

(BP)---FEATURES

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July 31, 1968

First Baptist, Dallas
Marks 100th Anniversary

By Bill Murchison
Religion Editor, Dallas Times Herald

DALLAS (BP)--When the First Baptist Church of Dallas was founded, it had only 11 members and an eccentric preacher-evangelist as pastor.

A hundred years later, its \$7½ million physical plant in downtown Dallas covers three city blocks; its members, among them Evangelist Billy Graham, number more than 15,000; and its budget totals \$1.9 million.

And its pastor, W. A. Criswell, is the current president of the 11-million member Southern Baptist Convention.

First Baptist Church of Dallas celebrated its first century of existence on Sunday, July 28, by recounting one of religion's most remarkable success stories.

Already the world's biggest and best-known Southern Baptist church, it shows every sign of going on to even better things under the leadership of its famed pastor.

Criswell, shepherd to his congregation for almost a quarter of a century, key-noted the day-long anniversary observance with a Sunday morning sermon. About 3,000 attended the service.

In other activities of the day, ground was broken for two new buildings, a new tower and steeple were dedicated, and mortgages totalling \$3½ million were burned.

With the destruction of the mortgages, the church was debt-free--for about one hour. The new buildings, including one housing a cafeteria and meeting rooms; the other for parking space and Sunday School rooms, will cost about \$4 million when completed.

With its average Sunday School attendance of 5,000, its 27 choirs, its staff of about 75, and its packed worship services, First Baptist has come a long way since a handful of Dallas Baptists gathered at the local Masonic Lodge on July 30, 1868.

Their meeting was the outgrowth of a two-week revival conducted by W. W. Harris, a part-time missionary of the Elm Fork Baptist Association and a renowned evangelist at the time.

Three weeks later, Harris was called to be pastor of the new church on a half-time basis. He served for two years before wandering on to other missions.

In 1897, the church entered its most significant era. It had, by then, over 700 members and a six-year-old, \$90,000 church building, but could boast of little else.

That was before it joined forces with George Washington Truett.

Dr. Truett was a serious and dignified man of 30 ("He even looked like God," an admirer said) when he was called from his Waco pastorate to the First Baptist pulpit. He had earlier achieved renown by raising \$92,000 to pay off Baylor University's outstanding debts.

So successful were Dr. Truett and the church during his 47 years as pastor, that both soon achieved international stature in religion. He served three terms as president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

George W. Truett died July 7, 1944. To a special pulpit committee fell the task of picking a successor.

After considering a list of 22 prospects, the committee settled on young (34), granite-jawed Wallie Amos Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church in Muskogee, Okla.

Even before that, however, Criswell's mission had been revealed to him. In a dream which found him seated in the balcony of First Baptist in Dallas, George W. Truett, who was then dead appeared beside him. "You must go down and preach to my people," said Truett. "Oh no, Dr. Truett, not I, not I!" Criswell cried. But the vision would not relent, and Criswell acquiesced.

Criswell proved himself a church builder of the Truett stamp. Between 1946 and 1958, church membership leaped from 8,400 to 11,800. The 11-story Burt Building was purchased for \$1 million and added to the church plant.

Criswell, a pulpit pounding orator, continues to pack the church's 4,000-seat auditorium. A theological conservative, he emphasizes the importance of evangelism. He describes himself as "a Bible preacher."



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"Indians" Learn Of Missions
Through Nature, Day Camping

By Larry Jerden

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--A band of "Indians" marched through the foothills of the Sangre de Christo Mountains in a single-file line that stretched more than 100 yards from their 225-pound leader to the 75-pound "warrior" bringing up the rear.

Each face bore a look of determination and resolution. Across the headbands holding feathers tight against scalps were scribbled the names of the "red" people--Jose, Richard, Louise, Bob, Dabby, and the like.

The "Indians," however, weren't on the way to massacre the white man, but to get refreshments after an exhausting hike where they learned about missions.

The 140 youthful "Indians" ages 9-12, were part of a popular pilot project that may well revolutionize children's activities at Baptist assemblies.

While youth and adults attended Bible studies, mission action clinics, and listened to missionaries, the juniors were learning of Christ and world missions through the teaching of nature.

Called simply "day camping," director Bob Dixon, husky leader of Royal Ambassador work for Texas Baptist Men, found unusual response among the boys and girls attending Southern Baptist World Missions Conference at Glorieta Baptist Assembly here.

While the day began officially at 8:15 for the campers, mothers reported children gulped down breakfast to get to their bus 30 minutes early for their ride to the Indian campsite.

At the large area the youngsters were divided along age group lines into 11 tribes, each with a tribal camp.

After donning their Indian garb, which they made themselves, the campers went into a big circle, where they pledged allegiance to the United States and Christian flags. They then sang, keeping time to the music with special sticks, which they also made themselves.

A large part of the morning was devoted to hiking. Activity on the hikes involved everything from listening to Indian Christians tell of the work among their people, to catching snakes, turtles, lizards, and insects. The animals were kept as pets and entered in races later in the week.

When the hikers returned, about midway through the morning, they carried their "treasures" to their nature museums. After refreshments they re-entered the big circle for a story by their leader.

In the circle, Dixon would tell them of Christ through the same method used by Jesus himself--parables of nature.

"Behold," said Jesus, "consider the fowls of the air." And the Indians considered them. Great lessons were taught of how God takes care of all his creatures and that God gave man dominion over every creature's life except one--his own.

"That life," Dixon told his Indians, "always gets fouled up when we try to run it ourselves. Our life is for Jesus to rule."

Even rocks provided lessons. One day each "Indian" was asked to bring back a rock. Dirty, rough, unattractive rocks were examined by the youngsters. Then they saw a polished stone.

The difference? It had been in the hands of a master stone worker.

The lesson? Our lives are rough until our Master takes hold.

Other lessons followed similar lines, all making an impact on the children.

"By taking our boys and girls into the out-of-doors, we placed them in the greatest environment for a revelation of God," Dixon said. "Our Lord is revealed in us in three ways: first through nature; second, in his holy word; and ultimately, through the life of Christ."

The camp was staffed by high school students from Lake Highlands Baptist Church in Dallas, where Dixon worships.

World Missions Conference was sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and Woman's Missionary Union, with the cooperation of the Home and Foreign Mission Boards. It attracted 1,700 persons from throughout the S. B. C. NATIONAL COMMISSION



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July 31, 1968

Baptist Men Approve New
Magazine, Record Budget

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Directors of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission approved a record \$628,886 operating budget, authorized two new magazines, and voted to begin construction of an operations building in Memphis, Tenn.

James K. Pace, Memphis insurance executive, was elected chairman of the Southern Baptist agency at the annual meeting of the directors at Glorieta Baptist Assembly here preceding the World Missions Conference. He succeeds Taylor O'Hearn, a Shreveport, La., attorney.

Clifford Carter, Washington, D. C., layman, was chosen vice-chairman, and Earl Mullenax, a sales executive from Shawnee Mission, Kan., as recording secretary.

The budget, an increase of \$81,246, included a 30 per cent hike in free materials for use by Brotherhood groups in associations and churches, George W. Schroeder, executive secretary-treasurer, explained.

Directors asked the Brotherhood Commission to begin publishing the two new magazines for use in the churches in October, 1970.

Schroeder said the publications are needed to meet anticipated requests for guidance materials for Royal Ambassadors and particularly boys ages six to eight.

Effective October, 1970, the Brotherhood Commission will offer Crusader Life, a monthly magazine for boys, 6-11, and Pioneer Life, a monthly missions magazine for boys, 12-17.

Their leaders will receive Crusader Leader and Pioneer Leader, quarterlies containing varied program suggestions. Subscribers to Ambassador Life and Ambassador Leader will receive the appropriate new magazines.

The new two-story operations building will be constructed on the east side of the existing Brotherhood Commission structure. It will house the supporting services department of the agency which regularly provides four magazines and other materials and merchandise to Brotherhood units in 15,000 churches.

Money for the building was voted almost two months ago by the Southern Baptist Convention. It is payable over a five-year period, beginning in 1968.

Directors also approved salary increases of four to seven per cent for the 70-member staff and liberalized vacation and insurance benefits.

In other action the directors authorized a national camping conference in September, 1968 and a national conference on world missions for Baptist men in the early 1970's. Both will be sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission.

The directors will meet in the summer of 1969 at the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis.

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Vietnam Missionary Says
U. S. Involvement "Moral"

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Herman Hayes, furloughing Southern Baptist missionary to Vietnam, took a firm "hawkish" stand on United States intervention in Vietnam during an address at Glorieta Baptist Assembly here.

In a speech to the Southern Baptist World Missions Conference, Hayes called the presence of American armed forces in Vietnam "just, right, honorable and moral."

A veteran of eight years in Vietnam, Hayes said the United States represented the main hope of containing Communism in Southeast Asia.

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Identifying the convictions as his own and not those of the Foreign Mission Board, Hayes said he felt the United States had promised to help the South Vietnamese and should stand behind that promise.

"Communism is one of the most satanic forces in the world today," Hayes said. He called Communists completely untrustworthy who claim promises are made to be broken.

Furthermore, Communism is anti-God and anti-Christian, Hayes added in declaring his opposition to the ideology and its supporters.

Hayes said he had formed his convictions while living in Saigon and learning first hand about atrocities of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong.

The need for Christ is great in Vietnam, he reminded, where only one person in 600 is a Christian.

World Missions Conference, which featured testimonies by home and foreign missionaries, instruction in mission action, and personal conferences with missionary personnel, was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union Auxiliary.

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Frank Gillham Elected
Editor of Arizona Paper

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--The Executive Board of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, in a special called session, elected M. Frank Gillham, an Arizona pastor and former Southern Baptist missionary, as editor of the 10,000-circulation Arizona Baptist Beacon.

The post was vacated recently by J. Dee Cates who became director of public relations for Scottsdale Baptist Hospital after six years as editor of the Baptist state paper.

Gillham, pastor of the Southside Baptist Church in Tempe, Ariz., will assume the position Aug. 15. In addition, he will serve as director of public relations for the state convention.

Prior to coming to the Arizona church 3½ years ago, Gillham was for eight years a foreign missionary, serving in East Pakistan and Japan. His last assignment abroad was that of pastor of Yokohama International Baptist Church in Yokohama, Japan.

During 1962, Gillham served as missionary coordinator for the Asian New Life Movement, assisting the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the SBC Foreign Mission Board, and the Japan Baptist Convention in coordinating the evangelistic crusades in seven Asian nations.

During his 3½ years as pastor, the church in Tempe has quadrupled its membership, with about 450 members currently.

Gillham is a graduate of Howard Payne College, Brownwood, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

Prior to his missionary service, Gillham was pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Tuscon, Ariz., and several churches in Texas.

Gillham, 36, is married to the former Wynon Holmes of Brownwood, Tex., and they have one son, Mark, 13, and one daughter, Marsha, six.

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