

FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE  
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**Group Asks Step-Up In  
Child Care Emphasis**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Association of Baptist Child Care Executives will ask the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee to give them a spokesman to "help tell the story of Baptist child care to the denomination."

The group adopted a resolution calling for an additional staff member of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, to write and to use other methods of making the ministry of child care better known.

The SBC has assigned in its program outline for the Christian Life Commission to provide assistance, advice and counsel "in the care of children, the care of unwed mothers, and the care of the aged." The Executive Committee would have to recommend to the Convention any additional budget allocation which the Commission would feel was necessary to employ a new staff member to work in child care, as the executives suggested.

The resolution, presented by T. M. Johns, superintendent of the Florida Baptist Children's Home, was unanimously adopted by the association. It came following an address by Foy Valentine, Christian Life Commission executive secretary. He made no proposal for such a post, however, although he said afterward that the Commission is so structured as to include such additional personnel.

Valentine told the superintendents and their wives that to be most effective in their work they must exemplify a Christian commitment, must have a specialized knowledge of the needs of homeless children, and must have the courage to see these needs met in the face of any difficulty.

"Your task is brothering, helping and preaching," he told the group.

In other action the association voted to ask the SBC Inter-Agency Council to set the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving each year as "Baptist Children's Homes Day."

John C. Warr, general manager, Georgia Baptist Children's Homes, was elected new president of the group. He succeeds Ford Deusner, general superintendent of the Kentucky Baptist Board of Child Care.

Other officers are: Erba Butler, superintendent, Memphis (Tenn.) Baptist Home, first vice president; M. W. Freeman, superintendent, District of Columbia Baptist Home for Children, second vice president; and Vernon Sparrow, superintendent of Mills Home, Thomasville, N.C., secretary.

The association represents 32 institutions in 20 states. Some 50 members, representing 27 homes, attended the 17th annual session here.

The 1966 meeting will be in San Antonio, Tex., with the Mexican Orphans Baptist Home of Texas as host. In 1967 the association will meet in New Orleans, La.

Child Care Specialist  
Urges Small Group Homes

WASHINGTON (BP)--Southern Baptist child care executives, meeting in annual conference here, were urged to take greater interest in small group homes for the placement of older children.

"Hold on to your large campus-type operations," they were told. "There will always be a need for them. But in various towns about your state open a regular size home for perhaps a half-dozen children."

The speaker was Martin Gula, specialist on group care in the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Gula said the small group home could best serve older children unable to adjust to living in a large group. "You will also have always a number of children who can best be served in a large campus setting," he said.

Gula twice addressed the child care executives during their three day conference. He urged the children's homes leaders to be constantly studying and evaluating their role in cooperation with other denominations and with non-sectarian agencies.

"As citizens and as a group you have an opportunity and a responsibility to help plan for children and for their families where a need arises," he said. "This is true on the local and state levels, and you should make your voices heard on a national level as well."

A forum following Gula's address revealed that while most of the 27 institutions represented were established originally for orphans, a vast majority of children now in care are from broken homes.

The speaker capitalized on this to point out the need for discovering family discord before total breakdown occurs. Skilled case workers, he said, can counsel families in difficulty and in many instances keep the home intact. In the process they can make it more satisfactory for the children.

Gula said churches have a great responsibility for helping to find such families in their midst and to secure proper help for them.

The child care executives voiced concern that the work of their agencies is not sufficiently understood within the denomination. They said many people interested in the work think of it only as a "substitute home for orphans."

Many pastors and sincere laymen object, according to one administrator, to admitting any child whose parents are living. "Usually these are the children most tragically in need of help," he said.

As a move toward better informing the denomination of their work, the organization voted to ask the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee to add a staff member to the Christian Life Commission, charged with providing information on child care by Southern Baptist agencies.

Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the Christian Life Commission, was one of the conference speakers.

John Murdoch, assistant superintendent of Connie Maxwell Baptist Children's Home, Greenwood, S.C., told the group, "Children are worth our care because they are human beings, precious in the sight of God." He said that giving a child security and letting him learn trust in adults "is a necessary step to his having trust also in his Heavenly Father."

The superintendent of the Missouri Baptist Children's Home, Edgar Blake, reported on his institution's success in placing older children for adoption. In four years it has placed 81 children beyond one year of age. Many of these were teenagers, he said.

T. M. Johns, superintendent of the Florida Baptist Children's Home and president of the Florida Baptist Convention, gave the closing address.

Around 50 administrators and their wives attended the three day meeting here. They came from 27 of the 32 Baptist children's homes in 20 states. Host institution for the conference was the District of Columbia Baptist Home for Children, M. W. Freeman, superintendent.

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