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April 5, 1968

Jess Moody Named Acting
Florida College President

274

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WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Jess Moody, pastor of First Baptist Church in West Palm Beach, Fla., has been named acting president of a proposed Baptist school here.

Moody assumed the position effective April 1 in addition to his duties as pastor of the First Baptist Church here.

He said he would serve in this capacity as long as the campus for the proposed Baptist school remains on the property of the First Baptist Church.

In other major action, the trustees of the proposed school voted to change the name of the college to Palm Beach Atlantic College, and to seek affiliation with the Palm Lake Baptist Association rather than the Florida Baptist Convention.

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Moody said that the college will meet at the church only on an interim basis before moving to property at Palm Beach Gardens near here, but he did not indicate when this would be.

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The new acting president said that the plans now call for establishing a four-year liberal arts college, opening with freshman classes next fall.

He added that the school hopes to offer oceanographic or pre-oceanographic studies, hence the word "Atlantic" in the proposed new name.

Moody said that the name did not include the word Baptist because they did not want people to assume that this was an institution of the Florida Baptist Convention.

He added that the Palm Lake Baptist Association Executive Committee had voted to take over the school, and that he had been consulting with the state convention executive secretary, Harold Bennett, about details.

There still, however, is a question about the actual control of the school. The trustees were elected by the Florida Baptist Convention, and technically, the school is still an institution of the state convention, until the full convention votes otherwise.

Moody said he hopes that the state convention will take over the school again when it moves to the proposed campus in Palm Beach Gardens.

The State Mission Board of the convention will discuss the college matter at its meeting April 23, Moody said.

Moody has been chairman of the college's board of trustees since its inception. He is a former president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

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Baptist Press

Baptist PR Meeting
Urges Courage, Change

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In their final session, the organization elected as its new president the program vice president who planned the meeting, Floyd A. Craig, director of public relations for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, Nashville.

Every major speaker dealt with the problem of change in today's society, opening and closing on similar notes.

"The church can't go on acting as if change (in society) does not exist, and it better get with it to see that it is the kind of change that ought to happen," declared opening speaker Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, former public relations director for the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod and current speaker for the Lutheran Hour radio program.

In the closing address, the executive secretary of the Religious Public Relations Council, Marvin C. Wilbur of New York, outlined what he considered to be some of the fantastic technological and sociological changes of the last 30 years.

"Of necessity," he said, "Americans will have to accept or adapt to more changes in one month today than we did in one year 30 years ago." This, he added, takes a tremendous amount of courage.

"I doubt if we will have the courage to change tomorrow if we remain unchanged ourselves," Wilbur said. "The P. R. person who survives must be willing to accept change and take advantage of every technological advance he can find--or finance."

The organization's president, John Bloskas of the SBC Annuity Board in Dallas, urged the group to explore the possible use of electronic computers in public relations work.

He quoted a recent speech by Albert McClellan, program planning secretary of the SBC Executive Committee, calling McClellan's proposal to study establishing a computer center with a network of consoles in every state convention and SBC agency, "one of the most important challenges issued to Southern Baptists in many a day."

Bloskas observed possible use of computers in public relations work might be evaluating Baptist response to what the convention is doing, and production of specially-written news releases tailored for a special audience by computer.

In two speeches to the group, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Professor Clyde Fant said that, like it or not, the younger generation of Baptists are changing.

Fant observed that while at one time, a one-sided, dogmatic and authoritarian approach to preaching might have worked in Baptist pulpits and communications media, that day is now gone. "We do not now live in an era of dogmatic interpretation," he said.

Fant said that Baptists face a credibility gap when performance and claims do not match, and said that one cause of the credibility gap is "because we try to speak without information, and that's putting it politely."

Fant, professor of preaching at the seminary, said that too many ministers use an inflated language and jargon, describing attendance at meetings as "glorious" and "marvelous."

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Fant urged a proper balance between emotion and intellect in dealing with the whole man, and a proper balance between communicating "what God has on his mind," and what is going on in society.

Other officers elected by the public relations group include: program vice president, Tom Brannon, public relations director for South Carolina Baptists; membership vice president, Joan Harvison, communications director for Oklahoma Baptists; newsletter editor Ed Shipman, promotion director for the SBC Radio-Television Commission; secretary-treasurer, Pat Pattillo, administrative assistant, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and SBC Inter-Agency Council representative, David K. Morris, public relations director for Alabama Baptists.

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Southern Baptist Leaders
 Deplore King Assassination

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By the Baptist Press

Numerous Southern Baptist leaders throughout the nation reacted with shock, grief, dismay and repentance to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., some calling for Southern Baptists to redouble efforts to deal with white racism in the South.

Almost all Baptist leaders contacted by Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention, expressed shock, grief and dismay at the murder in Memphis, Tenn., of the Negro Civil Rights leader, one of the few Baptists ever to win a Nobel Peace prize.

In statements following King's death, several Baptist denominational leaders and editors called on Southern Baptists to repent of the sin of racism, and to deal with the root causes that led to the riots and demonstrations that brought King to Memphis.

"Though felled by one demented assassin, all who contributed to the American racism and blind prejudice which produced the atmosphere ripe for such an act helped pull the trigger," wrote C. R. Daley, editor of the Kentucky Baptist "Western Recorder" in an editorial.

"This is true of Southern Baptists, who more than any other religious group have responsibility for that part of America that produced him and murdered him," Daley said.

Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission Secretary Foy Valentine urged Baptists "to give ourselves in compassion and patience to the things that make for justice, love, understanding, reconciliation, and peace."

"There is no hope for hostile and alienated people except through the Christian ministry of reconciliation to which God has called his people," said Valentine.

Two SBC Home Mission Board officials echoed the statement. Victor Glass, secretary of the board's department of work with National (Negro) Baptists, called the assassination "a signal to us that we need to hurry up with actions that have meaning for Negro people to have their full economic, political and educational rights."

The Home Mission Board executive secretary, Arthur B. Rutledge of Atlanta, stated, "I pray that this will stimulate Southern Baptists to a new awareness of our responsibility and opportunity to help achieve a Christian solution to the pressing human relations problem of our day."

The top executive of the Southern Baptist Convention, Porter W. Routh of Nashville, called on Southern Baptists to respond to President Lyndon B. Johnson's suggestion by devoting Sunday, April 7, to a day of prayer.

Routh, executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee, said the Sunday could well be used "as a time of confession of failure to practice Christian brotherhood."

The president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Duke K. McCall, predicted that King's assassination would have an effect on Congress, and force passage of a federal open housing law.

"Almost every time civil rights legislation has been stalled in the federal Congress, some extremist segregationist action has pried it loose and has set it back on the road," McCall observed. "There is almost a feeling of providential pattern to this thing."

King had once spoken at the seminary where McCall is president in about 1960, and McCall said that some Southern Baptists "tried to punish" the seminary for having listened to him.

In his editorial, Daley, also of Louisville, said that King, although a Baptist minister, was "rejected and criticized by most Southern Baptists. Many of these fellow Baptists," he added, "insisted he was an immoral man and a Communist."

Daley pointed out that with the exception of King's speech at Southern Seminary, he had never been invited to speak at a Southern Baptist meeting, and that he was spurned and criticized from the platform at the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Miami Beach, Fla., in 1960.

McCall said that many Baptists had misunderstood King's philosophy of non-violence, and had not considered him a "moderate".

"But the tragedy is now that there is none nearly so moderate as Martin Luther King to take his place, and his death leaves the terrifying possibility that all the Negro drive towards civil rights will be formed by the more radical elements of Negro leadership. "No matter how much some people dislike him and his methods, he reflected the most moderate leadership that the Negro community would follow," McCall said.

Two Baptist editors praised King as a great man in their editorials. "American history will rank him as one of the great men of the century and Baptist history eventually might put him alongside Billy Graham as one of the few outstanding Baptists of the mid-twentieth century," wrote Daley.

Editor J. Terry Young of the California Southern Baptist called King "a modern Moses leading his people out of bondage--into the promised land of freedom, equality, and justice guaranteed by the American constitution."

"His murder robbed America of its leading spokesman for freedom in this age," Young wrote. He added, "Dr. King made mistakes at times, as we all do, but his basic plea for equal rights and justice for all is just plain Americanism."

Calling his murder "one of the tragic events in American history," Young said only a demented man could have done such a thing.

Editors and Baptist leaders in the state where King was pastor, and the state where he died, likewise lamented his death.

The president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Wade Darby, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Tenn., called on Tennessee Baptists "to join in a rededication to peace, brotherhood, and a cooperative effort in the name of Christ to overcome the ills of society that result in hatred and violence." Darby is also chairman of the SBC Christian Life Commission.

The editor of the Tennessee Baptist and Reflector deplored the heinous crime, and the apathy toward the working conditions in Memphis "which are unjust and which lead toward a feeling of helplessness and despair."

"I am stunned that it could happen in our own state," Owen said, "but at the same time I realize that it can happen anywhere that people forget God and become dupes of the devil."

In Atlanta where King lived, the editor of the Georgia Baptist "Christian Index", Jack U. Harwell, wrote that Georgia Baptists ought to lead in rededication to the causes for which he died.

Harwell deplored the fact that on the very night in which Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, a movement was being launched in Atlanta "to push a candidate for President of the U. S. whose every utterance and act epitomized the segregationist's sins which Dr. King gave his life to oppose."

The executive secretary of the SBC Foreign Mission Board, Baker James Cauthen, of Richmond, Va., said that King's death calls upon all Christians everywhere "to fresh examination, prayer, and to a demonstration of their love to their fellow man."

C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, said that King's name has joined "that long list of the prophets and the martyrs who have lived and died for a noble cause,"

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