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Baptists Need Radical
Witness, Negro Says

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NASHVILLE (BP)--A young Negro sociologist told Southern Baptist workers with Negroes here that they must have a radical, costly and troublemaking witness if they are to communicate with the young Negro leader of tomorrow.

"I'm not talking about marching," said Vincent Harding, professor at Spelman College in Atlanta, Ga., in an address to the Advisory Council of Southern Baptists for work with Negroes.

"I'm talking about questioning."

Harding questioned whether it already is too late for Baptists to have an effective witness and communication to the young Negro leader of America.

Speaking of the fast rise of an emerging Negro youth, most of them followers of St. James Charismatic and Malcolm X, Harding called these Negro youth "pace setters" who will more and more set the tone for Negro life in the future.

"They are not concerned about whether Southern Baptist churches are open or closed to them," he said. "There was a time when they were knocking on doors and kneeling in front of churches asking to be admitted, but no longer."

Harding commented on the discussions heard earlier during the meeting, saying: "How sadly irrelevant to these young people is much of what you've been saying here."

He added that the situation might be different if 25 years ago, every Christian had gone into restaurants and hotels and said, "Pardon me, sir, but do you serve my black brother too?"

Saying it may be too late for any effective Baptist work with these radical Negro youth, Harding urged Baptists instead to work with whites and urge them to question things that really matter.

He called for "a consistent, constant, conscience-driven questioning of what America is doing in the world today."

He urged church journals to question whether there is some alternative better than spending millions on the war in Vietnam and building costly defensive systems while the hungry and poor of the nation and world are oppressed.

He called for Baptist young people to question their role for the future. "They need to be asking questions about the organization of social structures."

"We must always be asking questions about America, and trying to forget the concept that the United States and Christianity were born as Siamese twins, inseparable."

Harding observed that the questions are tremendously disturbing, but they must be asked. "We must remember that our first commitment is not to the American way of life, but to Jesus and his way."

He said that as result of this questioning, Christians may discover that they need to work to change some of the approaches the United States is using, and to change social structures.

Harding said that Christ may be using the radical young Negro to say that the American way of life has nothing to do with being Christian.

It is actually un-Christian, he said, for the United States to defend with military power corrupt governments abroad that oppress the poor while the wealthy benefit from American aid.

"The United States seems to be interested in preserving, not freedom, but anti-Communist governments," he declared.

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Criticizing U. S. involvement in Vietnam, Harding said that the young Negro radical of today often identifies with the Viet Cong because he is non-white, and because "the Viet Cong never called me Nigger."

He said that the United States' educational system is not geared to the Negro, and often the Negro drop-out should be called a "push out". After a Negro is forced out of school, the only thing he can do is join the Army and fight in Vietnam. The young Negro "pace setter" of the future resents this, Harding said.

Calling the period from 1954 to 1964 "the second reconstruction period," Harding said that the government has now backed off from civil rights legislation because of the Vietnam war, and the emerging Negro leadership has again become disenchanted.

They are rejecting integration as a goal and are calling for Black Power and Black Unity in an effort to find their own way, he said. "They don't care about us, but part of the agony of being Christian is that we care about others who don't care about us."

Christians must be concerned about this trend toward Black Unity, Harding observed. They must also seek to discover ways to wipe out poverty. "We must have a new will, and must re-direct our wealth."

"We must listen to these people and remember that Christ came to preach to the poor, the oppressed, the downtrodden. We must see the needs of the masses of the downtrodden people of the world.

"This may be too much to ask of a church group that has too long been a defender of the status quo," he said.

"I wonder if we will ever find our real calling as Christians--a calling to lose ourselves, not to preserve ourselves."

He compared Southern Baptist pastors to thousands of ministers in Germany during the 1940's who said to themselves, "This is not the time for me to give my witness and to get involved." They probably said this even until it was time for the Nuremberg trials to begin, he observed.

Victor Glass, head of the department of work with National (Negro) Baptists for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, told Harding and the group that it was significant even that a Baptist group of workers would hear what he was saying.

"We're just now willing to let a Negro come and beat us over the head, and tell us this," Glass said. "Perhaps it is an indication that Baptists are making progress, even slow progress."

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Understand Children,
Baptist Workers Told

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GALVESTON, Tex. (BP)--To gain an understanding of the makeup of childhood is the biggest task of ministers in becoming competent in the field of pastoral counseling.

This was the conclusion of Myron C. Madden, chaplain and director of pastoral care at Southern Baptist Hospital in New Orleans, in addresses to the third annual Texas Baptist Pastoral Care Clinic here.

"Just to become aware of the experiences of childhood is the key to pastoral counseling," he told the predominately Baptist group which included Episcopalians, Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Christian Church, and Assembly of God ministers and Salvation Army leaders.

The intensive two-day clinic on "Human Anxiety and the Gospel" was sponsored by the Baptist chaplain's office of University of Texas Medical Branch hospitals, Galveston, and the Texas Baptist human welfare commission.

Madden, serving as clinician, led instruction in areas concerning grief, death, anxiety and aging.

Madden rapped what he termed the present-day philosophy of "turning out" persons who have passed the age of 65 "because they are too old to maintain places of church leadership. This is getting to be the tradition of the West."

He said the trend is damaging not only to those in the age bracket but also in the loss of potentially sound leadership.

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"I think Medicare is going to do something good in the present psychology which says that when you get old, you're no more good," he said.

The churchmen freely shared experiences and asked questions of the clinic leader in the discussions of counseling with the grief-stricken, those with sex problems, repression of fear, and hidden causes of anxiety.

At several points Madden stressed the need for pastors to practice acceptance. "The uniqueness of God is that he does not demand any change in order to love us," the clinician declared.

He gave major emphasis to the "terrorizing experiences of children" and linked these to most of the problems which result in the request for pastoral counseling.

"We (in pastoral care) have a function to help bring about the possibility of sharing. My task as a pastor is to provide a relationship in which they can share without having to confess," Madden said.

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SBC Council on Negro
Work Votes To Disband

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NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Advisory Council on Work With Negroes no longer officially exists.

The group, meeting in Nashville Feb. 27, voted unanimously to disband and to carry out its function instead through the staff of the department of work with National (Negro) Baptists of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Atlanta.

A committee appointed last year by the advisory council to study this possibility recommended that the organization should be dissolved in its present structured form.

The advisory council was organized in 1954 to enable representatives of Southern Baptist Convention agencies to meet together with state Baptist workers with Negroes so they could discuss approaches and mutual concerns.

Although the advisory council itself has now been disbanded, it does not mean that Southern Baptists are discontinuing their work with National Baptists and in the field of race relations, said Victor Glass, head of the department of work with National Baptists for the Home Mission Board.

Glass told the council here that Baptists now have many more ways to function than in 1954 when the group was organized. The Inter-Agency Council of the SBC helps coordinate the work of SBC agencies, he said.

Each year, the Home Mission Board will continue to hold, as it has in the past, annual meetings for state Baptist workers with National Baptists. Representatives of SBC agencies will be invited to these meetings as needed, Glass said.

Actually, this action prevents duplication of meetings and over-lapping of responsibilities, he explained.

The committee recommendation observed that the council had performed some very useful services to the convention, but it had not been able to accomplish all that has been needed.

"It has been increasingly clear that a new medium of relationships and implementation needs to be found," said the recommendation.

"It has further seemed increasingly clear that the department of work with National Baptists of the Home Mission Board should be that medium since this department has program assignments from the Southern Baptist Convention in the area of work with Negroes.

"...We therefore recommend," said the committee, "that we declare ourselves to have fulfilled our original function and that with the 1967 meeting our organization as such in its present formal structure be dissolved."

The committee suggested that the Home Mission Board department of work with National Baptists might possibly reinforce its work if it decided to establish its own advisory council, but there was no definite proposal considered by the group that this should be done.

About 35 state Baptist workers with National (Negro) Baptists and representatives of Southern Baptist Convention agencies attended the final meeting of the advisory council.

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