

FROM REGIONAL OFFICE

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**SBC President Urges
Gifts to Oswald Widow**

DALLAS (BP)--The President of the Southern Baptist Convention called upon Baptists to demonstrate "the reality of their Christian faith and compassion" by contributing to help the family of the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy.

SBC President K. Owen White of Houston suggested that gifts to the widow and children of Lee Harvey Oswald "would be a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate the fact that our faith is warmhearted and personal."

"Here is a young widow with two children, who comes from another land, in great need of warm Christian friendship and sympathetic understanding," he said.

White, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Houston, made the statements in an article published by the Baptist Standard, weekly newspaper of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

In the same issue, Baptist Standard Editor E. S. James said that the Oswald family "not only must face life with a stigma they did not bring on themselves, but they must do it without many relatives or friends on whom they can depend for help."

"Baptists as a denomination are not making a plea in her behalf," said the editorial by James, "but the Standard joins the convention president in suggesting that we minister to this widow and children because they are creatures of God and stand in need of friends now."

Both White and James praised Americans for so quickly coming to the financial aid of the J. D. Tippit family, and urged Baptists not to forget the other Dallas widow who suffered tragedy and sorrow.

Funds for the family of Dallas Policeman J. D. Tippit, a Baptist who was killed supposedly by Oswald following the assassination of President Kennedy, have reached the \$400,000 mark and are expected to pass one-half million dollars.

Only about \$10,000 has been contributed to the family of Oswald, who was shot before nation-wide television audiences by Jack Ruby, Dallas nightclub owner.

Complete text of the statement by SBC President White said:

"Our whole nation was greatly shocked by the assassination of our late President, John F. Kennedy. The hearts of millions of people were moved with compassion toward Mrs. Kennedy and the children.

"On the day of the President's death another man also died violently while doing his duty as a police officer. The hearts of many people were greatly moved by this tragic incident, and contributions for Mrs. Tippit and the members of her family have come pouring in from all over the nation.

"But there is another family which also suffered tragedy and sorrow-- the family of Lee Harvey Oswald. Here is a young widow with two children, who comes from another land, without much Christian background, and in great need of warm Christian friendship and sympathetic understanding.

"It has been suggested from several sources that, individually and as families, Southern Baptists might demonstrate the reality of their Christian faith and the compassion of their own hearts by contributing something to this little family. It appears that this would be a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate the fact that our faith is warmhearted and personal.

"In the doing of it we would give a good testimony for our Lord and perhaps convince some who are skeptical that our Baptist faith is a very practical thing.

"Those wishing to make contributions should address mail to Mrs. Marina Oswald, P. O. Box 2089, Dallas, 75221. Federal authorities announce that food items are not being accepted."

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Baptist Leaders
Visit Russia

(1-3-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)--Four Baptist leaders flew to Moscow for a visit with Baptists in the U.S.S.R., the Baptist World Alliance has announced.

Two officers of the Alliance, one of them from Argentina, and one representative each from the American Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention are included in the party.

The trip was planned at the invitation of officials of the All Union Council of Evangelical Christians - Baptists, the Baptist fellowship which lists 560,000 members in 5,000 churches in the Soviet Union.

Those making the trip were:

Robert S. Denny of Washington, associate secretary of the Baptist World Alliance. Denny heads the international Baptist fellowship's youth division;

Paul S. James of New York City, first vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He is going in the place of K. Owen White of Houston, president of the Southern Baptist Convention who could not participate because of illness;

Alfonso Olmedo of San Luis, Argentina, a vice-president of the Baptist World Alliance. He is pastor of the First Baptist Church of San Luis, a city in the interior of Argentina;

Harold E. Stassen of Philadelphia, president of the American Baptist Convention. Stassen is a former governor of Minnesota and served as disarmament advisor and "secretary for peace" on President Eisenhower's White House staff.

Itinerary within the U.S.S.R. has been planned by Russian Baptist leaders, who will be hosts to the party, and was expected to include several cities. The group was to return to America January 10.

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Atlanta Baptist Church
Votes To Seat Negroes

ATLANTA, Ga. (BP)--The First Baptist Church of Atlanta has voted "by a decisive majority" to drop racial bars for admission to its sanctuary for worship services.

The 6,300-member congregation, largest Baptist church in the Southeast, has been the scene of intermittent picketing by inter-racial groups since last April when two Negroes were ejected from its sanctuary. Other picketing has protested imprisonment of G. Ashton Jones, itinerant preacher who was convicted on a charge of disturbing worship. He was arrested on the front steps while protesting the color bar.

The church's racial practice was established by the deacons eight years ago. Deacons arranged early in December for the first membership vote and for it to be by mail.

J. C. Horton Burch, church clerk, said a "sizable majority" returned ballots and a "decisive majority" voted to drop the racial ban. The tabulation was not announced, nor was the effective date for a change in policy.

The ballot question asked: "After prayerful communion with God, and in the divine leadership of the Holy Spirit, and without persuasion from any person, are you in favor of seating in the main sanctuary all who come to attend our worship service irrespective of race, color or creed?"

Roy O. McClain, pastor, in his sermon at the Sunday night service when the vote was announced, made a plea for congregational unity and cooperation. He said, "Open doors must be accompanied by open hearts and minds, lest the former mocks the latter."

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Networks Request Help
From Baptist Radio-TV

(1-3-64)

FORT WORTH (BP)--All three major broadcasting networks called on the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission here for program material during the blackout of commercial programming after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The Baptist agency here provided assistance to the National Broadcasting Co., (NBC); American Broadcasting Co., (ABC); and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS).

Both NBC radio and television asked Baptist Radio-TV Commission Director Paul M. Stevens to make statements concerning the president's death. The statements were recorded at NBC affiliate station WBAP-TV-AM-FM in Fort Worth.

The Public Affairs Department of ABC-TV requested help in developing coverage of a Baptist service memorializing President Kennedy. The commission staff and staff of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth made arrangements for a one-hour service to originate at the church.

While the service was in progress, however, Lee Harvey Oswald, accused assassin of President Kennedy, was shot while being transferred from city to county jails in Dallas, and the televised service from Fort Worth was cut after about 10 minutes on the air.

NBC-TV also requested a 15-minute musical memorial from the Baptist Hour Choir. The request was made on Saturday afternoon, and the program was videotaped by Saturday night. Both NBC-TV and radio carried the program.

Ironically, CBS-TV and the Baptist Radio-TV commission had just completed a special 30-minute Thanksgiving program which included a helicopter view of the Fort Worth-Dallas skylines. CBS officials felt the program was "inappropriate" after the president's assassination, and cancelled the show.

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CBS did, however, request the videotaped footage shot from the helicopter for use in news coverage of the president's death.

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Former Kentucky, Virginia
Royal Ambassador Man Dies

COLUMBIA, S. C. (BP)--J. C. Ballew, Royal Ambassador director for South Carolina Baptists and former secretary of Royal Ambassador work for Baptists in Virginia and Kentucky, died here Jan. 2 at the age of 37.

He had reportedly suffered from cancer for nearly three years.

Ballew had served as associate Brotherhood director for the South Carolina Baptist Convention in charge of Royal Ambassador work since 1961.

He was the first Royal Ambassador secretary for the Baptist General Association of Virginia from 1958-61, and was previously Royal Ambassador secretary for the Kentucky Baptist Convention from 1953-58.

Ballew also served part-time as Kentucky Baptist Royal Ambassador from 1950-53 while a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

He was a graduate of Wofford College in Spartanburg, S. C., and Southern Seminary in Louisville.

Survivors include Mrs. Ballew, the former Dorothy Owens of Inman, S. C., and two boys, James, 8, and Mark, 5.

Funeral services were held at Eau Claire Baptist Church, Columbia, S. C., with interment in Inman, S. C.

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Baptist Hospital Leader Dies

ATLANTA, Ga. (BP)--John B. Franklin, retired administrator of Baptist Hospitals in Georgia and Texas, died in Ashburn, Ga., at the age of 83. Funeral services were held in Ashburn with interment in San Antonio, Tex.

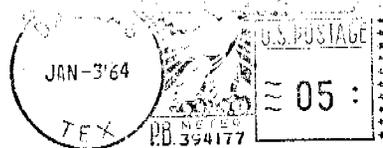
Franklin had been administrator of Georgia Baptist Hospital in Atlanta; Baylor Hospital in Dallas; Texas Baptist Memorial Sanitorium in Dallas (later became part of Baylor Hospital and Medical Center); Houston Hospital in Houston, Miss.; and General Hospital in Greenville, Miss.

Franklin was a Baptist deacon and at one time was an associate pastor of a Texas Baptist church.

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