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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
Telephone (615) 244-2355  
W. C. Fields, Director  
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

**REGIONAL OFFICES**

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Editor, 161 Spring Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30303, Telephone (404) 523-2593

DALLAS Editor, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) RI 1-1996

WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Editor, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

**BUREAU**

BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD Lynn M. Davis Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203,  
Telephone (615) 254-1631

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Students Urge SBC To Face  
Issues; Pastors Say Don't Leave

By Jim Newton

HOUSTON (BP)--A dozen Baptist students challenged Southern Baptists here to "walk into the furnace" and squarely face the issues of race, poverty, and the war in Vietnam.

During a dialogue with 250 Baptist leaders and pastors, the students said numerous young people are leaving Baptist churches because of Baptist failure to deal with these issues.

In response, the pastors repeatedly told the students, "Don't leave us; we need more like you."

One of the students, Ronald Joyner of the University of North Carolina, told the group: "I pray that those who walk into the furnace do not have to walk out of the church."

Earlier in the day, about two dozen of the students picketed the auxiliary meetings in advance of the Southern Baptist Convention. They said they wanted to call their efforts "a non-disruptive silent vigil carrying placards" for fear some would think they were beatnik types.

The placards they carried expressed concern that silence would be the way in which the Southern Baptist Convention met the social issues of 1968.

During the dialogue, Southern Baptists' failure to deal adequately with the race issue was cited repeatedly. Yet the students pointed out that they saw signs of hope.

"Maybe there is hope for our nation, our world," said Roger Sharpe, student from North Carolina State University in Raleigh and one of the organizers of the student demonstrations.

"Above the smoke of our burning cities, beyond the hate of our human hearts, across the chasm of our divided, disordered society, I do see hope," said Sharpe, "for I see a cross that still stands in the smoldering ruins of our generation.

"We must not, and will not fiddle while America burns," Sharpe declared.

Several pastors, including Ed Byrd of Florence, S. C., urged the students to "stay with us since you have these insights and convictions, and help us."

"You are now adults," Byrd said, "so welcome to the fellowship of the guilty."

Dave Philpot of Port Lavaca, Tex., former pastor of a Southern Baptist church in Fort Worth which integrated its membership, told the students Baptist churches need more like them, "but be ready to get your hands dirty and maybe bloody."

One of the students, Miss Gailya Brown of Baylor University in Waco, Tex., said some youth are leaving the denomination because of three "hangups" among Baptists.

She identified them as the Baptist tendency to separate the body and soul and be more interested in his spiritual than physical needs, a hangup on faith to the detriment of works, and a hangup on priorities, overemphasizing negative things like smoking and drinking to the detriment of poverty, war and inhumanity.

Miss Eleanor Self, a VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America) in Myrtle Beach, S. C., chided Southern Baptists for failing to deal with poverty, saying "it is unChristian to ignore a child whose stomach is swelling with the sickness of worms."

On the war in Vietnam, Joyner told the group many students, himself included, believe the war is fundamentally unjust and immoral. He added that if peace does come, it will come in spite of the Southern Baptist Convention and not because of it.

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Another student, Theo Brown of Baylor, said Southern Baptists are going to have to change "or else we are going to die," and youth will leave the denomination at an even faster rate.

Brown said that one person stopped him during the demonstration earlier in the day and said, "Why don't you go on and become a Presbyterian and leave us alone."

In the exchange, Victor Glass of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta, told the students that "God and history, and more Southern Baptists than you think, are on your side."

Only two of the 250 Baptists attending the session reacted negatively to what the students were saying.

Bill Swank, pastor in Pasadena, Tex., differed with the students on the priority of emphasis on ministering to physical needs instead of spiritual needs, and said it is not correct to say "my brother right or wrong."

He was referring to a statement made earlier by Miss Marie Moorefield of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., who said in reference to conscientious objectors to the Vietnam war: "My brother is no less my brother whether he is on his way to Vietnam, or to jail."

Swank said the important thing is not social action, but winning souls to faith in Jesus Christ.

Miss Moorefield countered that the students said there must be a proper balance between ministering to spiritual and social needs, and that the two cannot be separated.

Another student, Terry Nichols of University of North Carolina, said that Swank's language simply does not communicate to young people. "I would challenge you, sir, to go into a dormitory and try to pull off what you are saying in this language among today's students."

Another pastor, Bill West of River Oaks Baptist Church in Houston, said that he refused to stand "under the blanket indictment of apathy expressed by this self-appointed jury."

A professor at the University of Richmond, Robert Alley, countered, however, "These students are telling it like it is, and you'd better believe it. Unless something is done now, and quickly, we will lose them."

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William H. Crook Nominated  
As Ambassador To Australia

6/3/68

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Lyndon B. Johnson has nominated William H. Crook, a former Baptist pastor and Baptist school president in Texas, to be ambassador to Australia. The nomination is pending in the Senate.

Crook is currently assistant director of the Office of Economic Opportunity as head of the Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA). He came to this position in December 1966 from the regional office of Economic Opportunity in Austin, Tex., where he had been director since July 1965.

Prior to this, for five years, Crook was president of San Marcos Baptist Academy, a preparatory school in San Marcos, Tex. He has also served as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Nacogdoches, Tex.

The new appointee is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, where he earned his doctor's degree. He also did graduate work at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

Crook is married to the former Margaret Eleanor Butt of Corpus Christi. They have one son, William H., 11, and two daughters, Mary Elizabeth, 8, and Noel Eileen, 4.

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Irwin Elected Missions  
Superintendents President

6/3/68

HOUSTON (BP)--Mercer C. Irwin of New Orleans, La., was elected president of the Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Superintendents here.

Irwin succeeds D. E. Strahan, superintendent of missions in Champaign, Ill.

Other new offices filled were vice-president, William J. Cumbie, executive secretary, Mount Vernon Baptist Association, Alexandria, Va.; secretary, Jim Joslin, superintendent of missions, Springfield, Mo.; and treasurer, D. Clyde Presley, superintendent of missions, Capshaw, Ala.

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Natural Disasters Provoke  
Baptists To Action, WMU Told

By Roddy Stinson

HOUSTON (BP) -- Natural disasters provoked Southern Baptists to two of their greatest mission ventures in 1967, two speakers at the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Convention said here during the opening session.

Speaking to approximately 2,500 women from across the Southern Baptist Convention, Mrs. Robert Brannon, a housewife from Freeport, Tex., told about her participation in a volunteer ministry to victims of last summer's flood in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Charles McLaughlin, secretary of the Texas Baptist State Missions Commission in Dallas, described Baptist ministries in South Texas in the wake of Hurricane Beulah last September.

With photographs of the Alaska flood damage flashing behind her, Mrs. Brannon described the work of "107 Baptist men and three ladies from 20 states" who flew to Fairbanks in August to repair eight Southern Baptist churches and four pastors' homes damaged by the flood.

Explaining the necessity of this influx of volunteer help, Mrs. Brannon said, "Almost every home in Fairbanks was damaged, and it was necessary for the church members to work on their own houses before the winter freeze, just six weeks away."

The volunteers "from the lower 48" included electricians, carpenters, plumbers, furnace workers, masons, and painters, who worked night and day to complete their task, she said. "It took about a week of back-breaking work to tear out the wet sheetrock, insulation, wiring, plumbing, etc. and clean up the debris. But by the end of the second week, all of the churches were back in operating condition."

Why did the volunteers go? "The men and women who volunteered for this Alaska adventure all had about the same story to tell," Mrs. Brannon explained. "The Lord had so greatly blessed us that we wanted to give a little back to Him - to say, 'Thank you, Lord. We appreciate our many blessings and want to serve you with our talents.'"

McLaughlin also emphasized the role of dedicated Christians who participated - and continue to participate in ministries to the residents of southern Texas who were left destitute by Hurricane Beulah.

Using slides to illustrate his address, McLaughlin told of Baptists' response to the destruction and human misery caused by the floods, tornadoes, and storms spawned by Beulah.

"Baptists rushed to South Texas with a relief program designed to minister both to the physical and spiritual needs of the people," McLaughlin said. "Actions taken by churches and associations were tremendous. Men, women, and young people volunteered by the hundreds. Many worked around the clock gathering food and clothing, packing and marking them for shipment."

The ministries begun last fall are being continued in the Rio Grand River, McLaughlin said. "Scores of churches and individuals are engaged in work projects. Nurses, school teachers, dentists, doctors, carpenters, and building contractors are giving their time and talent in mission action. Others are sharing in weekday ministries in the churches, mission centers and homes.

"We regret the tragedy of Hurricane Beulah, but we rejoice in the response of the people to the needs that were made evident by the storm," he said.

Alarm-Sounded Over Alleged  
Baptist Crisis Of Faith

HOUSTON (BP)--Southern Baptist pastors here heard notes of alarm about the future of their faith.

Clark H. Pinnock, assistant professor of New Testament at New Orleans Theological Seminary, contended the Christian church faced the greatest crisis in all her history--a crisis of faith.

In the first of three addresses to the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, Pinnock said Christians stand in great danger of losing the Christian gospel altogether.

"Surveys have shown that a very widespread defection has taken place not only from cardinal Biblical truths, but from the Bible itself," Pinnock said.

In another major address, former Southern Baptist Convention President Herschel H. Hobbs of Oklahoma City said that Baptists of the world now stand at the watershed of history with the ability to change history's flow if they possess the spiritual strength, moral resolution, and are willing to "pay the price."

Hobbs, pastor of First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City and preacher for the Baptist Hour radio program, said that the number of missionaries abroad must be increased, and radio and television must be used to preach the gospel to every nation if Baptists are to change history.

"Perhaps in our generation, if the Lord delays His coming, the world may become overwhelmingly Christian or overwhelmingly pagan...Shall history record that Southern Baptists slept through the greatest revolution in world history?", Hobbs asked. "Or shall it show that we stood in the breach for God, faithful even unto the point of dying, to turn back the tides of evil and to bring the kingdom of God in the hearts of men everywhere?"

Speaking on the topic "Good News to All the World," Hobbs reminded the pastors, "If the world ever hears that a Saviour is born and is risen, you and I must tell it. God has no other plan."

Mankind may drown in its own blood in this generation, the speaker said. "But you and I should be so faithful in our stewardship of the gospel that as mankind goes down for the third time the last words it will hear will be 'Christ the Only Hope'."

The opening session of the Pastors' Conference also heard reports on evangelistic work in pioneer areas of the United States and projection of plans for the 1969 Crusade of the Americas.

David Wilson, missionary to New York, pointed to a crisis in that city, saying, "the number of people going to church could be seated in the cabs of that city on Sunday morning. We are not there to colonize, but to evangelize."

Henry Earl Peacock, missionary to Brazil and general coordinator for the Crusade, called the hemisphere-wide endeavor a "miracle of God." Never before, he said, has evangelism been undertaken on so wide a scale.

And he predicted that a successful crusade may pave the way toward a world-wide crusade in 1974.

Although the crusade has set no numerical goal for the 1969 evangelistic campaign, Peacock expressed the hope that at least one million of the 457 million persons living in the Western Hemisphere can be won for Christ during the crusade effort.

"Sometimes with the attention given to social issues and world problems, evangelism is pushed into the background. I believe the Crusade of the Americas will bring evangelism back into its proper focus," said Peacock.

Urging pastors to woo the "up and out" as well as the "downs and outs," he told them how Crusade founder Rubens Lopes went to Brazil's capitol to present a New Testament to President Humberto Branco and advised him to "put it in your inside coat pocket, on the left hand side, for in this book beats the heart of God and we would like to know that the heart of God beats close to the heart of our president."

Peacock challenged pastors "to visit the governors and mayors of your state, present a New Testament to them with their names engraved in letters of gold on it and tell them about the Crusade, especially about Christ, the Only Hope."

Another speaker, retired Orient missionary C. L. Culpepper, described the circumstances of the Shantung Revival in the early 1930's and expressed the belief that Southern Baptist churches can experience a similar awakening.

Such revival can come, he said, "if we recognize our spiritual and moral need, if we recognize God's promises to those who repent, and if we follow the formula (II Chron. 7:14): 'If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and heal their land'."

Culpepper added, "I believe we are too self-reliant. We really do not feel the need of God. We have so much knowledge; so many methods; so many gadgets; so many organizations. so many programs, that we really do not rely completely on God."

It is indeed far past the eleventh hour, he concluded, "but we still have time to heed the call to repent."

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Churches Which Lag Behind  
Sports on Race Issue Chided

6/3/68

By Al Morgan

HOUSTON (BP)--The church that lags behind the entertainment and sports world in its treatment of colored peoples has little to teach the world in mitigating its racial dilemmas, a Georgia pastor declared here at the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

Alvin Brackett, pastor of the Ingleside Baptist Church in Macon, Ga., said so much divides us in America today that the wall has become the symbol of our time. But he said the Holy Spirit has the power to break down the wall and make us one in Christ.

The speaker warned the pastors, however, that "a denomination that lives in the past and refuses to rethink its theology under the Holy Spirit's leadership will be a feeble voice in a world where scientific miracles have revolutionized the thoughts of men."

And a church whose members cannot be reconciled to one another will appear ridiculous, he added, as it attempts to reconcile the world to God.

Speaking on "The Indwelling Holy Spirit," Brackett noted that the Holy Spirit "will help us make our religion more than a private affair. Under his leadership, we must accept the social implications of the Gospel, never forgetting that the repentance of a nation, race, or church can only have meaning and significance when individuals repent."

Other major speakers in the afternoon session were K. Owen White, Metropolitan Missions coordinator for Southern Baptists in Los Angeles, and W. A. Criswell, pastor of the 15,000-member First Baptist Church in Dallas.

White, who served 12 years as pastor of Houston's First Baptist Church until 1965 and is a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said that Christians grieve the Holy Spirit in three ways - by pharisaical self-righteousness; by an inexcusable self-sufficiency and pride, and by failure to witness to all men everywhere of the grace of God in Christ and in our own experience.

He called for Christlike lives which allow Jesus to reveal Himself in and through man and warned his fellow pastors that "when we accept the glory for ourselves or personally take credit for what He has done, we rob God."

"Our accumulation of knowledge, our years of experience, our fondly imagined native ability and a seeming measure of success may make us dangerously self-sufficient," he continued. "We grieve the Holy Spirit by our lack of complete dependence upon him."

The 58-year-old Criswell challenged the pastors to commit themselves to Paul's motto, "Not I but Christ" (Gal. 2:20).

He said, "We must be emptied of self to be filled with all of His fullness. Our hands cannot be filled with worldly affection and ambition if we are to possess the Spirit without measure. Our souls must be emptied of self when we bring them to the fountains of heaven for the blessing."

Three speakers described evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in widely separated areas of the world -- South Africa, California, and Indonesia.

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Ernest S. Waite, pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church of Westminster, Colo., and one of 32 who preached in South Africa last September, told how a young couple who had made a 170-pound petrol "bomb" with the intention of avenging themselves against a family that had "done them wrong" were persuaded to attend a crusade. "After committing their lives to the Lord they destroyed the bomb," he said.

William Eugene Grubbs, director of the department of evangelism for the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, reported on "Encounter California" in which 200,000 Southern Baptists attempted to confront a state of 20 million people with the Gospel. Prayers for revival were answered, he said, and reports are still coming in on the results of personal evangelism emphasized in the campaign.

W. LeRoy Fowler, pastor of West University Baptist Church in Houston, said interest was so great in revival services in Indonesia that tickets had to be issued for seats in the Moslem-owned theater where they were to be held. Hundreds had to be turned away daily after the ticket supply was exhausted, he said. "I will probably never see seats for a revival being scalped for forty rupiah!"

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Mission Action Programs  
Presented To Superintendents

6/3/68

HOUSTON (BP)--A new Southern Baptist mission action program aimed at motivating Christians to do something to help people in a community who normally are overlooked by the local church was highlighted here to Baptist associational missions superintendents.

Miss Elaine Dickson, of Birmingham, Ala., assistant to the promotion director of Woman's Missionary Union, said the program strives to encourage Baptists to demonstrate their concern instead of intellectual theorizing or listening to preaching.

Speaking to the Conference of Associational Superintendents of Missions, one of five auxiliary meetings preliminary to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting here, Miss Dickson said, "The Southern Baptist conscience is, more insistently than ever, asking 'What can I do?'"

In preliminary work completed by the Woman's Missionary Union, the Brotherhood Commission, and the Home Mission Board, Miss Dickson said four major categories of need have been given priority for consideration by the churches in answer to the question.

These categories include (1) needs relating to Southern Baptist missions work, (2) needs within one church which can be met by other churches, (3) needs of community agencies and institutions which can be met by churches, and (4) any other needs which call for action.

Elaborating on the four categories, Miss Dickson said emphasis must be given to joint efforts by churches to do something which one church cannot do alone.

Some churches live in the midst of overwhelming need. Many churches in a setting of intense need do not have adequate resources to meet all of the needs about them, she said.

She urged churches to give priority attention to helping community agencies meet needs. She identified juvenile courts, homes for unwed mothers, nursing or convalescent homes, hospitals and offices of economic opportunity.

"In working with agencies, the church must determine which service outlets offer the most opportunity for the church to help meet the needs of the whole person--spiritual as well as others."

In another address, Hugh O. Chambliss, superintendent of missions, Huntsville, Ala., said association work has not reached its full potential because of four major obstacles.

He cited the lack of self appreciation essential for full accomplishment, fulfillment of stress on size instead of fulfilling its responsibility, the lack of a full program of action, and acting as diffusers of other programs instead of designers of its own.

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