

November 14, 1966

NEWS ANALYSIS

Ecumenical Evangelism
Underscored By Congress

By Jim Newton
Baptist Press Staff Writer

BERLIN (BP)--The First World Congress on Evangelism here, which attracted more than 1,200 delegates and observers from 106 nations, could possibly have started an ecumenical movement that most Southern Baptists can wholeheartedly endorse.

The emphasis of the meeting, as the 70 Southern Baptists who attended can attest, was not on ecumenicity. It was world evangelism, and world evangelism alone.

Evangelist Billy Graham, honorary chairman of the Congress who was the key man behind the 10-day meeting, observed that it might be ten years before the full significance of the Congress will be known. But to those who were present, several significant points were readily discernable.

At the outset, it became apparent that the Congress had only one major purpose: instilling in the hearts and minds of the delegates the urgency and primacy of evangelizing the entire world.

"Our goal is nothing short of the evangelization of the human race in this generation by every means God has given to the mind and will of men" declared a 1,000 word "sense of Congress" statement given unofficial approval by Congress participants.

Perhaps nothing illustrated the feeling of urgency for evangelism at the Congress better than a display in the main foyer of the modernistic Berlin Kongresshalle. The huge display featured a chronometer that ticked off a loud beat for the 2.14 people added per second to the world's population. During each minute, the Church grows only one-tenth as fast as the population.

The Congress ended with a ceremony in which the chronometer was turned off, and Graham announced that the population of the world had increased by 1,764,216 during the meeting. It dramatically illustrated the task before the Congress participants.

Graham in the closing address to the Congress, shocked many of the delegates with the statement: "Next week I observe my 48th birthday. At best, I will have ten more years of active ministry."

And the delegates went away knowing that they could not depend upon one man, one denomination, one nation, or one method to win the world to Christianity.

This realization contributed greatly to the ecumenical spirit of the Congress.

At first, many of the addresses during the plenary sessions blasted the ecumenical movement. As the 10-day Congress continued, however, the blasts became weaker and almost diminished.

This was very significant, especially since most of the delegates and observers present were representatives of evangelical denominations that largely have been isolationist in viewpoint and have avoided ecumenical entanglements and organic union like the plague.

Yet Graham, who throughout the Congress seemed to be the stabilizing individual behind the meeting, called the Congress "one of the truly great ecumenical conferences that has been held."

Congress officials first estimated there were about 70 denominations represented. Later they increased the number to about 100.

Five Roman Catholics attended. One Jewish rabbi was present. Two former presidents of the World Council of Churches were there, as was the executive secretary of the World Council of Churches' department of evangelism.

They were, however, the exception rather than the rule. Most of the delegates and observers were from conservative, evangelical Protestant denominations that have no part in the ecumenical movement.



---FEATURES

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They were, however, the exception rather than the rule. Most of the delegates and observers were from conservative, evangelical Protestant denominations that have no part in the ecumenical movement.

Despite the diverse backgrounds of the participants, they discovered common ties and shared concerns. A sense of "oneness in Christ" became apparent from the outset.

At the beginning of the Congress, there were rumors that some attempt might be made to form a huge world-wide evangelical association as a counterpart to the World Council of Churches. But this never materialized.

Graham, in a press conference, said that the purpose of the congress was not to form any mergers of religious groups or to start any new movements or denominations. He said that the Congress was not competitive with the World Council of Churches, but rather complementary.

Theologically, however, there was a great gulf between ideas espoused at the World Congress on Evangelism and at meetings of the World Council of Churches, especially the recent meeting on Church and Society in Geneva.

If one word would describe the Congress, it would probably be "conservative." But labels were difficult to pin upon the 1,200 delegates and observers who came from such diverse backgrounds.

Reformation theology was often preached from the pulpit. Perhaps this is logical, since the Congress was held on the 449th anniversary of Martin Luther's dramatic posting of the 95 theses on the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, not far from Berlin in East Germany.

It was obvious from the beginning that the Congress speakers upheld the absolute authority of the scriptures, chiding anyone who criticized the Holy Bible or questioned its infallibility.

Just as the speakers were against criticism of the Bible, most of those who spoke during the early sessions were against an over-emphasis of concern for social issues by today's churches.

Although the theme of the Congress was "One Race, One Gospel, One Task," a position paper on "hindrances to evangelism," did not mention racial discrimination by Christians as a problem. In a group discussion session, however, race was listed as one of the major hindrances to evangelism.

Lack of early statements on race probably led to inclusion of a section on race in the 1,000-word "sense of Congress" statement, which condemned "racialism wherever it appears."

Early statements from the pulpit, however, were frequent in their criticism of the radical "Death of God" theology, the new morality, and liberal theology in general.

Some publications in America had predicted before the Congress that the meeting would turn into a debate between evangelism vs social action proponents. But such a debate never materialized, primarily because social action was not given much of a platform.

It was truly a one issue Congress. A deep concern for evangelizing the world was evident throughout, especially in the closing session when Graham preached, and when the delegates knelt, almost prostrate, in obviously burdened prayer for the spiritual needs of the world.

What will be the results? No one knows for sure.

The big question is whether or not the Congress delegates, inspired by the spiritual experiences and concern for world evangelism gained at the Congress, will be able to return to their tasks and communicate this deep concern to others in their denomination. Or will it be just another meeting?

Perhaps from this congress will spring a deeper and more urgent concern by most major evangelical groups for evangelizing the world in this generation.

Perhaps also will come a realization that ecumenical cooperation may not be so bad after all, and that by working together, Christians stand a much better chance of accomplishing this goal---the world for Christ in this generation.

Jim Newton is assistant director of the Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention, and served as assistant chief copy editor on the press staff for the World Congress on Evangelism.



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

REGIONAL OFFICES

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Editor, 161 Spring Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30303, Telephone (404) 523-2593

DALLAS R. T. McCartney, Editor, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) RI 1-1996

WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Editor, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

BUREAU

BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD Lynn M. Davis Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203,
Telephone (615) 254-1631

November 14, 1966

Home Board Strengthens
New Orleans Missions

ATLANTA (BP)--A Baton Rouge pastor has been named director of Baptist Center Ministries in New Orleans, a new position created to coordinate the administration of seven separate ministries in that city.

Charles L. McCullin, currently pastor at Brookstown Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, La., was appointed to the position by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here.

Two of the four other appointments approved by the board in November also were made by the Christian Social Ministries Department which includes Baptist center ministries.

McCullin will be working with Clovis A. Brantley, the board's director of Baptist center work, to administer the Sellers Baptist Home (for unwed mothers) and Adoption Center, the Baptist Rescue Mission (for men), the Good Samaritan Home (for women), the Carver Center (for Negroes), the Baptist Friendship House, Rachel Sims Mission, and the Coliseum Place weekday ministry, all in New Orleans.

He also will be working to promote and develop church community weekday ministries, Brantley said.

McCullin's salary is shared between the board and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where he will teach a course in welfare ministries and direct students who choose the centers for practical experience.

McCullin is a graduate of Louisiana College (Baptist) in Pineville, La., and New Orleans Seminary, where he will receive a master of religious education degree in January of 1967.

His former pastorates include the First Baptist Church of Oak Ridge, La.; Fryeberg Baptist Church in Fryeberg, La.; and Jamestown Baptist Church in Jamestown, La.

The two others appointed to serve in the Christian Social Ministries department are:

Miss Alice Dominick, of Greenwood, S.C., to serve in the Spanish Migrant Center in Perrine, Fla.; and Ebb G. Kilpatrick Jr. of Deepstep, Ga., to serve as a juvenile rehabilitation director in Denver Association of Southern Baptists in Colorado.

F. LeRoy Smith, of Littleton, Colo., was appointed by the Pioneer Missions Department to serve as state superintendent of missions for Montana.

Robert T. Mighell of Tinley Park, Ill., was appointed by the Department of Rural-Urban Missions as pastoral-missionary in Macomb, Ill.

Miss Dominick, a Mississippi native, currently is a social worker at the Connie Maxwell Children's Home in Greenwood, S. C. She is a graduate of William Carey College (Baptist), Hattiesburg, Miss., and New Orleans Seminary. She served as a student summer missionary for two summers under the Home Mission Board in Florida and Ohio.

Kilpatrick, a native of Louisville, Ky., presently is pastor of the Smyrna Baptist Church in Deepstep, Ga. He is a graduate of Mercer University (Baptist), Macon, Ga., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

His other pastorates include the Bouldercrest Baptist Church in Conley, Ga.; the First Marion Baptist Church in Seymour, Ind.; and the Northside Baptist Church in Milledgeville, Ga. He has had clinical pastoral training at the School of Pastoral Care of the North Carolina Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem; the Georgia Baptist Hospital in Atlanta; and the Milledgeville State Hospital in Milledgeville, Ga.

Smith currently is pastor of the Windermere Baptist Church in Littleton, Colo. A Texas native, he is a graduate of Baylor University (Baptist) in Waco, Tex., and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

He has served as superintendent of city missions in Denver, Colo.; as associate executive secretary of the Colorado Baptist General Convention; as secretary of evangelism for the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention; and in Texas pastorates.

Mighell, a native of Johnson County, Ill., is currently pastor of the First Baptist Church in Tinley Park, Ill. He is a graduate of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth.

-30-

Dutch Baptist Paper Chides
Georgia Church on Race Issue

11/14/66

By Theo Sommerkamp
European Baptist Press Director

SNEEK, The Netherlands (BP)--Either the gospel has not been understood in Macon, Ga., or the people of Tattnall Square Baptist Church there have "knowingly and willingly" kept the gospel outside their church along with the Negroes.

So declared the Baptist weekly newspaper of the Netherlands, De Christen, in a front-page article entitled, "Macht en onmacht in Macon," meaning "Power and lack of power in Macon."

The article, by a Dutch Baptist pastor and co-editor of the paper, Jan A. Brandsma, was written with a critical but sympathetic approach to the race issue in the churches of the Deep South.

It mentioned specifically the firing of the entire church staff by Tattnall Square Baptist Church in Macon, Ga., over the race issue. The incident at the church, which earlier had voted against seating Negroes in its worship services, was highly publicized in Netherlands television newscasts.

If the gospel has really not been understood in Macon, then someone like Ross Coggins of the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission needs to help interpret it to the church, De Christen said.

On the other hand, if the Macon church is knowingly resisting the way of Christ, and the conciliatory and brotherly love aspects of the gospel, "then there would be no place in the Baptist World Alliance any longer for Tattnall Square Baptist Church."

Brandsma pointed out that though 35 per cent of the Baptists in America belong to Negro Baptist conventions, "now many Negroes want to be admitted to white churches as churchgoers or as members in the fullest sense."

He added, "Most of the white congregations have opened their churches for members of Negro race. Not every church has done so, and not Tattnall Square Church in Macon, Georgia. There the tension, pro and con, over race discrimination continues."

Noting Tattnall Square's affiliation with the SBC, he continued, the SBC "rejects racial discrimination in its official utterances, and it also recommends to the churches to open their doors for Negroes, but certain aspects of the gospel have not been sufficiently stressed."

Quoting Coggins, De Christen's article says, of white Baptists in the US, "We rebuild the Negroes' churches (apparently referring to Mississippi efforts) but we do not get at the prejudice that kindles the fire that destroys the churches."

-30-

Harwell Promoted To Edit
Georgia Christian Index

COLUMBUS, Ga. (BP)--Jack U. Harwell of Atlanta, for nine years associate editor of The Christian Index, was elected here as editor of the Georgia Baptist Convention weekly news journal.

Harwell was named to the post by the Executive Committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention meeting here. He succeeds John J. Hurt Jr., editor for 19 years, who recently became editor of the Baptist Standard, weekly publication of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

As the new editor of The Index, Harwell becomes head of the third oldest religious journal in the world currently in operation, and the third largest of the 29 state Baptist papers.

Employing a staff of nine persons, the Christian Index has a circulation of about 130,000. It has been owned by the convention since 1920, having been published first in 1922 under the editorship of Luther Rice.

A native of Mobile, Ala., Harwell is a journalism graduate of Samford University (formerly Howard College), a Baptist school in Birmingham, Ala. The 34-year-old Harwell is the son of a Baptist minister, H. Horace Harwell of Leroy, Ala., who has been active in both secular and religious journalism in Alabama for 40 years.

While in college, Harwell served on the staff of the college newspaper and worked for two years in the college public relations office. He also worked part-time for daily newspapers in Birmingham and Mobile, Ala.

For two years, he was a public relations specialist in the U. S. Army at Fort McPherson, later serving as civilian public relations worker and editor at Fort McPherson and Brookley Air Force Base, Mobile, Ala. He worked part-time for the Atlanta Constitution while at Fort McPherson.

A deacon at Dogwood Hills Baptist Church in East Point, Ga., Harwell is the author of numerous articles for Baptist publications and is currently completing a missions study book for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board for publication in early 1968.

Active in Atlanta Baptist affairs, Harwell serves on the board of directors of the Georgia Council on Alcohol Problems, and was a plaintiff in the recent suit attempting to bar the sale of alcoholic beverages at a private club in the Atlanta Stadium.

Harwell's oldest brother, Hoyt G. Harwell is a reporter for the Associated Press, and another brother, Frank Harwell, is editor of a weekly newspaper published in Jackson, Ala.

His wife, the former Blanche Virginia Beard of Tuscaloosa, Ala., is a public school teacher in Atlanta. They have twin boys, Ronald and Donald, ages 11.