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MCCALL OBJECTS TO "RACE PREJUDICE" CHARGE LEVELED BY WORLD COUNCIL LEADER AGAINST SOUTHERN BAPTISTS

LONDON--(BP)--Dr. Duke K. McCall, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, has objected to a published charge that racial prejudice caused the Southern Baptist Convention to refuse participation in the World Council of Churches.

Dr. McCall is in London attending a meeting of the Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee. The statement to which he objected was made by Dr. Henry Smith Leiper, associate general secretary of the World Council of Churches, as he left New York, August 6 for Amsterdam to attend a meeting of the Council, and was published in The New York Times.

"It is unfortunate, to say the least," Dr. McCall asserted, "that low motives should be ascribed specifically or by implication to those religious bodies which have not joined the World Council.

"That is not the course to strengthen the ties of fellowship between evangelical Christians. Rather it will destroy the genuine good will which existed prior to any 'ecumenical movement,'" the Southern Baptist leader charged.

Dr. McCall said that "this good will in the hearts of individual Christians is far more important than any mechanical, organizational ties."

The published statement to which Dr. McCall objected quoted Dr. Leiper as expressing belief that refusal of the Southern Baptist Convention to participate in the Council is due to "the refusal of that body to follow the general attitude of the council regarding races and nationalities -- a natural decision to make since two-thirds of the human race is not of the Caucasian race."

Dr. McCall said here that he and Dr. Leiper conferred aboard the Queen Elizabeth on their trans-Atlantic crossing, and that the World Council leader did not deny the statement.

Denying that any racial implications are involved in Southern Baptist refusal to join the World Council, Dr. McCall cited that the Southern Baptist Convention is already a member of a worldwide interracial fellowship -- the Baptist World Alliance.

Main reasons for Southern Baptist action ten years ago declining an invitation to World Council membership, were listed by Dr. McCall as follows:

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"1. Organizational: the inability of th Convention to commit its independent Baptist churches to membership in any other organization;

"2. Doctrinal: the belief that the leadership of the World Council and its influence would favor theological liberalism, and

"3. Historical: Baptists have never been willing to submerge their convictions in a union movement and they fear that the ultimate goal of the World Council is organic church union."

Dr. McCall suggested that Dr. Leiper's charge might be a revival of published rumors from Copenhagen last summer that Southern Baptists demanded racial segregation in Danish hotels and eating places during the session of the Baptist World Congress there. These rumors were later squelched and proven untrue by affidavits secured by Dr. Louie D. Newton, then president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Dr. McCall.