

October 9, 1968

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE <sup>745</sup>  
(Fifty-second in a series)

GHETTOS: PAST AND PRESENT

By T. B. Maston  
Retired Professor of Christian Ethics  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary <sup>460</sup>

There has been in recent years a great deal of discussion of the ghettos. Originally, "ghetto" referred to the area of the city where Jews were required to live.

When I was a college student there was considerable interest in the ghettos in the larger industrial areas of the North and East. These were, in the main, Irish, Italian, and Polish ghettos. In addition, there were in a few cities, such as New York and San Francisco, some unusually sharply isolated Chinese ghettos.

People who lived in these and other ghettos were separated in most ways from the main stream of American life. They maintained to a large degree their distinctive customs and culture.

Until quite recently there was a considerable period of time when little was heard concerning the ghettos. One could still visit Chinatown in some of our larger cities. But the other ghettos had largely disappeared.

The second and third generation children of European immigrants moved culturally and in many cases actually or physically from the ghettos. They became Americans rather than Irish-Americans, Italian-Americans, or Polish-Americans. Chinese and other Orientals found this movement to be more difficult but not impossible.

The contemporary ghetto is quite different from the ghettos of the past. The vast majority of the residents of the present day ghettos are not immigrants from Europe or from the Orient. Most of them have migrated to the urban centers from the rural areas of the South. Furthermore, ghettos are far more prevalent than formerly in smaller cities. In other words, the ghetto is a more common phenomenon in the contemporary period.

Also, in contemporary Negro ghettos there is largely lacking the inner cohesion and strength found in some of the former immigrant ghettos. The residents of the latter had their roots firmly fixed in a historic culture from which they had come. Many Negroes do not identify with any culture. Their rootlessness is a major factor in their frustration. This is particularly true of the poorer Negroes in the ghettos of the urban centers who do not feel that they have become an integral part of American life.

In contrast to the residents of the earlier ghettos, the Negroes have the handicap of color. This, in a racially conscious society, makes it much more difficult for children and grandchildren to move from the ghettos. Many find themselves trapped.

One thing that increases the pressure in the contemporary ghetto is the fact that those who live there, particularly the young, have caught a glimpse of the American creed or dream. They have a deepening desire that the dream become a reality for them. There develops within them a strong discontent with a ghetto type of existence.

When the pressure is strong against them moving up and out of the ghetto, it is more or less natural that the residents of the ghetto will react in one of two ways. They will either use drastic means if need be in an attempt to break down the wall that separates them from full participation in the American way of life or they will seek to build within the ghetto a separate and distinctly Negro community. There is some evidence of the latter in the contemporary period although evidently the majority of Negroes still prefer and hope for a thorough integration of the Negro people into American life.



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460 James Robertson Parkway  
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W. C. Fields, Director  
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

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**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) R1 1-1996  
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Editor, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

Baptist Joint Committee  
Elects Negro Chairman

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**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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WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs elected Homer J. Tucker of New Jersey as its chairman at the semi-annual meeting here. C. Emanuel Carlson is the executive director.

Tucker is the first Negro to be named as chairman of the agency that is maintained in the nation's capital by eight Baptist bodies in North America. The Southern Baptist Convention is a major supporter of the committee.

A large portion of the meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee was spent discussing the ways it should serve the various Baptist bodies in the future.

The Baptist Joint Committee is authorized by its sponsoring denominations "to act in the field of public affairs" (1) when a need for conference or negotiation with government arises, (2) when Baptist principles are involved, and (3) when items are referred to it by a Baptist convention or agency.

Among other functions, the committee is empowered "to inform the Baptist constituencies of governmental movements and measures affecting principles held essential to true relations between church and state and the right application of Christianity to the life of the nation."

In the past the committee worked largely in the areas of religious liberty and separation of church and state. But in recent years the problems of church-state relations have rapidly expanded and have become more complex.

The committee authorized a special committee "to re-study the role of the Baptist Joint Committee and its working relationship with the member communions." This committee will make a report of its findings in October 1969.

Other officers of the Baptist Joint Committee are: C. R. Daley of the Southern Baptist Convention, first vice chairman; G. K. Zimmerman of the North American Baptist General Conference, second vice chairman; and Alton Wheeler of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, recording secretary.

In accepting his election as chairman, Tucker pointed out many of the overwhelming problems in the nation to be confronted by Baptists. But, he continued, "I am staggered by the resources of the combined eight bodies in the Baptist Joint Committee. The total membership of some 23 million are greatly multiplied when they come in contact with the divine power of God."

Tucker is director of urban work and community ministries for the New Jersey Baptist Convention. Prior to that (for 14 years) he was pastor of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Newark, N. J. He serves on the Baptist Joint Committee as a representative of the American Baptist Convention.

A southern Negro, Tucker grew up in Warrenton, Ga. Although he completed only the fourth grade in elementary school, at age 20 he passed a college entrance examination and later graduated from Virginia Seminary and College at Lynchburg, Va.

The new Baptist Joint Committee chairman also earned a master of arts degree in social work at Atlanta University School of Social Work, Atlanta, Ga., and bachelor of divinity and master of sacred theology degrees from Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin, Ohio. He has completed residence requirements for a doctor of philosophy degree in human relations at New York University. YMCA College at Springfield, Mass. conferred on him the honorary doctor of human relations degree.

For several years Tucker was active in YMCA work having served in several executive capacities in Lynchburg, Va., Atlanta, Ga., Beaumont, Tex., Bridgeport, Conn., Jersey City, N. J. and Cincinnati, Ohio.

He closed two Negro YMCAs and integrated them into the community organization. He developed the first integrated YMCA camp in Connecticut in 1946.

Tucker was the first Negro in the South to receive the Eagle Scout Award. This honor came to him in Texas in 1934.

In 1964 Tucker received the Edward H. Rhodes Award from the American Baptist Convention as pastor of the year in urban leadership. The Ford Foundation gave him a fellowship at the Rutgers Urban Training Center. He also spent some time at the Urban Training Center in Chicago where he lived on "skid row" in a program to develop special urban ministries.

Other offices now held by Tucker include: vice chairman of the Essex County Drug Addiction Council, personnel chairman of the Neward Pre-School Council, and chairman of the Welfare Department of the Neward Council of Churches.

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Texas Baptists To Consider  
Freeing Baylor Med College

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(10-9-68)

HOUSTON (BP)--The Houston Executive Committee of the Baylor University board of trustees has proposed that a separate non-profit corporation be formed to assume ownership and control of Baylor University College of Medicine here.

The proposal calls for the corporation trustees to be named by the Baylor University board of trustees, and that the corporation trustees not be limited to Baptists.

Eventually, according to a report submitted by a seven-member ad hoc committee both Baylor University and the Baptist General Convention of Texas would be freed of financial responsibility for the college.

Supposedly, the proposal would also enable the medical college to obtain and use federal grants and loans without restriction from the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

During October and November, the proposal will be presented for consideration by the full Baylor University board, the Christian Education Commission, and the Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and to the full convention in annual session.

The seven-member committee headed by Russell H. Dilday, a Houston Baptist pastor, stated that such action was necessary for the training of more physicians than the college is now able to produce.

It cited a recent report of the state coordinating board for Texas colleges and universities proposing that Baylor College of Medicine double its enrollment from 320 to 640 students, and that it grant funds to Baylor for training medical students on a per-capita basis.

It is the feeling of the administration, trustees and faculty of the Baylor College of Medicine, the report said, "That the school should be enlarged to lessen the grave shortage of physicians and to cooperate with the state to meet this great public need without sacrificing excellence."

The report points out an alternative would be the early establishments of a state medical college in Houston in the medical center.

Achievements and academic reputation, the report continued, have obscured the fact that the college is in dire financial straits. The college has been operating at an increasing deficit amounting to several hundred thousand dollars each year.

Contributions of Texas Baptists through the Cooperative Program amount to less than one percent of the annual expenditures of the college that now amount to \$21 ½ million.

For additional revenue the College of Medicine will have to depend on greatly increased private donations and government funds.

"The College of Medicine is the heart of the medical center and should be free to share in the benefactions, both public and private, which are vitally needed to continue the great humanitarian services and scientific advances of the medical center," the report stated.

Money for buildings and other purposes is needed, and acceptance of funds from the state of Texas would not in itself provide adequate financial support for the college, the report said.

To solve these problems, the committee proposed:

1. A separate non-profit corporation should be formed for education, charitable, and scientific purposes, to assume ownership and control of Baylor University College of Medicine.

2. To preserve its university association, which is a necessity for a medical college, the general board of Baylor University would choose the trustees, not restricting them to Baptists, so that the college would have a broadly based board of trustees.

3. That the name of Baylor be retained to preserve the traditions and renown of the medical school associated with that name, as well as to maintain the affiliation with the parent university.

The committee closed its report by saying the College of Medicine, under Baptist control, has "flourished and attained a pinnacle of excellence of which Texas Baptists can be justly proud," but that "This institution should not be subject to any conditions which would hamper its growth or cause it to lose the high standards which it has attained."

The College of Medicine is under the administration of Michael DeBakey, famed heart surgeon. He became Baylor vice president for medical affairs last May.

Baylor president Abner V. McCall met with the Houston Executive Committee in a series of meetings formulating the proposal. McCall said the new proposal seems to be the "only reasonable and practical course under the present circumstances.

"In this way the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Baylor University can give an affirmative answer to the state of Texas for aid in meeting the growing shortage of physicians in this state; the finances of the school of medicine can be put on a sounder basis; and the academic affiliation of the school of medicine with Baylor University can be maintained," McCall said.

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Texas Baptist  
Leader Succumbs

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(10-9-68)

DALLAS (BP)--Wallace Bassett, 83, holder of the longest pastorate in Southern Baptist Annals, died Oct. 8 in the Baylor Medical Center here.

As preacher, administrator, author and denominational and civic leader, Bassett became a legend in his own time. His credits include founder, president and president emeritus of the SBC Annuity Board for a total of 45 years, nearly 50 years as pastor of Dallas' 6,400-member Cliff Temple Baptist Church and three terms as president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Also, trustee, Baylor University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, chairman of the Texas Baptist Executive Board, president State Mission Board.

Born Dec. 31, 1884 in Middle Grove, Mo., Bassett attended William Jewell Academy and La Grange College, emerging from the latter school in 1909 with his baccalaureate degree. After study at Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City and Newtown Baptist Seminary, Boston, he received a doctor of divinity degree from La Grange in 1916.

He received a similar degree from Baylor University, Waco, Tex., in 1920.

Bassett was licensed to preach as a teenager in Madison, Mo., only two years following his conversion in 1899. He served pastorates in Sulphur Springs and Amarillo, Tex., before his call to Cliff Temple in 1918.

The Dallas pastor was a charter member of several Dallas business and civic groups. He wrote two books, 'Beatific Verities' (1917) and 'A Star At Midnight' (1940).

Upon his retirement from the pulpit two years ago, Bassett received congratulations and thanks from all echelons of Baptist life and also a telegram from President Johnson praising the Baptist leader for his testimony "that has reached far beyond your congregation, your city and your denomination."

Survivors include his widow, three daughters, a son and five grandchildren. Funeral services are scheduled for 2:00 p.m. Oct. 10 at Cliff Temple.

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