



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 20, 1968

### Statement on Crisis In Nation To Be Presented To Convention

NASHVILLE (BP)--A strongly-worded statement calling for creation of a Baptist task force to deal with the current racial crisis in the nation has been signed by a group of 69 Southern Baptist leaders for presentation to the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston, June 4-7.

The statement voices a confession for "our share of responsibility" for the racial crisis, declares commitment to defend all people against injustice, and appeals to all Southern Baptists to take action "in human relations and urgent ministry."

It specifically urges the Southern Baptist Convention and its Executive Committee to create a task force of representatives from concerned SBC agencies "to deal with these problems in the most effective manner possible," and it calls upon Baptist churches, associations and state conventions to join the SBC "in a renewal of Christian effort to meet this national crisis."

Signed by 69 executives of SBC agencies, state conventions and editors of Baptist state papers, the 1,027 word statement was drafted by an ad hoc committee of top Southern Baptist leaders. It was mailed to the 74 SBC agency heads, state convention executive secretaries, and Baptist state paper editors with a request that they sign it and authorize its presentation to the SBC Executive Committee in its pre-convention session.

If the Executive Committee approves the statement on June 4, it could go to the Convention as a recommendation from the Executive Committee for action the following day.

The statement describes the crisis situation, decrying the potential for anarchy, and ominous sounds of hate and violence, and conditions of poverty and oppression.

"We are an affluent society, abounding in wealth and luxury. Yet one-fifth of our people, black and white, suffer from poverty," said the statement. "Many are hurt by circumstances they cannot escape, injustice they cannot correct, or heartless exploitation they cannot resist. Many live in slum housing or ghettos of race or poverty or ignorance or bitterness that generate both despair and defiance."

Baptist leaders signing the statement acknowledged "our share of responsibility for the injustice, disorder and wickedness of our land." In a statement of confession, they said "we have come far short of our privilege in Christian brotherhood."

In a declaration of commitment, the signers pledged to defend the oppressed against injustice, to strive to obtain equality of human and civil rights for all, to resist prejudice and combat forces that breed distrust and hostility, and to personally accept every Christian as a brother and welcome in Baptist churches every person regardless of race or class.

In the statement of appeal, Baptists were urged to accept the present crisis as "a challenge from God to strive for reconciliation by love.... Words will not suffice," said the statement. "The time has come for action."

It was made clear that the persons signing the statement were doing so as individuals, and not in an official capacity. The statement was prefaced with a paragraph stating: "We recognize that no individual can speak for a convention, agency or church. The following represents the concern, confession, commitment and appeal by the undersigned."

Of the 69 signers, 29 work with SBC agencies, including some associates who had a part in drafting the statement; 22 executive secretaries of state conventions, and 17 editors of Baptist state papers, plus three executive secretaries who also serve as editors.

Signers, listed alphabetically as individuals, were the following:

Clifton J. Allen, Reuben E. Alley, Charles H. Ashcraft, John P. Baker, O. L. Bayless, Harold C. Bennett, Millard J. Berquist, Kendall Berry, Olin T. Binkley, Charles E. Blackman, C. E. Boyle, R. Y. Bradford, Rabun Brantley, Glen E. Braswell, Emanuel Carlson, J. Dee Cates, Baker James Cauthen, W. Perry Crouch, C. R. Daley, James O. Duncan, W. Ross Edwards, W. C. Fields, Searcy S. Garrison, Victor Glass, Marse Grant, Harold K. Graves, Roy D. Gresham, W. R. Grigg, Horace G. Hammett, Earl O. Harding, Hardy M. Harrell, Robert J. Hastings, Jack U. Harwell, Ralph A. Herring, Roland P. Hood, Fred D. Hubbs, Robert D. Hughes, Alma Hunt, John J. Hurt, W. Fred Kendall, T. B. Lackey, Duke K. McCall, Albert McClellan, E. Harmon Moore, L. H. Moore, Merrill D. Moore, Fred B. Moseley, Josef Nordenhaug, James Pleitz R. R. G. Puckett, R. Alton Reed, John E. Roberts, Ray E. Roberts, Porter Routh, Arthur Rutledge, Harold G. Sanders, George W. Schroeder, Al Shackelford, James H. Smith, W. G. Stracener, Richard M. Stephenson, Paul M. Stevens, James D. Sullivan, Roy Valentine, Edmond Walker, S. A. Whitlow, Davis Woolley, and J. Terry Young



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**A STATEMENT CONCERNING THE CRISIS IN OUR NATION**

(We recognize that no individual can speak for a convention, agency, or church. The following represents the concern, confession, commitment, and appeal by the undersigned.)

We Face a Crisis

Our nation is enveloped in a social and cultural revolution. We are shocked by the potential for anarchy in a land dedicated to democracy and freedom. There are ominous sounds of hate and violence among men and of unbelief and rebellion toward God. These compel Christians to face the social situation and to examine themselves under the judgment of God.

We are an affluent society, abounding in wealth and luxury. Yet, one-fifth of our people, black and white, suffer from poverty. Many are hurt by circumstance they cannot escape, injustice they cannot correct, or heartless exploitation they cannot resist. Many live in slum housing or ghettos of race or poverty or ignorance or bitterness that generate both despair and defiance.

We are a nation that declares the sovereignty of law and the necessity of civil order. Yet, we have had riots, and have tolerated conditions that breed riots, spread violence, foster disrespect for the law, and undermine the democratic process.

We are a nation that declares the equality and rights of persons irrespective of race. Yet, as a nation, we have allowed cultural patterns to persist that have deprived millions of black Americans, and other racial groups as well, of equality of recognition and opportunity in the areas of education, employment, citizenship, housing, and worship. Worse still, as a nation, we have condoned prejudices that have damaged the personhood of blacks and whites alike. We have seen a climate of racism developed resulting in hostility, injustice, suspicion, faction, strife, and alarming potential for bitterness, division, destruction, and death.

We Voice Our Confession

The current crisis should arouse the Christian conscience. Judgment begins at the house of God. Christians are inescapably involved in the life of the nation. We therefore acknowledge our share of responsibility for the injustice, disorder, and wickedness of our land. We humble ourselves before God and acknowledge that we share the blame with millions of other persons for the shame of lawlessness, the agony of injustice, and the spirit of strife.

As Southern Baptists, representative of one of the largest bodies of Christians in our nation and claiming special ties of spiritual unity with the large conventions of Negro Baptists in our land, we have come far short of our privilege in Christian brotherhood.

We implore God to create in us a right spirit of repentance and to make us instruments of his redemption, his righteousness, his peace, and his love toward all men.

We Declare Our Commitment

The Christ we serve, the opportunity we face, and the crisis we confront, compel us to action. We therefore declare our commitment, believing this to be right in the sight of God and our duty under the lordship of Christ.

We will respect every individual as a person possessing dignity and inherent worth growing out of his creation in the image of God.

We will strive to obtain and secure for every person equality of human and civil rights. We will undertake to secure opportunities in matters of citizenship, public services, education, employment, and personal habitation that every man may achieve his highest potential as a person.

We will accept and exercise our civic responsibility as Christians to defend people against injustice. We will strive to insure for all persons the full opportunity for achievement according to the endowments given by God.

We will refuse to be a party to any movement that fosters racism or violence or mob action.

We will personally accept every Christian as a brother beloved in the Lord and welcome to the fellowship of faith and worship every person irrespective of race or class.

We will strive by personal initiative and every appropriate means of communication to bridge divisive barriers, to work for reconciliation, and to open channels of fellowship and cooperation.

We will strive to become well-informed about public issues, social ills, and divisive movements that are damaging to human relationships. We will strive to resist prejudice and to combat forces that breed distrust and hostility.

We will recognize our involvement with other Christians and with all others of good will in the obligation to work for righteousness in public life and justice for all persons. We will strive to promote Christian brotherhood as a witness to the gospel of Christ.

#### We Make An Appeal

Our nation is at the crossroads. We must decide whether we shall be united in good will, freedom, and justice under God to serve mankind or be destroyed by covetousness, passion, hate, and strife.

We appeal to our fellow Southern Baptists to join us in self-examination under the Spirit of God and to accept the present crisis as a challenge from God to strive for reconciliation by love.

We appeal to our fellow Southern Baptists to engage in Christian ventures in human relationships, and to take courageous actions for justice and peace.

We believe that a vigorous Christian response to this national crisis is imperative for an effective witness on our part at home and abroad.

Words will not suffice. The time has come for action. Our hope for healing and renewal is in the redemption of the whole of life. Let us call men to faith in Christ. Let us dare to accept the full demands of the love and lordship of Christ in human relationships and urgent ministry. Let us be identified with Christ in the reproach and suffering of the cross.

We express the earnest hope that the Executive Committee and the Southern Baptist Convention will take the following actions:

1. Approve this statement on the national crisis.
2. Authorize the agencies concerned in these areas to set up a task force to deal with these problems in the most effective manner possible consistent with their program assignments. It is understood that the chairman of the Inter-Agency Council will convene the meeting of interested agencies as soon as possible for organization. Immediate action may be necessary in some cases. Long range plans should be worked out through the Inter-Agency Council.
3. Call upon the churches, the associations, and state conventions to join the Southern Baptist Convention in a renewal of Christian effort to meet this national crisis.

# # #

Signing the statement were the following individuals: (listed alphabetically)

Clifton J. Allen, Reuben E. Alley, Charles H. Ashcraft, John P. Baker, O. L. Bayless, Harold C. Bennett, Millard J. Berquist, Kendall Berry, Olin T. Binkley, Charles E. Blackman, C. E. Boyle, R. Y. Bradford, Rabun Brantley, Glen E. Braswell, Emanuel Carlson, J. Dee Cates

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May 20, 1968

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Baptist Press

Home Of Midwestern Seminary  
President Burns, Berquist Hurt

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Fire swept through the antebellum home of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Millard J. Berquist here, causing about \$15,000 to \$20,000 damage.

Berquist was slightly burned when a piece of hot plaster fell and struck him on the face near his eye, but he was not seriously injured.

Almost all of the furnishings of the home were saved, including numerous antiques which Berquist and his family considered priceless.

Fire inspectors said they suspected the fire was caused by defective wiring in the attic. Most of the top floor was badly damaged, but the lower floor was not as seriously damaged.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Berquist and their daughter, Mrs. Barbara Phillips, were at home on the Sunday afternoon when the fire started. They were hosting an outdoor outing for about 50 students at the high school where Mrs. Phillips teaches.

When the fire broke out, the students helped the family carry almost all of the furniture and furnishings out of the burning house.

Berquist was in the house trying to save some of the furnishings when the plaster fell and hit him in the face near the eye. He was treated and released at a local hospital. There was no damage to his eyesight.

Berquist and his wife had moved into the antebellum home last August, and the house had been renovated only last Christmas. It was originally the old Vivian mansion, given to the seminary by Mrs. Sheffa Vivian Foster. Ironically, the house burned to the ground in 1947, and Mrs. Foster had it completely rebuilt to original specifications.

The Berquists will probably be living on the seminary campus until the house can again be renovated and remodeled, a seminary official said.

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John W. Raley, Pioneer  
Oklahoma Educator, Dies

5/20/68

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--John Wesley Raley, president emeritus of Oklahoma Baptist University here, and pioneer Oklahoma educator, died here Sunday, May 19 of a heart attack following recovery from massive abdominal surgery this spring.

Funeral services were slated for Dr. Raley at 2:00 p. m., Tuesday, May 21, at the Oklahoma Baptist University chapel named in his honor. He was 65 years of age.

He was president of the Baptist school here for 27 years, resigning in 1961 because of ill health, to become chancellor. He was named president emeritus in 1965. At the time of his retirement, his tenure was the longest of any college president in Oklahoma or the Southern Baptist Convention.

A graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex., Dr. Raley earned the master of theology degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, and the doctor of theology degree from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. Both Baylor and Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) conferred honorary doctor of divinity degrees upon him.

He was the former pastor of Baptist churches in Smithville, Tex.; Milburn, N. J.; and Bartlesville, Okla. While pastor of First Baptist Church, Bartlesville, and chairman of the OBU board of trustees, he was elected the school's eighth president.

Survivors include the widow, Helen, a son, John Wesley Raley Jr., of Oklahoma City, a daughter, Mrs. James R. Nash of Waco, Tex., five brothers, three sisters, and three grandchildren.

Burial was to be in the University Gardens of Rest Haven Memorial Cemetery, Shawnee, with Roesch Brothers Funeral Chapel in charge of arrangements.

The family requested that instead of flowers, memorial gifts be sent to the Raley Chapel Completion Fund at OBU.

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