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April 3, 1967

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Graham Speaks At Georgia Church Where SBC Founded

AUGUSTA, Ga. (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham spoke to an overflow crowd in Augusta's largest auditorium at a consecration service highlighting a week-long observance of the 150th anniversary of Augusta's First Baptist Church, where the Southern Baptist Convention was organized in 1845.

"Certainly no church in the Southern Baptist Convention has a greater heritage, or a more illustrious past," said the famed Baptist evangelist.

Graham gave high praise to the church's pastor, R. Jack Robinson, and extended his congratulations to the church on the historic event. "It is my prayer that the future will be far greater than its history," he said.

In the major message that followed, Graham said the world is in a period of change-- political change, social change, technological change, and religious change. He added, however, that some things that were true 150 years ago are still true now.

"There are people who say that God is dead. Let them rage," he declared. "The truth remains that God is very much alive."

Graham listed as other things that are unchanged--the nature of God, the word of God, the nature of man, the way of salvation, and the Christian's responsibility to his neighbor.

The Graham service was one of three held during the week at Bell Auditorium, which seats about 4,000 people. Other activities were held at the First Baptist Church.

Overflow crowds were turned away at every activity of the nine-day celebration. Robinson, in his 14th year as pastor of the 3,600-member congregation, termed the entire week a "profound success."

Highlights of the week included an all-day horseback ride from Kiokee, Ga., to the church, by deacons of the church, with Robinson making the last leg of the relay.

The ride commemorated rides made by Daniel Marshall, first Baptist preacher in Georgia, from Kiokee, oldest Baptist church in the state, to organize the church in 1817.

H. Franklin Paschall, pastor of First Baptist Church in Nashville, and president of the SBC, spoke at a special service honoring former pastors and staff members, plus missionaries who have gone out from the church.

A historical pageant entitled, "Establish Thou the Work of Thy Hands," was another feature. Over 400 people were involved in the production, which also played to a capacity crowd at Bell Auditorium.

A new history of the church, written by Mrs. Anna Olive Jones, was formally presented at an autograph party honoring the author.

On the concluding day of the sesquicentennial week, an old-fashioned dinner on the ground was served and a note representing payment of all church debts was burned.

The church adopted a report of its long-range planning committee which suggested a \$600,000 building fund campaign and engagement of architects to plan a long-range expansion program for all facilities.

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Baptist Press

Nashville Church Gives
\$15,000 to N.Y. Chapel

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KINGSTON, N.Y. (BP)--The Inglewood Baptist Church in Nashville, has given the Watson Memorial Baptist Chapel of Kingston, N.Y. a \$15,000 gift, the largest gift ever given to a chapel in the Northeast.

A check for \$5,000, the first installment of the \$15,000 gift, was presented to the chapel at the Sunday morning worship service here.

Donald J. Morgan is pastor of the 30-member chapel, which is a mission of the Ridgecrest Baptist Church of New Windsor, N. Y.

The gift by the Nashville church shows the cooperation among the stronger churches in the Southern Baptist Convention and the younger churches in the northern part of the U.S., which Southern Baptists call the "pioneer" area.

The money will be used to renovate the chapel, which is a former dwelling that was purchased by the three-year-old congregation in July, 1966.

At the completion of the renovation, which is expected by midsummer of this year, the chapel will have a seating capacity of 125 on the first-floor level, with a library and classrooms on the second floor.

The chapel began as a home fellowship. Later they met in a Seventh-Day Adventist building in Rhinebeck, N. Y. The chapel was first named the North Kingston Baptist Chapel.

Kingston is a city of 29,500 population, located on the Hudson River in the southeastern part of New York.

The Watson Memorial Chapel and its sponsoring church (Ridgecrest) are in the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association, affiliated with the Baptist Convention of Maryland

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Response To "The Vine"
Termed "Overwhelming"

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FORT WORTH (BP)--Audience response to the television broadcast of an hour-long special on the life of Christ has been called "overwhelming" by the head of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission here.

More than 7,000 letters and responses have been received by the commission following broadcast of the program, "The Vine," by the National Broadcasting Co.

"Of the 7,000 letters received to this date, less than 10 have been unfavorable--and then, the criticism was extremely mild," said Paul M. Stevens, executive director of the SBC Radio-TV Commission, which produced "The Vine" jointly with NBC-TV.

An estimated nation-wide audience of more than 25 million people viewed the pre-Easter, hour-long color documentary on the network television broadcast, Sunday afternoon, March 12.

Typical of the 7,000 responses received, said Stevens, were letters which said in part:

"...There would be fewer people saying 'God is Dead' if God were given equal time on television, and if when presented, it was done on a quality level, professionally presented as today."

"...I was so pleased to see what is being done by Southern Baptists to spread the Gospel and to reach many who would not be reached otherwise."

"...Your presentation was outstanding and so practical in that it brought out how the 'then' is still 'now' and modern day applications of Christianity."

"...Your production showed a genuine breakthrough in the presentation of Christ to a Twentieth Century America."

"...We need more programs like this for our people to watch on television."

Stevens said the responses came from almost every state in the nation, with especially large response from the East and from California. Members of more than 20 different religious denominations have praised the production.

As a result of the response, the network is planning to reschedule "The Vine" sometime in 1968, Stevens said.

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Baptist Press

Florida Convention Approves
College Charter By Slim Vote

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--The Florida Baptist Convention approved the articles of incorporation and charter for a new Baptist college in West Palm Beach, but only after lengthy debate and a slim majority vote of 242-197.

The vote came after six hours of consideration, which included numerous questions, not quite as many answers, much debate, and numerous statements of conviction, said one observer.

The convention-approved charter will now go to the Florida Secretary of State in Tallahassee for official approval. Once official recognition is given, the school will be officially chartered and the trustees will be authorized to receive property and funds.

Meeting at the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville for a special called session, the convention approved the name of the new institution--Florida Baptist College, Inc.

Much of the debate centered around the question of whether the proposed new school would be established with adequate financial backing.

Proponents of the college reported that a total of \$776,449 has been pledged in a local campaign for the school, with about \$120,000 on hand in cash. A state missions offering of the Florida Baptist Convention brought the total to about \$170,000 now available.

Neither the college committee nor the trustees have developed a long-range financial plan or an estimate of financial needs for presentation to the convention, although plans have been approved for a state-wide \$1 million fund raising campaign for the school.

Debate also centered around inclusion of a doctrinal statement in the proposed articles of incorporation, inclusion of a clause which would prevent the school from accepting federal aid, and whether the phrase "junior college" should be included in the school's name.

As finally approved, the charter listed two "basic and over-riding principles" which will determine the character and objectives of the institution--(1) "the Bible is the inspired word of God and is a sufficient guide for salvation and the Christian life," and (2) "Jesus is the virgin-born son of God and the Lord and Savior of all who trust him."

Convention officials said it is the only Baptist college charter to their knowledge which includes a doctrinal statement on the virgin birth of Jesus.

Leading the debate to include doctrinal statements in the charter was Homer G. Lindsay, pastor of the host First Baptist Church of Jacksonville.

A Jacksonville educator, Robert Spiro of Jacksonville University and a former dean of Mercer University (Baptist), Macon, Ga., argued however that the section on the doctrinal statements would not meet standards for accreditation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The new charter also provides that all trustees shall be Baptists elected by the Florida Baptist Convention, that the president and all deans shall be active Baptists, that all faculty and staff members "give evidence of a genuine Christian faith and professional competence and that strong preference be given to qualified Baptists as faculty and staff members."

Since the trustees do not yet hold title to the property on which the college is to be built, the section of the proposed charter containing the property description was deleted.

Three trustees of the college stated that while the written commitment of the donor had actually expired more than a year ago, the deed to the property is being held "in readiness to be conveyed to the college as soon as it is officially chartered."

Malcolm Knight, pastor of the Southside Baptist Church, Jacksonville, said that the convention was ignoring the criteria established earlier, and questioned if indeed the proposed donor of the property, John D. MacArthur is still interested in giving the site to the college. He questioned whether the whole procedure for the charter was in order.

Jess Moody, chairman of the school's board of trustees, said the deed is in the hands of a holding company controlled by MacArthur and assured the convention the property would be given the school once the charter is approved.

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The convention meeting in November had voted 573-360 to activate the board of trustees and to rescind previously-approved convention requirements of \$1½ million plus a site for the college. The criteria were approved by two conventions and sustained by the convention's State Missions Board.

Moody in November said that unless the criteria were rescinded, the college might lose the gift of the site.

During the same convention last November, a motion was approved which would cut off financial support from any institution of the convention, including Stetson University in DeLand, Fla., if the institution accepts a federal grant.

A clause was proposed for the charter of the new West Palm college which would forbid it from accepting federal aid, but the clause was defeated after the convention was reminded that the school would have to operate under the policies approved last November.

In an editorial in the convention's official publication following the convention, Florida Baptist Witness Editor W. G. Stracener said editorially that "we cannot overlook the fact that the charter was adopted by a vote of 242-197," or a ratio of 55-45 per cent.

"It was perfectly obvious that many Florida Baptists do still oppose starting the college, and many more oppose proceeding with it at this time until more specific plans are made and more definite resources are in sight," said the Florida Baptist Witness editorial.

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Baptist Medical School
Awarded Research Grant

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Bowman Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest College, a Baptist institution in Winston-Salem, N. C., has been awarded a Hill-Burton demonstration grant of \$984,311 to develop a special computer system to record medical records.

Announcement was made by the U.S. Public Health Service of the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW).

This was one of nine grants totaling \$1.6 million recently approved by the Federal Hospital Council, the official body which advises the Surgeon General on the administration of the Hill-Burton program.

One other church-related institution was named to receive the computer research funds: Sacred Heart General Hospital, Eugene, Ore.

The computer system used by many hospitals involves translating medical records into a form of short hand, using only key words or phrases in the record. The project at Bowman Gray is intended to demonstrate a means whereby all qualifying phrases will be stored in the computer and recalled on demand, according to Assistant Surgeon General Harald M. Graning.

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CUTLINES

BAPTIST PRESS PHOTO

GRAHAM SPEAKS AT HISTORIC SBC CHURCH: Evangelist Billy Graham (right) greets the pastor of the First Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga., R. Jack Robinson (left) outside the church where the Southern Baptist Convention was founded in 1845. Graham spoke during a week-long observance of the church's 150th anniversary. (BP PHOTO)

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