

August 12, 1964

Autrey Says Racism
Curbs SBC Evangelism

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--The director of evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board said here racial prejudice has curbed the evangelistic outreach of America's churches.

C. E. Autrey of Dallas told a Conference on Christianity and Race Relations at Glorieta Baptist Assembly there are many factors in a nationwide drop in conversions, but racial hatred is one of the biggest factors.

"You cannot love and hate with the same heart," he said, "and today we are trying to generate a church without the basic ingredient of the New Testament church--love for people."

The Southern Baptist evangelism leader cited three big problems that the contemporary church faces in the realm of race relations--racism, lawlessness and the effect of racism on missions and evangelism.

"Racism is immoral, and it breeds cruelty, injustice and hate," Autrey said.

"Lawlessness is spawned by both the white and Negro, in both North and South; East and West," he added.

Autrey called it an "economic contradiction" for Southern Baptists to spend millions in sending missionaries to convert the colored people of the world, while treating the Negro in America without love and concern.

"Our attitude towards people of other races is definitely curbing our evangelistic outreach, both at home and around the world," he said.

A professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, told the week-long conference that racists who claim to be Christians are guilty of heresy.

Henlee H. Barnette, professor of Christian ethics at the Baptist seminary, said racism is heretical because it is unbiblical and unchristian.

"Those who hold to racism are living in heresy for they deny the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures which teach that all are one in Christ and one in his body," Barnette said.

Barnette, who spoke twice on the program, said racial prejudice is the most difficult of all kinds of prejudice to overcome.

"Prejudice is like cancer," he said. "Little is known as to its cause and cure.

"The atom is easier to smash than racial prejudice." The only answer, he said, is a change in human nature--a change of heart through faith in Jesus Christ.

He cautioned that in some cases religion can actually promote prejudice. "Some clergymen can corrupt the gospel and use it as a weapon to promote race hatred and prejudice. Indeed, I have never known a racist who was an atheist," the professor said.

He called for churches to stress tolerance and brotherhood in moulding Christian attitudes towards others.

The pastor of First Baptist Church, Tallahassee, Fla., C. A. Roberts, told of the crisis in his church this year when the congregation voted 640 to 625 against seating Negroes in worship services, or accepting them as members.

"It was not defeat, however--it was victory," Roberts said. He explained that although the church failed to do "the Christian thing," the members had made real progress, for 625 people were in favor of the proposal to desegregate.

The conference, sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, marks the first time a nationwide Southern Baptist agency has held a meeting dealing with the current racial crisis.

Guidance Conference

NASHVILLE (BP)--Pastors, counselors and laymen have been invited to attend the annual three-day Southern Baptist Counseling and Guidance Conference here Sept. 28-30. Walter Delamarter of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, will preside. Theme of the conference is "The Impact of Culture on the Helping Ministries."

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Church Ordains Woman
To Pastoral Ministry

(8-12-64)

DURHAM, N. C. (BP)--Miss Addie Davis, a 1963 graduate of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in nearby Wake Forest community, has been ordained to the gospel ministry.

Watts Street Baptist Church of Durham was scene of the ordination service. Warren Carr is pastor of the church. Two Southeastern Seminary professors took part in the ordination service.

Miss Davis has been called as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Readsboro, Vt., affiliated with the American Baptist Convention.

She formerly was an assistant to the pastor of First Baptist church, Elkin, N. C.; dean of women at Alderson-Broadus College (American Baptist), Philippi, W. Va., and supply pastor for Lone Star Baptist Church, Covington, Va.

Women graduates of Southern Baptist seminaries usually enter church vocations in education or music, become teachers or are appointed as unordained missionaries.

There are apparently no women serving as pastors of Southern Baptist Convention churches, although there are a number filling pulpits in the American Baptist Convention. Miss Davis will, in fact, possibly be first graduate of a Southern Baptist seminary to be ordained for pastoral ministry.

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Shelly Leaves Paper,
Returns To Alabama

(8-12-64)

BALTIMORE (BP)--James C. Shelly, associate editor of the Maryland Baptist, state convention weekly newspaper here, has resigned to accept a Baptist Student Union position in Alabama.

Shelly, who came to his Maryland post from Alabama last Jan. 1, will be student director for Florence State College, Florence, Ala. His new duties begin Sept. 15.

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Father, Son In Same
Southeastern Classes

(8-12-64)

WAKE FOREST, N. C. (BP)--Father and son studied together during the summer school at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary here. They recommend it to others.

Clayton D. Sweet Jr., a 1959 bachelor of divinity graduate of Southeastern, was taking additional courses. His father, Clayton Sr., has been a pastor and school teach for 33 years in Bluefield, Va.

"Someday I hope to complete my B. D. degree," said the elder Sweet.

Father and son took two courses together--one a study in Psalms and the other in Christian ethics.

Originally from Ohio, the elder Sweet has been a ninth grade general science teacher in Bluefield for over 30 years and has served as pastor of small neighboring churches.

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Clayton Jr. has been pastor of a church in Pulaski, Va., since his graduation from Southeastern. Of this summer education with his father, he said:

"I consider our going to school together the completion of an ideal Christian father-son relationship. To me, my father has been parent, teacher, coach, pastor and friend. Now he is fellow student."

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Top 18 In Membership
Remain From Last Year

(8-12-64)

By the Baptist Press

No new names appear on the current year's roster of Southern Baptist Convention churches with more than 5000 members. The list of 18 still is headed by the First Baptist Church of Dallas.

According to records received by the research and statistics department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, First Church of Dallas now has 13,142 members. This compares with 12,879 a year ago.

The research and statistics department is the major clearing house for vital statistics in the denomination.

In the first five churches in size of membership, the same churches appear as before. Those in third and fourth spots, respectively, have traded positions.

Second place still is occupied by Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, largest church east of the Mississippi River. Its latest membership figure is 8249 compared with 8539 in the previous report.

New holder of third place is First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Tex., with 8086 members. Dropping from third to fourth place in the trade of positions was San Antonio, Tex., First Baptist Church, with present membership of 7793.

Amarillo, Tex., First Baptist Church continues to maintain fifth place, showing that four of the five largest churches are in Texas. The Amarillo congregation has 7515 members presently.

The second five consists of the same churches in the same relative positions. First Baptist Church, Beaumont, Tex., is sixth in size with 6889 members. Next is Dallas' Cliff Temple Baptist Church with 6704.

Wichita Falls First Baptist Church, the seventh of the top eight to be from Texas, has 6635 members. Ninth place is held by an Alabama church, Dauphin Way Baptist of Mobile, with 6232 members. The 10th slot is filled again by First Baptist Church, Atlanta, with 6193--the third in the top 10 located east of the Mississippi River.

The previous year's report showed 19 churches with over 5000 members. It narrowed to 18 this year with the dropout from the roster of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., which held 19th position.

The 15th and 16th position churches traded places, as did the 17th and 18th churches in the listing.

The remaining eight churches, three from Texas, with their current memberships, are:

Tulsa, Okla., First, 6075; Fort Worth, Travis Avenue, 5880; Oklahoma City, First, 5837; Houston, South Main, 5691; Baton Rouge, La., First, 5381; Louisville, Walnut Street, 5264; Midland, Tex., First, 5197, and Fort Smith, Ark., First, 5101.

Membership figures are taken from statistics sent in by more than 1100 district associations of Southern Baptist churches and represent membership as it stood in late 1963, when records were tallied. A state-by-state roster of churches and membership appears in the fall issue of "Quarterly Review," put out by the research and statistics department. (BP)

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Ohio Budget Provides
For New Department

SENECAVILLE, Ohio (BP)--The executive board of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio approved a budget for 1965 here, which includes a new department of work in its administrative office at Columbus.

The total budget of \$755,057 will be recommended to the Convention proper at its fall meeting. The total includes Cooperative Program income, special offerings for three mission causes and supplements for joint missions and promotion work from Southern Baptist Convention boards.

The Cooperative Program section of the 1965 budget going to the SBC is \$126,050. This compares with \$120,132 this year. On a percentage basis, 30 per cent of Cooperative Program receipts from the churches will go to the SBC next year, compared with 27 per cent during 1964.

The new department of work will promote Annuity Board protection plans for church and denominational workers and will handle Brotherhood men's work and Royal Ambassador boys' work on a state conventionwide basis. It will come into existence Jan. 1.

W. Leonard Stigler, who has been handling both evangelism and Brotherhood-Royal Ambassador promotion, will then handle evangelism only. A new department secretary will be elected for the new position.

An associate will be employed in the Sunday school department next year who will include church music duties as part of his work.

The board met at the Seneca Lake assembly grounds of the Ohio convention. The Ohio convention covers that state and portions of West Virginia, New York and Pennsylvania.