

July 31, 1967

EDITOR'S NOTE: Religion in the public school classroom has been an issue in the United States for several years, especially since the Supreme Court rulings on Bible reading and prayer in 1962. Many have supported the teaching of the Bible as literature in the public schools, something the court did not forbid, but rather condoned. Here is an English theologian's views on how the law in Great Britain requiring the teaching of the Bible in public schools has worked in that country.

--Baptist Press

Religion in the Classroom: 655
What's Happening in England

By Bob Terry*
For the Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE (BP)--"Today the average Briton is almost Biblically illiterate in spite of the Education Act of 1946, which requires that the Bible be taught in all of the schools in the country," said Ralph P. Martin of the faculty of theology, University of Manchester, England.

Martin, who is currently a visiting professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here, observed that the school child is at his most impressionable age.

"He is likely to be brought to Christ at this age or be driven away from Him," Martin stated. "In England the latter has occurred until all that most people know of the church is the image sarcastically portrayed in the mass communication media."

A lack of qualified teachers was cited as part of the problem. As a result the teaching of the Bible in day schools has been forced upon whomever would take it. Many of these teachers have not been interested in the Bible or, in some cases, were ignorant of it themselves, Martin noted.

"Politics, the latest soccer match, and other such topics have replaced the Bible as the subject of discussion in these classes. In those where the teachers did present the Bible it was often done in a very boring fashion.

Is it any wonder the children see no significance to God's word when their teachers do not?" Martin asked.

Christian teachers, Martin surmized, might help counter this trend away from God and His word: "A warm, vital love for God's word would show the children that the Bible is more than an ancient superstition of a by-gone generation."

Martin pointed out that English Christians were beginning to catch this vision and were preparing for the teaching profession. Hardly a week passes without the Baptist Times reporting that a minister has resigned to go into teaching. This is viewed as a "new expression of the Christian ministry" and is good, he said.

However, Martin continued, in solving the teacher problem this way, another problem is being created--a shortage of pastors. The lay Christian teacher is the best answer, he concluded.

Pointing out the example of Cliff Richard, a popular English singer who was converted and decided to become a school teacher, Martin observed that "as a Christian he ought to have an outstanding witness for Christ in the classroom."

Richard, who often speaks at Billy Graham rallies, will combine the teaching of the Bible with music and "will not be regarded as an outdated foggy," Martin said. "The Bible will be related to today's life. This is the type witness England needs.

"Unless we can find Christian teachers for our children," Martin continued, "the cause of Christ is in serious trouble in England. Decreeing that the Bible be taught in the classroom is not enough. There must be teachers who love God's word to influence these children positively for Him.

"Otherwise, the church's downward trend of recent years may be continued," he concluded.

July 31, 1967

Old-Time Services
Mark Church Anniversary

656

406

By Al Morgan

DALLAS (BP)--Anything resembling a modern worship service was purely coincidental.

Dressed in a frock-tailed coat and striped 'breeches' reminiscent of the 1860's, Pastor W. A. Criswell opened the year-long centennial program of the First Baptist Church of Dallas.

Criswell's sermon drew stout "amens" as he pointed out that "in the old days there wasn't a preacher that didn't believe and adhere to the Good Book.

"Today, except for some of us Fundamentalists, there isn't a preacher in this country that still believes in it (in its entirety). Our (Baptists) attitudes are still the same. If God said it, we believe it," Criswell declared.

Criswell added that old-time services "were filled with feeling. Today we find expression of our emotions and our feelings in melodramatic fear."

An estimated 3,000 or more persons packed pews and sat in the aisles to hear Criswell preach his sermon on "Old Time Religion."

Most of the membership were appropriately dressed for the gala occasion which took on the atmosphere of an old time revival meeting.

Although not used by Criswell, the old-fashioned "Preacher's Pitcher" was full, and one could easily have quivered for its safety during the preaching part of the service.

All was not "hell-fire and brimstone." The grand splendor of an era long past was evident as choir members took their places, the women barely able to step in their uniform black ankle-hugging skirts and white puffed blouses. Men, too, looked more like a barbaric shop quartet than choir members in their suspenders, bow ties and white shirts.

Lee Roy Till led special choir selections from the 1860's. Till is minister of music for the 14,000-member Southern Baptist church.

Anne Criswell, daughter of the pastor belted out a medley of gospel songs, including "Roll, Jordan Roll," and "Amazing Grace." She wore an eye-catching yellow, full-skirted costume.

The congregation readily responded to "I Feel Like Traveling On," and Texas Baptists and guests got a good sampling of what it used to be like in the "hand-clapping" and "foot-stomping" days when people openly expressed their religion. For a moment the hands of time turned back.

The service began the centennial year celebration by honoring all 50-year and other long-time members. It will end July 28, 1968 with a "Centennial Sunday."

Criswell, pastor of the Southern Baptist Convention's largest church since 1944, is the church's tenth pastor. The former Oklahoma preacher picked up the reins dropped by the late George W. Truett who served the congregation from 1897 until his death in 1944.

Descendants of the founders of the church were recognized during the service.



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July 31, 1967

White, Negro Baptists Pray
For End To Racial Rioting

657

616

NASHVILLE (BP)--About 6,000 white and Negro Baptists prayed here for an end to race riots in America, just before the president of the Baptist World Alliance declared that there would be no need for demands for "black power" to conteract "white power" if the power of love would reign supreme.

"Then selfishness, intolerance, impatience, bigotries, prejudices and complexes will disappear and hate the violence will cease," said William R. Tolbert, vice president of the Republic of Liberia and top elected official of the Baptist World Alliance.

The mass rally here, called the Baptist World Fellowship Convocation, marked the first time in Nashville history that white and Negro Baptists of four different conventions had met together for fellowship, worship and inspiration.

The rally also welcomed the first of about 120 world-wide Baptist leaders in Nashville to attend sessions of the Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee.

Opening the convocation was a parade of flags representing 80 of the 124 nations where Baptists are members of the Baptist World Alliance. White and Negro youth from Nashville area churches carried the standards while the organ played "Onward Christian Soldiers."

Prayer for an end to racial strife was voiced during the invocation by the executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, Porter W. Routh of Nashville.

Routh prayed that the fellowship of the meeting might serve as "a bridge of understanding" to the honor and glory of God in the face of racial tension and turmoil around the world.

Earlier, the four general chairmen of the convocation had issued a statement calling for Baptists to attend the convocation to pray for "reconciliation and order among men" in response to President Lyndon B. Johnson's plea for Christians to observe that Sunday as a day of prayer for an end to racial rioting.

"In the face of racial disorders that are among the worst the nation has seen since the Civil War, we call upon our people for a demonstration of the power of Christ to change our prejudices," said the statement.

"We condemn the rioting, burning, looting, senseless slaughter and anarchy which has occurred in so many places," the statement continued. "We also confess our own sins and guilt, and that of our people, in permitting racism, injustice, and deprivation to breed such public strife."

During the major address, Tolbert said he felt that the convocation could be a very meaningful demonstration of positive race relations "in these days of unrest, tension, misunderstanding, perplexities, strife, conflict and bloodshed.

"This can be assured," he told the integrated audience, "if indeed we have come together in genuine brotherly love and in the name and true spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Quoting the Apostle Paul, Tolbert declared that all Baptists "are one body in Christ" regardless of their differences in nationality, language, color, geographical location, economic condition or social status.

Calling for Baptists to practice what they preach, Tolbert urged "acts of stooping low to raise to higher standard the unfortunate..., acts of mercy and pardon..., acts of bearing the burdens of one another..., and acts of genuine love for one another."

If Baptists would do this, he continued, "we would never be content when we have in abundance this world's goods while others of the one human family exist in destitution, suffering from ignorance, poverty and disease."

Earlier, Baptist leaders from 25 nations were introduced, each repeating in his own language I Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

657

Greetings were brought by the nation-wide leaders with offices in Nashville of four different Baptist groups sponsoring the convocation--Free Will Baptists, Southern Baptists, and two Negro groups, the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., and the National Baptist Convention of America.

One Negro Baptist commented following the convocation, "This meeting has done more to improve the relations between white and Negro Baptists in Nashville than anything in the city's history."

-30-

Liberty, Separation
Not Same, Prof Says

658

238

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"Baptists too easily identify religious freedom with separation of church and state, and the American way with the Baptist way," a seminary professor said here.

"They are not the same," said Dr. Claude L. Howe, associate professor of church history at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, to the sixth annual Pastors Conference held recently on the seminary campus.

Speaking to the four-day conference, Howe emphasized that Baptists, more than any other religious group, have upheld religious freedom in theory and practice.

"For Baptists, religious freedom begins with individual freedom before God. Basic elements of religious freedom include freedom of access to God, freedom of belief about God and freedom of action for God," he said.

"But there has been a failure to relate the basic principles of religious freedom to changing historical circumstances. Thus," said Howe, "Baptists today have no clear word on a variety of issues."

Howe, said the principle of religious freedom is right, but behind what is legal or logical or expedient is the question of what is right in terms of one's Christian commitment.

The Baptist historian pointed to three major challenges today that pose serious threats to religious freedom around the world. They are: secularism, sectarianism, and socialism.

"Secularism is a major threat in that it virtually abolishes religion in the name of freedom," he said.

As for the other two threats, Howe stated that sectarianism virtually abolishes freedom in the name of religion and socialism substitutes a political philosophy for a religious faith.

-30-

Watts Retires As
Seminary Professor

659

7/31/67

182

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--J. Wash Watts, professor of Old Testament Interpretation and Hebrew, has retired after serving on the faculty of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary for 36 years.

In addition to his role as professor, he served as dean of student affairs for over 20 years and was twice acting president of the seminary, during 1942 and 1958.

Prior to his position at the New Orleans Seminary, Watts was pastor of Baptist churches in South Carolina, Kentucky and Louisiana. He served as a missionary to Palestine from 1923-28, founding the Near East Mission of the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board.

A native of Laurens, S.C., Watts graduated from Furman University and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He has also studied at Oxford University in England.

A prolific writer, Watts is the author of several books, including Living of the Gospel Old Testament Teaching, A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament, A Distinctive Translation of Genesis, A Distinctive Translation of Isaiah, and Glimpses of God in Genesis.

Mr. and Mrs. Watts are now living in Mars Hill, North Carolina, where Dr. Watts will continue to do research and writing.

-30-

658-659

July 31, 1967

3

Baptist Press

E. S. James Suffers
Massive Coronary

660

126

DALLAS (BP)--E. S. James, 67, retired editor of the Baptist Standard, is in intensive care at Baylor University Medical Center here, suffering from what his family called a "massive coronary."

He is listed in "poor to fair condition." Visitors other than family are not permitted.

James, who retired in 1966 after serving Texas Baptists as editor of the Baptist Standard for 12 years, claimed a prominent place as a champion of the separation of church and state. He carried the religious liberty banner to the president's office in 1963, gaining an audience with the late President John F. Kennedy.

A native of Butler, Okla., he was born March 1, 1900. Prior to joining the Standard in 1954, he served 17 years as pastor of First Baptist Church, Vernon, Tex.

-30-

NOTE TO EDITORS: Additional information will be sent you as it becomes available.
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North American Fellowship
Urges Racial Progress

661

7/31/67

742

NASHVILLE (BP)--The chairman of the North American Baptist Fellowship has called on the Baptist conventions of North America to encourage their members to work together for improved race relations and world peace.

V. Carney Hargroves, pastor of the Second Baptist Church of Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa., was addressing a central committee meeting of the North American Baptist Fellowship.

Representatives of ten Baptist bodies on the North American continent were present, eight of which groups hold membership in the fellowship, a committee of the Baptist World Alliance, (BWA).

Josef Nordenhaug, general secretary of the BWA, said that some of four other eligible groups have advised him of the possibility of their joining at their next annual meeting.

The fellowship was organized in March 1966, and was an outgrowth of the North American Baptist Jubilee Advance, a five year program of cooperative mission and evangelistic emphasis.

In his report as chairman of the fellowship, Hargroves emphasized that the fellowship must be more than a paper organization "where leaders can pretend to be nice to each other."

He encouraged various Baptist groups to conduct interracial and inter-convention rallies in their areas, so that the Baptist people working under different denominational structures can know each other better and present a united Baptist witness in their communities.

Such a rally was held at Nashville, Sunday afternoon, July 30, with 6,000 persons from four different Baptist groups cooperating. "This meeting has done more for racial cooperation and understanding than anything that has ever been attempted in the city," one Negro observer said.

Hargroves also suggested dialogue between pastors and church leaders of local areas where a variety of groups are represented. These conversations can deal with community problems where Baptists need to express a common witness, or they can, he said, center on points of church practice where the groups differ. He mentioned also the possibility of joint publication projects on a continent-wide level.

"Yet we cannot spend all our time being introspective, in looking only at ourselves," he said. "We live in a world of tremendous need. We cannot allow ourselves to be unaware of it, nor to be unconcerned about it.

"In the fourth chapter of Luke, Jesus laid out some of the guidelines for his own ministry. There was of course the preaching of good news; there was concern for those who were in prison, about those who suffered physical illness. He was anxious to help in providing freedom for minorities and the underprivileged.

"We cannot set for ourselves goals less realistic than these," Hargroves said.

There are an estimated 30 groups bearing the name Baptist on the North American continent. Eleven of them are members of the Baptist World Alliance and thus eligible for membership in the Fellowship Committee.

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660-661

Those belonging to the Fellowship are American Baptist Convention, Baptist Federation of Canada, North American Baptist General Conference, National Baptist Convention of America, National Baptist Convention of Mexico, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Southern Baptist Convention, the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

These groups have a combined membership of about 16 million.

Hargroves was re-elected chairman of the fellowship's central committee, with Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia, a member of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference re-elected vice chairman. Josef Nordenhaug will continue as secretary and Carl Tiller as treasurer because of their similar roles in the BWA.

At the Nashville meeting a budget of \$5,300 for 1968 was adopted and endorsed in principle plans being initiated by the BWA Youth Committee for a possible continent-wide conference of Baptist youth in 1969-71. The youth committee was asked to study the matter and report more definitely at a later meeting.

Most of the conventions associated in the Fellowship are cooperating in an evangelistic program, Crusade of the Americas, planned for churches throughout South, Central and North America in 1969.

Rubens Lopes of Sao Paulo, Brazil, a visitor at the meeting, and originator of the crusade idea in his role as president of Brazilian Baptists, said that Baptists in 30 nations have pledged cooperation in the project.

"These Baptists are of three different skin colors; they speak four different languages. But they are marching in the crusade under one flag--the flag of Jesus Christ, and they have one message--Christ the only hope," Lopes said.

"When I came to North America I found that if I stepped on a rug a door would open automatically," Lopes said. "This crusade is a lot like that. I go to different countries and tell them of our plans, and the door opens. It is a case of doors being opened by an unseen hand.

"We know that God is at work."

-30-

Hemisphere Crusade Adds *662*
Twenty-Two New Groups

546

LOUISVILLE, KY. (BP)--Mounting support for a massive evangelism effort by Baptists throughout the western hemisphere was reported here by representatives from 28 countries.

The Central Coordinating Committee of "The Crusade of the Americas" accepted the participation of 21 new Baptist groups in the denomination's 1969 evangelism plans.

The committee adopted a \$117,803 budget for 1968, outlined plans for literature distribution in North, Central and South America, and laid the groundwork for regional preparatory conferences in 1968.

Rubens Lopes of Sao Paulo, Brazil, president of the Crusade, called upon Baptist laymen to be at the forefront of the evangelism effort.

"The front lines belong to the laymen," he said. "The generals may sound the trumpets, but the victory must be won by the troops, the laymen."

New groups in the United States announcing that they had voted to cooperate with the Crusade were the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; West Virginia Baptist Convention affiliated with the American Baptist Convention; the 7th Day Baptist General Conference; North American Baptist General Conference; General Association of General Baptists; and the Baptist General Conference.

Latin American and Caribbean Baptist groups declaring their support for the Crusade were from Dominican Republic, Guadalupe, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Guayana, Trinidad and Tabago, Cayman Brack, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Antigua, Barbados, St. Kitts, Nevis, and Anguilla.

Baptists in Bermuda also announced their desire to participate in the evangelistic effort.

-more-

662

A previous policy of limiting participation to bodies affiliated with the Baptist World Alliance was rescinded to allow for the broadest possible participation of Baptist ethnic, regional or national bodies.

Money for the Crusade budget is to be subscribed by the member bodies on the basis of a suggested contribution of \$2.50 per church, according to the general coordinator for the Crusade, Henry Earl Peacock of the Rio de Janeiro, a Southern Baptist Convention missionary.

Owen Cooper, an industrialist from Yazoo City, Miss., announced progress on plans for a hemisphere Baptist laymen's congress to be held in Rio de Janeiro, July 15-21, 1968. He said attendance would be by invitation and that about 750 are expected to attend.

Wayne Dehoney, a Louisville, Ky., pastor and Crusade coordinator for the United States and Canada announced plans for a two-nation evangelism congress to be held in late 1968 in some centrally located U.S. city.

The Central Coordinating Committee received the offer from John McCombe of New York, representing the American Bible Society, to provide the Crusade at below-cost 500,000 copies of Scripture selections. The committee plans to request half of these in Spanish and half in Portuguese.

A special pamphlet embodying the Crusade theme, "Christ the Only Hope," is in the planning stages for widespread distribution up and down the hemisphere--200 million copies in Spanish, 200 million in English, 80 million in Portuguese, and two million in French.

Enthusiastic reports were given the committee by other regional coordinators: Ervin Haste for Mexico and Central America, Dottson Mills for the Caribbean, Manuel A. Calderon for Northern South America, Samuel O. Libert for Southern South America, and Amelio Gianetta for Brazil.

The Directory Council (administrative committee) of the Central Coordinating Committee will meet in Buenos Aires July 8 and 9, 1968. The Central Coordinating Committee will meet in Sao Paulo, Brazil July 11-13, 1968.

-30-

C O R R E C T I O N S

1. On BP story sent 7/25/67, headlined: "Mammoth Bible Project/ Set For Atlanta In Fall, change figure in graph 2, line 1, from 200 as sent to 1,500, making it read: "Most of the city's 1,500 churches are organizing...."

2. On BP story sent 7/28/67, headlined: "Baptist Sunday School Board/ Oks \$36 Million Budget, correct spelling of name in graph 10, line 2, to read: "...and Roy Babb of Nashville..." (Babb, not Babbs). Thanks.

--Baptist Press