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Baptist World Leader
Wants Renewed Vitality

Atlantic City (BP)---Joao F. Soren, a Brazilian who's president of the Baptist World Alliance, called Baptists here to renewed vitality in worldwide evangelism.

He also reminded his hearers at a North American-wide gathering of Baptists in Convention Hall that the responsibility of Christian extension belongs not to a few but to "every person who confesses to be a follower of the Lord of Salvation."

Soren is pastor of the First Baptist Church at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He was elected in 1960 to a five-year term as head of the world Baptist fellowship.

His remarks--delivered in polished English--came at the Sunday morning worship services of a continentwide Baptist Jubilee Celebration. This marked the 150th anniversary of the first national Baptist organization in America. North American Baptists now number 22 million.

"As our denomination waxes strong numerically, we must be ever vigilant against the danger of practical clericalism within our groups," he declared.

This danger, he said, "presents itself as a widespread tendency toward relegating the responsibilities and the privileges which belong to all Christians to that smaller group which we are accustomed to designate as 'professional Christians.'

"Such a distinction is artificial and potentially dangerous," he asserted. "We cannot propose to stand for the rights and prerogatives of the individual Baptist church member and at the same time sit down when it comes to facing and implementing the responsibilities upon which those rights repose. Baptist democracy is not primarily a matter of ecclesiastical suffrage and denominational government, but essentially a principle of competency toward participation."

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Diefenbaker Defends
Wheat To Red China

Atlantic City (BP)---Former Canadian Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker defended here the action of his country in providing wheat for Communist China.

Addressing the Third Baptist Jubilee Celebration in Convention Hall, Diefenbaker said there was starvation in China when Canada provided the wheat.

"We were not of the opinion that charity depends on political thinking," the former prime minister told the gathering of 15,000 Baptists from throughout North America.

Diefenbaker, a Baptist himself, added he thinks the cleavage between the Soviet Union and Red China now can be contributed partially to the fact that Canada helped to feed starving Chinese when Russia would not. He proposes establishment of an international body to provide food and aid to needy peoples.

"I believe that liberty and light cannot be achieved so long as two-thirds of the world's population have one fifth of the world's income," Diefenbaker told the Baptist gathering.

The Canadian leader applauded the United States for having done more than any other country to raise standards around the world.

The former prime minister said spiritual needs also must be met in many countries.

Diefenbaker pointed to what he considered discriminatory practices by western nations as an aid to Communism.

"I believe with all my heart and soul that you and I must solve the problem of equality of all men in accordance with Christian principles if we are to preserve people in all parts of the world from the onrush of Communism," he said.

He called on the United States and Canada to practice what they preach if they are to present a convincing message to the world.

"We have found that those who would destroy us sometimes make detours, but only in the last two or three days, we have seen renewed evidence of their policy in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia."

Diefenbaker said the world is in tumult and he is often asked, "Do you think we will come through?"

"We put faith before fear," he said "and we know that although evil seems to triumph over short periods, good is ultimate."

He urged Baptists to exemplify the faith of their forefathers to relate faith in liberty.

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Differences And Agreements Shared

Atlantic City (BP)--Baptists from seven conventions and conferences aired their differences and shared their distinctives here during the Third Baptist Jubilee Celebration.

A 20-member panel composed of representatives from each of the seven Baptist groups discussed and debated their viewpoints after presentation of a 27-page, pocket-size pamphlet entitled, "Baptist Distinctives and Diversities." Though the groups supposedly agreed on the contents of the pamphlet, members of the panel weren't even in agreement on what it had taken a special Baptist Jubilee Advance committee nearly five years to write.

Most of the discussion centered on disagreements of Baptists on theology and race relations.

Several panel members objected to the pamphlet's giving only four lines on race relations. The pamphlet said some Baptists are for granting "complete equality to all people regardless of color, nationality, or creed, and some are not willing to do so."

Jitsuo Morikawa, Valley Forge, Pa., evangelism director for the American Baptist Convention, said the pamphlet devoted one and one-half pages to baptism, and only four lines to race relations.

"This whole document is a preoccupation with the church. We need to be delivered out of preoccupation with the church and being Baptists into a relevant engagement with Christian service in the world," Morikawa said.

C. M. Smith of Philadelphia, a Negro panel representative of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., defended the pamphlet, however. "There are certain issues the committee felt it did not have to put into print, if we could get the message into the hearts and lives of Baptist people," he said.

Another Negro panel member, C. T. Epps of Jersey City, N. J. and a representative of the same convention, countered that more should have been included if Baptists are to grow in Christian love for all people.

"How can a person love God whom he has not seen and hate his brother whom he has seen?" Epps asked.

Morikawa also objected to Baptists' spending so much time on debating such theological issues as the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures.

"This is not a burning issue in the 20th Century," Morikawa said. "We must live in the 20th Century, not the 18th or 19th. I believe we should deal with more relevant issues that are contemporary."

Herschel H. Hobbs of Oklahoma City, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention argued the question of the authority of the scriptures is not a dated problem; it is a timeless one.

Hobbs said the authority of the scriptures must be related to every generation and its needs so that faith in the Bible will be passed on to future generations and they in turn will pass it on to their children and their children's children.

Frank H. Woyke of Forest Park, Ill., executive secretary of the North American Baptist General Conference, agreed. "What was relevant 500 years ago will always be relevant. The French have a saying, 'The more things change, the more they remain the same.'"

Two American Baptist Convention representatives contended that Baptists should not afford to be isolationists and refuse to have fellowship and communication with other Christians.

R. G. Torbet, professor at Central Baptist Seminary, Kansas City, Kan., said that Baptist isolation from other Christian groups affects their missions concept. "Are we to go out and make Baptists of a certain kind, or are we to make Christians of the people in the world?" the professor at the American Convention-related school asked.

American Baptist Convention General Secretary Edwin H. Tuller of Valley Forge said his Convention participates in the ecumenical movement in an effort to give a "distinctive Baptist witness" to other Christian groups of the world.

Theodore Adams of Richmond, Southern Baptist leader who is presiding at the Baptist Jubilee Celebration, said in closing, "This session itself is a wonderful example of love in fellowship. We have our differences as Baptists, but we are cre~~e~~ in Jesus Christ."

Baptists attending the 150th anniversary celebration represent the Southern Baptist Convention, the American Baptist Convention, the Baptist Federation of Canada, the National Baptist Convention of America, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.; the North American Baptist General Conference, and the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference.

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Costume Parade Gives Jubilee Color

Atlantic City (BP)--A colorful missions-emphasis session at the 150th anniversary Baptist Jubilee Celebration here featured an impressive parade of 150 Baptist missionaries dressed in the native costumes of the countries they serve.

Flags of 75 nations led the parade of missionaries, representing the seven various Baptist conventions and conferences participating in the 150th anniversary celebration at Convention Hall here.

Following the procession, presiding officer Theodore F. Adams of Richmond praised the work of the missionaries, stating "they're all ours, even though all are not from our particular convention."

"God grant that nothing we do here will hinder what they do over there," Adams told nearly 5,000 Baptists attending the celebration.

Miss Shirley Yang of Hong Kong, dressed in an elegant Chinese costume, fervently sang "O Divine Redeemer." There were tears in her eyes as she sang, and she quietly wept after she was seated.

Baptist nationals from six countries told of the results of the seven Baptist bodies' missionary efforts in their nations, and their own personal experience and impressions of what Christianity had meant to them.

A 30-year old African, Flavius Martin of Cameroun, said after studying for the ministry in the United States the most impressive thing about this country was he had been accepted as an equal and a brother in Christ while here.

Martin, dressed in the colorful red and yellow robes of Cameroun, has just completed study at North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, S. D. He plans to return to his country and become pastor of a Baptist mission church in Cameroun.

Raul Cadima of Bolivia called for Baptists in America to help turn the tide of communism in South America. "My country may fall into the hands of the Communists if Christians don't do more than they are now doing," he said.

"The Communists have been trying to infiltrate Christian churches in Bolivia, especially among the young people," he added.

Joe A. Samuels, Negro minister in Jamaica, praised the effect of Baptist schools and the freedom of worship in his country. "This is most fortunate," he said, "especially when compared with our nearest neighboring country, Cuba, which is experiencing a severe spiritual drought and a burning thirst for the word of God."

Inspirational Sessions
Draw Jubilee Praise

By Jim Newton

ATLANTIC CITY (BP)--Baptists from throughout North America observed their 150th anniversary of missionary advance by adopting a message to the world, discussing their distinctive beliefs and differences, and emphasizing missions--the purpose for which the first Baptist convention was organized in 1814.

The historic Third Baptist Jubilee Celebration meeting at Convention Hall here was the first time in history the representatives of the seven largest Baptist bodies in North America gathered under one roof for a big joint session.

Most Baptists attending the session praised the inspirational sessions as a big step towards better understanding, communication and fellowship between the highly-independent Baptist groups of America.

It was not, however, interpreted as a move to unite the seven Baptist conventions, conferences and federations, which have a total membership of nearly 22 million.

Too many differences of opinion cropped up during the three-day Jubilee celebration, and during the separate but simultaneous meetings earlier this week of the Southern Baptist Convention and American Baptist Convention, two of the biggest Baptist bodies in America.

During the Third Jubilee celebration, one session was devoted to discussion of Baptist differences and distinctive beliefs.

A 20-member panel composed of representatives from each of the seven participating Baptist groups debated their viewpoints on theology, race relations, and the nature of the church during the discussion.

The discussion centered around a 27-page, pocket-size pamphlet on "Baptist Distinctives and Differences" prepared by a Baptist Jubilee Advance special committee.

On theology, an American Baptist evangelism leader, Jitsuo Morikawa of Valley Forge, Pa., objected to Baptists spending so much time debating the authority and inspiration of the Bible, and not enough on "the burning, relevant, contemporary issues of the 20th century."

Herschel H. Hobbs of Oklahoma City, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Frank H. Woyke of Forest Park, Ill., executive secretary of the North American Baptist General Conference, argued that the question of the authority of the scriptures is not a dated one, it is timeless.

On race relations, Morikawa said the pamphlet on Baptist differences devoted $1\frac{1}{2}$ pages to baptism. He said only four lines treated race relations and these said some are for better race relations, others aren't.

A Negro panel member from the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., C. M. Smith of Philadelphia, defended the pamphlet, saying "there are certain issues the committee felt it did not have to put into print, if we could get the message into the hearts and lives of Baptist people."

Another Negro panel member representing the same convention, C. T. Epps of Jersey City, drew enthusiastic applause from the crowd when he said, "There is no place for hate in the Baptist community."

On some things, however, the 11,831 Baptists registered for the celebration were agreed.

An impressive and inspirational missions-emphasis session featured a parade of 150 Baptist missionaries dressed in costumes of the countries they serve, and testimonies from seven national converts on what missions in their country had accomplished.

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Almost all attending the session agreed the missions session was a reminder that the first nationwide Baptist convention, called the "General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions," was organized in 1814 to provide support for foreign missions efforts.

The seven Baptist groups were also able to agree on a "message to the world" prepared jointly by key theological leaders from each body.

The statement, not a creed, outlined Baptist beliefs agreed upon by all Baptist groups. It contained no controversial statements.

Specific areas covered by the "message" committee report included salvation, religious liberty and freedom, the importance of the individual, Christian love for all men, social problems including mild and brief statements on race relations, and belief in the Bible.

The statement did not specifically state that Baptists believe in the absolute literal authority and inspiration of the Bible, a point of theological controversy which all Baptists have never been able to settle completely.

Actually, no vote of approval was taken. The Baptists attending stood "as an affirmation of our belief." Presiding officer Theodore F. Adams of Richmond, Va., explained, "This is in no sense a legislative body. We are a fellowship of Baptized believers in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Nearly every Baptist attending the celebration did agree, however, that the music presented during the three-day meeting was one of the biggest highlights and most inspirational features.

A special oratorio composed for the 150th anniversary celebration by Ron Nelson of Brown University, Providence, R. I., was acclaimed and praised by music critics and Baptist conventioners.

The Atlantic City Press called it "one of the masterworks of contemporary oratorical composition." The oratorio was based on the Psalm scripture which says, "What is man, that Thou are mindful of him?"

Samuel Miller, dean of Harvard Divinity School and a Baptist minister, wrote the prose narrative for the Oratorio, and soloists were Irene Jordan and Sherrill Milnes.

Other special music presentations by the famed George Beverly Shea, by the Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma, Russell Newport of St. Louis, Mo., and Miss Shirley Yang of Hong Kong, brought "amens" and applause from the crowds.

A prize-winning drama, "Except for John Leland", was presented by the South Hunterdon Regional High School in New Jersey. The drama depicted the Baptist influence on early American efforts to pass the Bill of Rights.

The three-day celebration opened with the keynote address by John G. Diefenbaker, former Canadian prime minister, and closed with a sermon by Evangelist Billy Graham.

Diefenbaker, now a member of Parliament in Canada, told the opening crowd of 10,000, "This historic meeting provides public evidence of our unwavering belief in spiritual values;...it will encourage fellowship and bring out greater unity among Baptists;...it will express collective heartfelt thanks to the missionaries who have carried the message of Christ to all parts of the world."

Joao F. Soren of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, called Baptists to renewed vitality in world wide evangelism in another major address. "This is the task for which the church exists," he said.

Soren, president of the 26-million-member Baptist World Alliance, reminded the crowd that 1964 had been voted "a year of evangelism emphasis" by the Alliance. "Has it not dawned upon you what might happen to this world if these 26 million Baptists could work out a God-inspired plan whereby this immense potential could be mobilized into a united spiritual crusade unto the ends of the earth," he said.

Graham amplified Soren's plea for evangelism in the closing message.

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The famed Baptist evangelist also told the Third Jubilee Celebration Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of truth. He told the truth about sin, hell, judgment, and conversion: "We have made a tragic mistake in our preaching by toning down the fact of judgment and hell."

"If we had more hell in the pulpit, we would have less hell in the pew," Graham said.

Brooks Hays, consultant to President Lyndon B. Johnson and former Southern Baptist Convention president, said racial conflict is the greatest challenge facing Baptists of today.

"We are a divided people in this land, and sometimes I fear we are outnumbered not by men of hate, but by men of indifference--men lacking a sense of urgency regarding tragic racial cleavages in Christian society," Hays said.

Kenneth Scott Latourette, professor emeritus of Yale University Divinity School and a foremost church historian, said that the Baptist denomination, once which ministered to the poor and the uneducated, now is becoming a denomination of more sophisticated, better educated people.

This has caused some real problems in change, he said. "Can the gospel as we Baptists have traditionally presented it hold the rising generation?" he asked.

"Baptists seem so convinced that our view of the gospel is more near in accord with the New Testament that we have been reluctant to run the danger of compromise with too close association with others.

"But the Holy Spirit is striving, some of us are convinced, to overcome our blindnesses, prejudices, false loyalties, and self-centeredness in a true unity of faith where we will each speak the truth as we are given to see it, and always in love," Latourette said.

Many Baptists who attended the three-day Jubilee Celebration here agreed the meeting offered a big step in the direction of better understanding between the seven Baptist groups represented.

In addition to Southern and American Baptists, there were representatives of the Baptist Federation of Canada, the National Baptist Convention of America, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., the North American Baptist General Conference, and the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference.