

November 21, 1963

Oklahomans Reaffirm
Biblical Revelation

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma here adopted a resolution affirming "our faith in the infallibility of God's revealed word."

The resolution also encouraged Oklahoma Baptists to declare "that the Bible, in its supernatural revelation, stands as the immutable, eternal word of God."

Stewardship, missionary and evangelistic outreach was the recurring emphasis in convention addresses and actions.

A record \$2,860,000 Cooperative Program budget objective for 1964 was adopted. Of this amount, 42 per cent vs. 41 per cent in 1963 is to go to the Southern Baptist Convention.

The 1964 budget tops the 1963 figure by \$160,000.

The convention adopted a guide whereby it will raise its Cooperative Program percentage to the SBC as the cooperating churches in Oklahoma increase their church budget allotment to the Cooperative Program.

Elected by a two-vote margin as president of the convention for the coming year was J. C. Segler, pastor, Crown Heights Baptist Church here.

James Ralph Scales, Shawnee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University, commented on tension in Baptist life.

"I cannot help but observe that our people, distressed at conflict and tension in the denomination, do not seem to know or understand that such conflict has been characteristic of the life of Christ's church during her periods of growth," he said, "and was the outstanding mark of the primitive Christian community."

The 1964 meeting will be held in Tulsa, Nov. 10-12.

Lowell D. Milburn, Shawnee minister, in the convention sermon, warned Christians against "sleeping through the greatest revolution of history."

He said the "earth-shaking changes" are God's providing "the greatest opportunity for evangelism and missions since Christ was on earth."

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Louisiana Elevates
Status of Magazine

(11-21-63)

LAKE CHARLES, La. (BP)--The Louisiana Baptist Convention, meeting here, voted to elevate the Baptist Message, its weekly newsmagazine, to an institution. The magazine will have its own trustees.

The Baptist Message has been under the convention's executive board since 1920 when it was bought from a private owner. James F. Cole of Alexandria, site of the convention offices and magazine publication, is present editor.

The magazine has a circulation of over 66,000. It recently converted from a tabloid newspaper format on newsprint to magazine format with a more expensive grade of paper.

In other action, Louisiana convention approved a \$2-3/4 million budget for 1964 and an advance goal of \$100,000. The Cooperative Program share of \$863,151, or 31.4 per cent of receipts from churches, is unchanged from 1963.

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The convention elected Scott L. Tatum, pastor, Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, as president. The 1964 time and place are Nov. 10-12, New Orleans. The 1965 convention will meet in Shreveport.

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Cutline

November 21, 1963

Baptist Press Photo

NEW YEAR, NEW WORK--On Jan. 1, W. Perry Crouch assumes office as general secretary of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. He moves to Raleigh from Asheville, where he's been pastor of the First Baptist Church. (BP) Photo

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BAPTIST FEATURES

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A BAPTIST NEWS SERVICE

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FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE
W. BARRY GARRETT, REGIONAL EDITOR
1628—16th St., N. W., Washington, 9, D. C.
Telephone: ADams 2-1760

November 21, 1963

Catholic Church Tackles
Christian Unity Problem

By W. Barry Garrett

ROME (BP)-- Finally, after three years of preparation and two years of sessions, the subject for which the world has been waiting reached the floor of Vatican Council II ---the problem of Christian unity as related to the Roman Catholic Church.

In a preliminary press briefing, Fr. Thomas F. Stransky, a member of the staff of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, explained, "The main problem we face now is to find out how much unity there is in the church toward Christian unity with others." Judging from all that has already been said, this reporter's view is that it is too late for the Roman Catholic Church to turn back now. It must face the problem of more amicable relations with other Christians.

Archbishop of Westminster, John C. Heenan, expressed the dilemma of Protestants and Catholics alike caused by this unprecedented talk of unity by the Roman Church. He said, "It is a fact that many clergy and faithful have been bewildered by the new departures resulting from the ecumenical movement. The council will now give clear guidance so that all Christians may know what degree of cooperation will be allowed. It will be made clear that sincere ecumenism does not involve Catholics or non-Catholics in any denial of their own religious convictions."

In a speech before the council last year explaining "the true nature of the ecumenical discussion," Msgr. Josef De Smedt, Bishop of Bruges (Belgium) set forth principles to guide the church in its deliberations. He said, "The ecumenical discussion is not a study or a conference on the establishment of unity, it is not a deliberation on unity, it is not an effort at conversion. It simply means the use of principles of psychology and the testimony of one's faith to another human being in a serene, objective and plain manner....Such a discussion is not held in such a way that both parties can be mutually deceived."

Bishop De Smedt then set forth nine guidelines for the council for its ecumenical discussion. They are:

1. "We should have a clear idea of the present-day doctrine of both the Orthodox and Protestant churches."
2. "We should know their opinions on our doctrine, the points they understand correctly and those they do not understand."
3. "We should know what is missing according to the opinion of non-Catholics in Catholic doctrine or what is present but insufficiently clear."
4. "We should investigate whether our way of expression contains assertions or formulations which are difficult to understand by non-Catholics."
5. "The terminology should be well-chosen" in the light of reactions by non-Catholics"
6. "Opinions should be well thought-out and seen in a context in which they will be acceptable to non-Catholics."
7. "Argumentation and the wording of the text itself should be presented in such a manner that they are convincing to non-Catholics."

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8. "All kinds of sterile polemics should be avoided."

9. "Errors should be pointed out in a way which is not offensive to those in error."

It is in the spirit of these nine principles that Albert C. Outler, a delegated observer from the World Methodist Council, addressed a meeting of the American hierarchy with the observers at the council on November 8, 1963. He paid tribute to the new ecumenical discussions in the following words:

"Far deeper than those external signs of Christian fellowship are the inner impulses of the Holy Spirit within our hearts and yours, where He has begun to break down the old encrusted barriers of ignorance, prejudice, and enmity that have so long divided us and has awakened a new disposition in us all of mutual recognition and of genuine interest in dialogue, a new experience of fellowship and affection."

Outler then plainly set forth before the Catholic bishops what would be required on their part if they are to make real headway in unity talks with Protestants. He said:

"Your obedience to the Spirit's command to unity will require a truly radical renewal of your acknowledgment of the prime authority of the Word of God in Scripture, with its grand themes of God's utter sovereignty and grace, of man's justification and sanctification through God's sheer, unmerited gift in Christ, of God's solemn judgment against all latria of any creature, all celestialism and triumphalism in church history."

He further pointed out to the bishops that they had made great progress in their definition of ecumenism and that it is "valid enough as far as it goes, but it is patently incomplete." He raised questions with them about the adequacy of their theory to account for the "churchly status" of other Christian communities and if they had really faced the consequences of such an adequate theory put into practice.

Outler asserted to the bishops, "Your answers to these questions will be decisive as to what can be done now, or ever, to transcend our tragic and bitter histories of schism and mutual recrimination."

Facing these almost insurmountable difficulties inherent in the divisions between Catholics and Protestants, the Roman Catholic Church now plunges headlong into their discussion of Christian unity. Many people consider it a genuine miracle that such a discussion can take place. Although they can see no prospect for Christian unity, especially Catholic-Protestant unity, they say that God can perform new miracles in ways unknown and unthought by men. "We can talk," they say, "but God must perform the miracle."

The schema (proposal) on ecumenism to be debated by the council fathers has five chapters: (1) principles of Catholic ecumenism, (2) ecumenism in practice, (3) the Eastern churches and the separated churches from the 16th century and later, (4) Catholic relations to non-Christians, especially Jews, and (5) religious liberty.

In the summary of Chapter I that has at this writing been released to the public, the council calls upon all Catholics "to recognize the signs of the times" in regard to Christian unity discussion. As a first step it calls for a "renewal (reform) in the Catholic family itself" in order that the church may give effective testimony to the truth.

Recognizing that Protestants are fellow Christians and that their communions are "churches" the council admonishes the Catholic people to seek better relations among Christians. It says:

"Every Catholic should refrain from any words, judgments or actions which falsely or unjustly represent the real status of our separated brethren. Together with them, Catholics should seek carefully to discover practical means for coming to know each other better, to respect and help one another, and by prayer and cooperation, to carry out more faithfully the will of Christ."

FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE
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D. C. Convention
Accepts Negro Church

WASHINGTON (BP)-- The District of Columbia Baptist Convention, in a near unanimous vote, agreed to accept for membership in the convention a Negro Baptist church.

By this action, Shiloh Baptist Church becomes the largest church in the District of Columbia Convention. It has a total membership of 8000, with active membership listed at 3000. Of the 600 messengers at the convention, only 25 voted against accepting the church. No one spoke in opposition.

Earl L. Harrison, pastor of the Shiloh Church, said their desire for membership in the convention was not "spearheading any preconceived movement for racial integration."

"Instead," Harrison stated, "we are seeking 'Christian fellowship' with those whom we feel akin in spiritual experiences and ultimate spiritual goal accomplishments."

The church is also a member of the Baptist Convention of Washington, D. C. and Vicinity and of the Progressive Baptist Convention.

The convention gave special recognition to M. Chandler Stith for his 20 years of service as executive secretary. Stith was honored at a special dinner and presented a gift of over \$2500.

The District of Columbia Convention is dually aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Convention. Of its \$456,020 budget for 1964, \$12,110 in undesignated gifts will go to each of the two conventions. In designated and undesignated gifts, a total of \$107,110 is set for the Southern Convention and \$39,110 for the American Convention.

Race relations and required Bible reading and prayer in public schools were among the resolutions passed by the convention.

On the matter of race, the resolution called for (1) further development of cooperation between Negro Baptist churches and the churches of the District of Columbia Convention.

Another resolution recognized the Supreme Court's decision on required Bible reading and prayer in the public schools and the "historic policy of Baptists to guard the separation of church and state and to promote the free exercise of religion." It urged (1) all Christians to recognize and abide by the law of the land, (2) individual families to practice Bible reading, prayer and other means of religious education, (3) the churches to strengthen their programs of Bible study and doctrinal instruction.

For the first time the convention sponsored an International Dinner. Of the 300 attending, over 60 were foreign students representing 22 countries. The foreign students were guests of the churches.

Fred B. Rhodes, Jr., a layman and a direct descendant of Roger Williams, was elected president. The 1964 convention will meet Nov. 16-17.

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BWA Official Leads
Prayer In Congress

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Adolfs Klaupiks, Latvian-born director of the relief department of the Baptist World Alliance, led the prayer opening a recent session of the U. S. House of Representatives.

Klaupiks was invited personally by Rep. John W. McCormack (D., Mass.), Speaker of the House, in recognition of Latvian Independence Day.

(Though Latvia gained independence in 1918, the country was absorbed into the USSR in 1940 and lost its independent status.)

Klaupiks plead in his prayer that the "Lord of the great and of the small nations, Lord of the free and of the captive peoples" might "grant us courage and wisdom so to use our strength, our resources and our influence that people who are still under the yoke of oppression and in bondage of fear and frustration might enjoy liberty and freedom to serve Thee joyfully and to choose their own way of life under Thy guidance."

He prayed also, "May all human malice disappear. May right and justice triumph."

Klaupiks was general secretary of the Latvian Baptist Union, with headquarters at Riga, prior to World War II. He joined the staff of the Baptist World Alliance for administration of relief and refugee work in 1947.

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Music Deadline Set

(11-21-63)

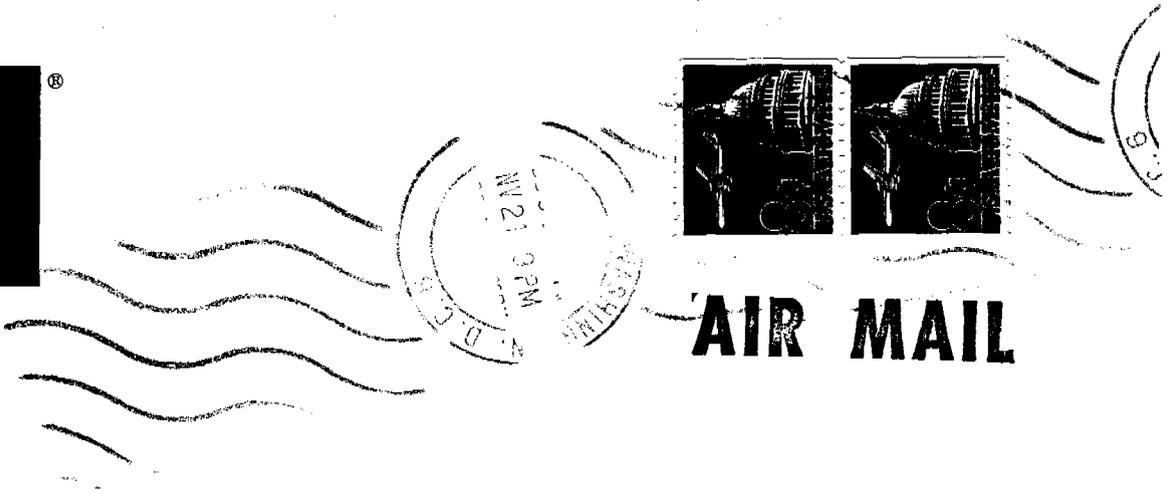
ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (BP)--The Ritz Carlton Hotel, headquarters for the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference here May 18-19, requires conference goers to reserve rooms by Dec. 15. In writing for room reservations, if you wish to attend this conference and stay in the headquarters hotel, indicate you're attending the music conference.

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Catholic Bishops Get
Larger Share Of Power

By W. Barry Garrett

ROME (BP)-- Decentralization of the Roman Catholic Church is one of the major objectives of Vatican Council II. By decentralization is meant less dependence on Rome (i.e. the Roman Curia and the rule of the pope) and more initiative and authority for the bishops around the world.

In the view of the council fathers this purpose is but a completion of the Vatican Council I (1869-70) which decreed the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope. It is stated by Catholic authorities that due to the outbreak of the Prussian war the work of Vatican I was interrupted without considering the further question of the relation of the bishops to the pope.

During the intervening 90 years between these two councils, both in the Protestant mind and in Roman Catholic practice, the application of the doctrine of the supremacy of the pope took on extreme expressions. To the Protestants it appeared that, in order to get Catholic action on a problem, all that was necessary was for the pope to make a decision and thus it would be. Theoretically, this may be true, but in practice the pope's mind is not made up unilaterally.

On the other hand, many of the Catholic bishops have become irked by the necessity of going to Rome for decisions on how to administer their dioceses. The Roman Curia, an instrument of the papal office, had seemingly usurped many of the powers that the bishops think belong to them and became the real ruling power in the church. In order to correct these conditions, the doctrine of "the collegiality of the bishops" has been developed.

By this doctrine is meant that as the pope is the successor to Peter as the head of the church, so the bishops are the successors to the apostles. Thus, in conjunction with the head of the church and never apart from it, the bishops make up the ruling and teaching authority in the church. This is what was meant when the council fathers by a 6-1 vote on October 30 voted that they held their office "by divine right."

In order to implement this new role for the bishops of the church a number of proposals have been made--the principle of subsidiarity, a bishops senate in Rome, and increasing the powers of national conferences of bishops.

The bishops mean by the principle of subsidiarity that a bishop has all the powers to perform the duties of his episcopal office. Except for certain powers reserved for the Supreme Pontiff for the good of the church as a whole, the bishop has episcopal powers over his diocese. This is a sort of "states rights" doctrine applied to the government of the church.

Furthermore, since only the bishops hold office "by divine right" they are not to be subject to the control of the Roman Curia. The Curia will still have an important

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function in assisting the Holy Father in his work, but some governing body such as a senate of bishops may be created to rule the church in cooperation with the authority of the pope. This would be a representative body from the national conferences of bishops and would meet in Rome once or twice each year for a month or so at a time.

At the present time there are over 50 national conferences of bishops, but they have only advisory functions. The new proposal is that they be given juridical or legislative powers for matters that do not involve the whole church. Although most of the bishops seem to be in favor of this new role for national conferences, opposition arises from bishops who do not want to be **bound** in their dioceses by decisions of a national group of bishops.

According to the doctrine propounded at the council the pope will continue to be infallible and will be the supreme and final authority in the church. But, henceforth, the church will be ruled by the college of bishops that always works in cooperation with and never contradictory to its head.

The exact and final forms of these revisions in the church's government have not yet been decided. After discussion and debate the various proposals are referred back to the commissions which draw up schemata to be presented to the council at a later date. After the council passes on them and they are approved by the pope they become the decrees of the council and the laws of the church.