



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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January 20, 1969

Speakers Chide Baptists
For Race, Poverty Failure

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GATLINBURG, Tenn. (BP)--Two major speakers to the Baptist Public Relations Association meeting here chided Southern Baptists for failing to do more about the problems of racism and poverty in the South.

"It is a well-established fact that the extent of hunger, poverty, and racism is greatest in the South where you are most numerous and powerful," said Mrs. Gloria Hobbs, deputy director of the Job Corps Center in McKinney, Tex.

Another speaker, Clarence Jordan, founder of the Koinonia Farms in Americus, Ga., compared Southern Baptists to the Hebrew people who were not allowed to enter the Promised Land because they disobeyed God.

"It may be that the price Southern Baptists will have to pay for disobedience in the last 25 years will be to wander in the wilderness of despair and even death for the next 50 or even 100 years," said Jordan, himself a Southern Baptist.

"The nation is delirious with the fever of racism," declared Jordan. "But the true evidence of this (racism) is not just in the flames of riots in our cities, but in the nature of such a group here, for the lack of color in your faces is so obvious."

"Our problem is more than racism," he continued. "It is hypocrisy. And no where is this hypocrisy more apparent and more at home and more nurtured than in, of all places, the Christian churches, especially the two major churches of the South--Methodist and Baptist."

Jordan told the public relations workers that if he were in their place, he would not boast about Southern Baptist statistics, claiming God has surely blessed. "The number of leaves on a tree has never been the basis on which the power of the chain saw can be spared," he mused.

Jordan, himself a Southern Baptist, added that he did not come to point the finger of guilt at Southern Baptists, but to show the enormity and the complexity of the problem.

"We are in an ideological dilemma over what we are, and what we have committed ourselves to be," he said. "We have pledged ourselves to justice, and have practiced injustice. We have said we are lovers of righteousness, and inequity has been our lot."

Yet Southern Baptists need not worry about integrating their churches, for no self-respecting Negro today would campaign to join a white, Southern Baptist church, he said.

With the advent of Black Power, the Negro today is looking for something deeper, more meaningful. "His cry is now going to be black dignity, black manhood," Jordan said. "He came to the United States involuntarily as a slave, as an animal. He now wants to withdraw into black separatism and one day to re-enter society as a man."

Jordan spent an hour after conference sessions sharing his personal experiences at his integrated farm in Southwest Georgia. He told of being kicked out of the Southern Baptist church because he brought an Indian to the worship services, of being beaten, of his home being machine-gunned, and of economic and legal reprisals brought against him and his family because of his inter-racial farming community.

Mrs. Hobbs painted a word picture of the horrors of poverty, asking the Baptist public relations workers to try to imagine how a mother feels when she comes home at night and finds two rats birthing her child, one nibbling on his lip and another on his toe.

"It is up to you people to assume the responsibility to translate, not statistics, but the reality of poverty," she said. "There is so much Southern Baptist public relations people can do to bring about sympathy for the trials and tribulations of the people who live in poverty

Saying solutions to the poverty problem will have to come at the local level, she offered 16 suggestions to Southern Baptists. Included among her suggestions were:

Get meaningfully involved; get to know personally social workers in the ghetto and poor people; encourage churches to develop special poverty projects; stimulate honest dialogue between church members and the poor; become informed yourself; don't show hostility toward ministers who leave the church to go into this kind of ministry; be sincere, honest, and don't be a do-gooder; and take a stand, even if it means stepping on the toes of some very powerful Baptist who owns sub-standard shacks and tenements.

Judge Clears Way for Sale
Of SBC Organization Site

AUGUSTA, Ga. (BP)--An Augusta superior court judge has lifted a temporary court order restraining the city's First Baptist Church from selling its downtown property--the site of the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Judge William M. Fleming had issued a temporary restraining order Dec. 6, 1968, after 14 individuals filed suit to block the church's plan to move to a 32-acre site already purchased on Walton Way.

A majority of the membership voted in May to purchase the Walton Way property, clearing the way for sale of the downtown site.

But, the 14 persons protested, saying the downtown site should be saved for historic purposes. The Southern Baptist Convention was organized at the Augusta church in 1854, but the building in which the SBC was formed was replaced by the present building in 1902.

Church officers announced last may that appropriate historical markers will be placed on the present site after the move is made.

Judge Fleming's brief order of last week gave no explanation for his lifting of the restraining order.

George Linney, church moderator, said: "We are gratified over the court's decision upholding the cherished Baptist principle of majority rule in the local church."

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Leonard Holloway Resigns
To Return To Butt Foundation

(1-20-69)

CORPUS CHRISTI, Tex. (BP)--Leonard L. Holloway, president of the University of Corpus Christi for the past five months, has resigned to become associated with Howard E. Butt Jr., in Christian renewal research and programs.

As assistant to Butt, Holloway will work with Christian Men, Inc., Laity Lodge and the H. E. Butt Foundation, helping with conducting pastoral leadership institutes, and doing research on an American adaptation of Kirchentag, a German lay-witnessing celebration which played a large part in post-World War II church renewal in Germany.

Holloway is returning to an organization he helped to formulate. "Ten years ago Leonard Holloway helped us pioneer key phases of Laity Lodge programs and the Laymen's Leadership Institute," said Butt. "We feel very fortunate to have a person of his stature and experience associated with us again.

The chairman of the board of trustees for University of Corpus Christi, Othal Brand, said no decision has been made on Holloway's successor. His resignation was effective immediately.

The vice president of the college, Kenneth A. Moroney, will act as president for the present, and there will be no interruption in the activity of the college program, Brand said.

Maroney said the program will continue "as currently projected by Mr. Holloway in all phases and aspects."

Before coming to the University of Corpus Christi, Holloway had been president of Mary Hardin-Baylor College, another Baptist school in Belton, Tex. Previously he had served in numerous denominational capacities, including assistant to the president at both Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, and as public relations director for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

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Deal With Communications
Barriers, PR Workers Urged

(1-20-69)

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (BP)--The president of the Baptist Public Relations Association, Floyd Craig of Nashville, urged more than 100 communications specialists in the denomination to rip away barriers to communication and deal with honesty and integrity in their role.

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Craig, public relations director for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, listed four key barriers to communications, and said they must be torn down if Baptists are to communicate effectively.

Citing the lack of courage as the number one barrier, Craig said that this malady often causes Baptist public relations workers to become "masters of ambiguity" who are "skilled in telling a story so selectively that every audience that reads their news release is happy, even though deep down they know it leaves an overall inaccurate impression.

"A master of ambiguity can tell everything that went on in a public meeting, bury the tough issues, and vital actions, and gloss over the important," he added. "The only reason I can determine that this occurs is because to tell it straight would cause someone to ask questions."

He also listed "playing it by ear," "failing to listen," and "steering clear of controversy" as major barriers to be overcome.

"An institution, convention, agency or communicator that puts off dealing with a controversial subject just to keep peace at the moment is like a person trying to put out a fire by covering it with more fuel," said Craig, calling this a shortsighted view.

"I don't think we are responsible to wash our dirty laundry in public, but when it is pulled out in our faces, we need to help clean it," he added.

Urging his co-workers to bring light to current controversies, Craig cited two conflicts currently raging in the Southern Baptist Convention where they should help.

"The first is the division between social action and evangelism," he said. "Extremes on both sides are bent upon tearing things apart. I can't help but believe this is of the devil. Is it not possible for us to illumine the fact that a gospel which does not express itself in social concern is a pious fraud, and a social reform separated from biblical faith is not the gospel of the New Testament but a shallow humanism?" he asked.

Citing the ecumenical movement as the other controversy, Craig said that Southern Baptists are schizophrenic about it. "We applaud Billy Graham for his interdenominational crusades, and we will get together with anybody to fight liquor or gambling. But we become irrational when somebody suggests we should talk about common problems with other denominations," he said.

Craig also urged the Baptist public relations workers to be more involved with their local church, to seek "a deepening commitment to our Lord," and to share its expertise with the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Boards.

Craig appointed a committee to fulfill a request from the two mission boards to prepare a background data sheet on members of the organization who could assist them in short periods of time in photography, journalism, general public relations, or a combination of these.

Later the association adopted a resolution commending the mission boards for their far-sighted imagination and creativity in requesting the assistance of the public relations people.

In another major address, Gil A. Stricklin, associate to Evangelist Billy Graham in charge of public relations, said that truth is the mandatory premise to communicating the true image of Christianity and any religious organization.

"I am afraid that in some areas of our Southern Baptist denominational work, there need to be more courageous stands taken in behalf of truth," Stricklin said. "We should set the example in being truthful, but if all the facts were known, there would be some areas where we are not telling the truth, we are not being honest, where we are liars."

"Honest is the best policy must be a conviction rather than a mere cliché," said the Graham aide. "To be open, not to try to conceal, or manipulate, or withhold information will pay you dividends that you never dream of," he added.

Another speaker, Baptist Press Assistant Director Jim Newton, described the communications revolution that is fast sweeping the nation, and tried to picture what the entire field of communications would be like in the year 2000.

In the next century, it will be entirely possible for every person in society to have immediate and personal access to a global data bank where all knowledge and information is stored and available, so that individuals may request a computer to compile research on a specific subject, Newton predicted.

Asking how Baptists should respond to such a communications revolution, Newton observed three alternatives: "(1) we can try to retreat to 'the good old days,' (2) we can ignore the revolution until it is too late to catch up, or (3) we can be informed, and be ready to adapt and change to utilize the communications revolution to better communicate the gospel."

He added that while Baptists must be concerned and informed about the future, they must not forget the present, but must be more involved in seeking to eradicate poverty, racism, prejudice, hatred, bigotry and ignorance. "We must proclaim in word and deed the gospel of love," he added.

The Baptist Press editor and writer added that he did not feel that the Southern Baptist teletype network would ever be re-instated, for nothing less than a total communications system involving all SBC agencies, state conventions and institutions would succeed in the future.

He called for Baptist public relations workers to seriously consider the possibility of a nation-wide Baptist communications system, hooked to a national computer that would service all state and SBC organizations, and for serious examination of the possibility of a national Baptist news publication.

A total of 110 registered for the three-day meeting.

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Seelig, Fields Elected
To Head Baptist PR Group

(1-20-69)

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (BP)--For the first time, the Baptist Public Relations Association elected both a president and a president-elect, naming John Earl Seelig of Fort Worth and W. C. Fields of Nashville to the respective posts.

Seelig, assistant to the president at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, earlier had won seven awards in the organization's annual awards competition.

Fields, public relations secretary for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, is the current president of the Associated Church Press, and the immediate past president of the Religious Public Relations Council, both national and interdenominational organizations.

Named membership vice president was James C. Austin of Louisville, head of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's fund campaign to endow the Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism. Elected program vice president was Marjorie Saunders, public relations director for Baylor University Medical Center, Dallas.

Other officers elected were Earl Mercer, public relations director for Louisiana Baptist Children's Homes, Monroe, La., as newsletter editor; Wesley (Pat) Pattillo, administrative assistant at Southern Seminary, Louisville, as secretary-treasurer; and David K. Morris, public relations director for the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Montgomery, as representative on the SBC Inter-Agency Council.

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