



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Telephone (615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

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Failure to Deal With Causes Hurts Baptists

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists' failure to deal with cause in addition to effect has cost them in terms of national leadership, a denominational leader said here.

Ross Coggins of Nashville told mission leaders here that Southern Baptists have been concerned only with their relief of suffering instead of with the sources of it.

"God is concerned with not only the relief of suffering, but with its sources; and it is just as Christian to get at the sources of suffering as to relieve suffering," the director of communications for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission said.

He said Southern Baptists contribute to flood relief but avoid flood control. They feed the hungry, but avoid unemployment problems. They send chaplains to youth at war, but remain ignorant of international relations.

"We rebuild Negro churches, but fail to get at the prejudice which lights the fires that burned them."

"Such failure has cost us leadership in shaping the direction in which things will go in our country. People pay no attention to what we do, not because they do not care for the church, but they believe the church does not care about them," he said.

"They look upon us as a people who find a difficulty for all the solutions, and who couch these in stained glass words while meeting in our beautiful religious showplaces, usually located at maximum distances from the scene of human suffering.

"They see us as a harmless group of evasionists, a cult of congeniality, in which personal piety becomes a substitute for social justices, rather than an incentive to social justice."

Coggins was speaking during Home Mission Week at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly under the theme of communicating the gospel on moral and social issues.

He called for development of a theology of social and moral action, and cited the lack of it as the reason Southern Baptists have not been creative in these areas.

"We have said, 'just get people converted, and all these problems will be solved.' But a lot of converted people haven't solved all their problems morally or socially, or in many other ways," he said.

"Our preachers do not say when people are converted, there is no use preaching about stewardship, or prayer, or other matters."

He said Southern Baptists might rise to their greatest ministry if they could grasp the moral and social imperatives which derive from clear theological bases.

Coggins feels that Baptists' commitment to evangelism and to man's need for conversion should be coupled with a creative concern for man's moral and social problems.

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Southwestern Officials
Slate Fall Africa Tour

8/23/66

FORT WORTH (BP)--A trustee representative and the president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here will tour Africa during the months of September and October.

President and Mrs. Robert Naylor of Fort Worth and Trustee and Mrs. Kendall Berry of Blytheville, Ark., will visit mission stations under the auspices of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and will visit Baptist seminaries on the continent. Naylor has also scheduled several lectures.

They will visit Monrovia, Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Lagos, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Salisbury, Blantyre, Lusaka, Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Cario, Baghdad, Victoria Falls, Arusha, Tanzania, Jinja, Uganda, and other points of interest.

They are scheduled to leave Fort Worth Sept. 9 and to return Nov. 4.

August 23, 1966

2

Baptist Press

Study Says Baptists Lag
On Ex-Prisoner Ministry

By George Mims Jr.

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Today's churches offer neither a haven nor a starting place for ex-prisoners adjusting to a society that wants nothing to do with them, according to a study by William S. Garmon, professor of social ethics at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here.

Garmon, who has just returned to the seminary after a year's intensive research on the church and the rehabilitation of the ex-prisoner, found the greatest problem is that the church people "talk the talk, but don't walk the walk."

During the course of his study, Garmon traveled over 25,000 miles throughout the United States, visiting 12 prisons, seven halfway houses and numerous correctional service agencies studying their after-care programs. He also attended both the Chicago Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago Divinity School.

"Most people do not want anything to do with employing ex-prisoners and usually do not invite one to church," he said. "One ex-prisoner told me that when he went with the prison director to talk to church people about working with ex-prisoners a woman said: 'I don't want an ex-con sitting with my daughter.'"

Interviewing federal, state and local correctional officials from nine states across the nation, Garmon found that while the needs of this group can be generalized as acceptance, jobs, housing, clothing, and so on, the beginning point for the churches and church members is to recognize their own sin in the matter and to accept the releases as human beings.

"Some words of St. Paul have haunted me as I made this study for the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention," said Garmon, quoting from Galatians: "'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'"

"There is a void in society that churches can step in to fill and it must be an educated approach---no fanatics or white chargers railing against the institutions," he said. "People with wrong motives can create real problems. It is a work that takes a great deal of love and determination."

What are Southern Baptist doing now? Scarcely anything, as near as Garmon can tell.

"There is some work going on, but I am convinced that the church has neglected the ex-prisoners like the rest of society and has put them out of sight and out of mind," he said.

Garmon, who has been a faculty member of the school of theology at the New Orleans Seminary since 1956, hopes that individual churches will begin providing personnel for a ministry to ex-prisoners that will be directed on a nation-wide or state-wide level by professional people.

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C O R R E C T I O N

On story mailed Aug. 22, (pages 3 & 4), headlined---Maryland Baptist College Elects Kratz President, please make the following corrections:

Graph 1, line 2: kill word "junior" making it read: "president of the Baptist college..."

Graph 5, line 2: insert phrase about degree from seminary making it read: "bachelor of science and master of arts degrees; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth with a bachelor of divinity degree; and Teachers College in Columbia University,...."

KILL last 2 paragraphs, or last graph, substituting instead the following:

The college is being organized and planned on the basis of a four-year institution, but will open, probably in September of 1968, as a two-year institution, to move to a four-year curriculum when feasible.

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