on "The Attitude of Catholics Towards Non-Christians, Particularly Toward the Jews." This paper, prepared by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, will compose the fourth chapter of the schema on ecumenism.

This document denounced an attitude prevailing in some Catholic circles, catechisms and books, that the Jews as a race are guilty of the crucifixion of Christ. This view has resulted in strong anti-Semitic attitudes on the part of many Catholics and has caused undue hardships to be imposed on Jews in many areas and at various times in history.

In the new Catholic statement on attitude toward Jews three major points are made: (1) there is a deep bond that ties the church to the Chosen People of the Old Testament; (2) the responsibility for Christ's death falls upon sinful mankind; and (3) it was from Abraham's stock that Christ, His Blessed Mother and the apostles were born.

The document explains: "The part the Jewish leaders of Christ's day played in bringing about the crucifixion does not exclude the guilt of all mankind. But the personal guilt of these leaders cannot be charged to the whole Jewish people either of his time or today. It is therefore unjust to call this people 'deicide' or to consider it 'cursed' by God."

Roman Catholic "preachers and catechists," the document continues, "are admonished never to present a contrary position; furthermore, they are urged to promote mutual understanding and esteem."