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January 30, 1968

Baptist Editor Commends
Ertha Kitt's Courage

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--"Three cheers for Ertha Kitt," a Baptist editor wrote here in commenting editorially on the singer's critical comments at a White House conference recently.

"May her tribe increase when convictions need to be stated with courage," wrote editor Jack L. Gritz of The Baptist Messenger, official publication of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

"This does not mean we fully agree with Miss Kitt's statements," the editor added. "But she stated what she thinks on an important subject with conviction and feeling. Under the circumstances, it took courage to do so."

The editor took issue with those who have been critical of the singer's outburst, saying her conduct was "inexcusable."

The Negro singer stunned White House guests and Mrs. Lyndon Johnson (Jan. 18) when she angrily said American youth were rebelling because of the Vietnam war. She told Mrs. Johnson:

"You send the best of this country off to be shot and maimed. They rebel in the street. They will take pot and they will get high. They don't want to go to school because they're going to be snatched off from their mothers to be shot in Vietnam."

With tears in her eyes, Mrs. Johnson responded by saying, "Because there is a war on---and I pray that there will be a just and honest peace--that still doesn't give us a free ticket not to try to work for better things such as against crime in the streets, better education and better health for our people."

The Baptist editor commended Mrs. Johnson. "She handled the whole matter graciously and we were proud of her."

But Gritz said that the incident raises some perplexing questions.

"What should a person do when he or she is invited to a home to discuss a serious subject? Should the individual sip his coffee quietly, smile pleasantly at the hostess and nod his head in agreement with whatever is being said? Or should the individual state his convictions and express his feelings concerning the subject under discussion?"

The editor asked if the President's wife and her advisors really wanted to have a conference to discuss the problem of juvenile delinquency. "Or did they just want some well-known names to lend prestige to their prepared recommendations?"

He also questioned in what way Miss Kitt was ill mannered. Then he answered: "We have yet to hear anyone explain that. She may have been unpleasant; but ill-mannered, No!"

"Juvenile delinquency---the subject of the conference---is unpleasant. The war in Vietnam is unpleasant. The frustration of uncommitted youth in modern society is unpleasant. Many things in life are unpleasant, including the disagreement of individuals in public or in private," Editor Gritz wrote.

Then he concluded with his "Three cheers" statement, and by saying: "The people we are worried about are those who seem to think politeness should take precedence over conviction."

Chicago Crusade Rally
Involves Baptist Groups

CHICAGO (BP)--At least three different Baptist groups, perhaps more, will sponsor a city-wide rally as part of the Crusade of the Americas here next fall.

The Chicago rally is being planned by representatives of the Baptist General Conference, the North American Baptist Conference, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

The rally is to be one of 40 such meetings scheduled this fall, but the Chicago rally is believed to be the only one involving Baptist bodies other than Southern Baptists.

Other Baptists in the Chicago area will be invited to participate, including those of the American Baptist Convention, the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc., the National Baptist Convention of America, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, the General Association of Regular Baptists, the Conservative Baptists, the General Association of General Baptists (Armenian) and the Seventh Day Baptists.

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Golden Gate Seminary
To Seek Accreditation

1/30/68

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary here has been recognized as a "candidate for accreditation" by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

The association is the accrediting commission for senior colleges and universities in California, Hawaii, and Guam.

Golden Gate Seminary is already fully accredited by the American Association of Theological Schools, and the American Association of Schools of Religious Education.

Seminary President Harold Graves and Dean William A. Carleton said that accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges would open the door for a broader scope of coordinated training with public universities in specialized degrees.

It would provide recognition of seminary credits toward teaching accreditation and for seminary graduates who wish to take graduate degrees from public or private universities, the dean and president said.

The accrediting commission wrote Graves that the seminary would be listed as "a recognized candidate for accreditation" from the period Jan. 25, 1968, until June 30, 1969.

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Accrediting Group To Meet
At Southwestern Seminary

1/30/68

FORT WORTH (BP)--The Commission on Christian Education of the American Association of Theological Schools is scheduled to hold its annual meeting here at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Feb. 12).

About a dozen deans and professors of theological seminaries representing Baptist, Presbyterian, Mennonite, Lutheran, Methodist, and interdenominational seminaries and divinity schools are expected to attend.

Joe Davis Heacock, dean of Southwestern Seminary's School of Religious Education, is the Baptist member of the commission.

The faculty at the seminary's School of Religious Education and Southwestern President Robert Naylor will host the group for a banquet following the meeting.

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January 30, 1968

Project 500:

New Yorkers Anticipate
Spiritual Spring Training

By Roy Jennings

NEW YORK (BP)--The streets of Flat Bush, which once surged with baseball fever in support of the Brooklyn Dodgers, will become the scene this spring of an interesting variety of Southern Baptist ministries.

The friendly invasion of organized Southern Baptist work, spearheaded by 10 committed families, will center in a historic church building where President William McKinley worshipped when in New York City.

Hopefully, the three-story brownstone will become one of 500 new churches Southern Baptists will establish during the next two years as a part of Project 500.

Through Project 500, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board is seeking to begin new work in strategic locations in states where organized Southern Baptist work is less than 20 years old.

Located in the heart of the Park Slope section of Flat Bush, once the cultural hub of Brooklyn, the onetime Dutch Reformed Church will seat 1,000 in its auditorium.

A full-size gymnasium dominates the floor beneath the auditorium while the basement has enough educational space for 400 persons.

Southern Baptists got the church building at an almost unbelievable bargain, indicated James S. Wright of Jamaica, N. Y., who is supervising early Southern Baptist efforts in Flat Bush.

For \$45,000 Southern Baptists received the three-story building and property insured for \$250,000 and an organ costing \$40,000 when new. Five years ago the Dutch Reformed congregation renovated the building at a cost of \$70,000.

Why did Twelfth Street Dutch Reform Church decide to permit Southern Baptists to open a ministry among the 80,000 persons on the slopes of Prospect Park? Here's the way Wright explained it:

Since 1900 the congregation dwindled from 1,000 members to about 30. Last year, several of the members wanted to close the church doors.

In recent years many of the members of the congregation moved out of the community to the lower part of Brooklyn or Long Island. As the people left, the ministry to the community declined. A series of supply preachers filled the pulpit the last 16 years.

Southern Baptists will open a multi-faceted ministry on a small scale among the predominantly Jewish and Catholic population and expand as more funds become available, Wright indicated.

Under the guidance of a mission pastor, the church is offering a traditional worship service Sunday mornings plus a language ministry and a weekday program.

Wright said he envisions a nursery school program, language work with Spanish-speaking persons in an adjacent community, and a well-attended activity Saturday morning in the gymnasium.

Already worship attendance is up to 60 with 50 children turning out for a movie and play Saturday morning, Wright said.

To successfully reach the people living in the area, Wright and other Southern Baptists are using varied introductory and enlistment techniques.

They range from wearing clerical collars to staging open air concerts in the park to attract people who won't come to church.

Wright says he dons a clerical collar when he walks through the park to open conversations with the bench warmers.

People in Flat Bush are apprehensive of strangers but will respond to persons whom they recognize as clergy, Wright explained.

Wright said he had to undergo an examination in theology as well as explain Southern Baptists' plans for ministering to the community before the Dutch Reformed congregation would sell the church. At the end of the discussions they offered to sell the building at any price.

Southern Baptist ministries will escalate when the new pastor, Jerreal Buchanan of Albuquerque, N. M., takes charge in late winter.

Wright said Southern Baptists are making the Flat Bush ministry possible through their gifts this year to the Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions. From the total offering of \$5½ million, the last \$1½ million will be used to get well-trained missionary pastors to Project 500 church fields.