

May 27, 1969

News Analysis

New Planned Cities In USA
Challenge Church Strategy

by. W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--Baptist missionary and church-state strategy will be tested to the limit within the next 30 years. This is at least one aspect of a projection for new cities in the United States by the end of this century.

The National Committee on Urban Growth Policy has projected 100 new cities of 100,000 population each, plus 10 cities of over a million each by the year 2000 A. D.

Even with this ambitious plan, such expansion will take care of only 20 per cent of the anticipated population growth in the next three decades, the committee said in a special report to the nation.

According to the committee's recommendations, new government agencies on all levels would be created, the new urban development would take place by orderly planning and a national policy of coordinating a wide range of programs for the cities would be developed.

Churches facing this unprecedented but well-planned urban growth cannot avoid difficult strategy questions. What new congregations will be started where and by whom? What emerging new ministries will the churches seek to offer? What new religiously based institutions will be developed, and how will these be related to public agencies?

Not the least demension of church concern in the new national urban planning will be the question of interfaith relationships and interfaith planning. Those with experience in developing religious work in planned cities know that it will be exceedingly difficult for isolationist groups to be effective in the future.

If religion is to be given its proper perspective in the new urban America, church leaders in the denomination and in the states who are alert to the plans and who can participate in the planning should be developed.

The National Committee on Urban Growth Policy is headed by former Congressman Albert Rains of Alabama. He is a veteran leader in the formulation of national housing programs. The director of the New City Project is Lawrence Henderson.

The committee is bi-partisan in its membership, giving its report an additional thrust. Vice President Spiro T. Agnew in the introduction to the committee's report said:

"The concept of the new city offers us a chance to discover what we really want from an urban environment, and what we plan to bring to it. Unlike planning for a single aspect or urban life, the planning for the new city involves fresh examination of nearly every concept we have taken for granted. It promises an intellectual undertaking as great as that of the space age itself."

The vice president further pointed out that "without cities of a new kind, cities which exist to serve human life and not detract from it, our complex civilizations cannot survive."

A new book, "The New City," to be published by Urban America in July, will incorporate the committee's report and will discuss its recommendations.

The book will speak of several ways of creating the new proposed cities: "By making the old new, by expanding small towns, by organizing peripheral growth so that it produces planned communities instead of sprawl--and by building them from the ground up."

From its study of the problems of future urban growth, the committee concluded that "continuation of current trends will bring the country to a succession of one urban crisis after another which will tear at the very fabric of our society."

However, the committee also found a number of "reasons to believe that there is basis for a positive program to meet urban growth." They are:

1. The federal government has recognized the national character of the problems of housing, education, job development and other areas.
2. State governments are beginning to devise state-level approaches to solutions of urban growth problems.
3. The central cities and other local governments are seeking solutions, but they cannot handle the problems without financial assistance from federal and state governments.
4. There is a rising recognition of the need to deal with urban growth problems on a metropolitan scale.

The National Urban Growth Committee recommends to the states that they authorize the creation of agencies at the state, county and local levels. These agencies, according to the committee should have powers to use a wide variety of federal programs and have powers of condemnation and eminent domain.

A new federal agency should be established, according to the report, to work with other federal programs and to relate to the state and local agencies to be developed.

The study on future urban needs in the United States was sponsored by the National Association of Counties, The National League of Cities, The United States Conference of Mayors and by Urban America, Inc.

The National Committee on Urban Growth Policy included; the chairman and ranking minority member of the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, Sen. John Sparkman (D. Ala.) and Sen. John Tower (R. Tex.); The whip of the House, Congressman Hale Boggs (D. La.) and the ranking minority member of the House Banking and Currency Committee, Rep. William B. Widnall (R. N.J.);

Gov. Raymond Shafer of Pennsylvania and former Gov. Philip Hoff of Vermont; Mayor Henry Maier of Milwaukee and former Mayor Floyd Hyde of Fresno, Calif., who is now assistant secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development;

Commissioner James Aldredge of Fulton County, Ga.; Rep. Thomas L. Ashley (D. Ohio); Rep. Albert W. Johnson (R. Pa.); Rep. Henry Reuss (D. Wisc.) and Rep. Robert G. Stephans (D. Ga.).



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Extremism, Crisis Implementation,
Crusade Reports Set on SBC Agenda

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A recommendation commending extremism as "dangerous," "insidious," and "anti-Christian," plus reports on major Baptist efforts in 1968-69 in evangelism and in dealing with the nation's racial crisis, will be major items on the agenda for the Southern Baptist Convention here, June 10-13.

More than 15,000 Baptists are expected to attend the meeting of the 11.3 million member convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination, Tuesday through Thursday, June 10-13, at The Rivergate Exhibition Center.

A strongly-worded statement on extremism will be brought to the convention on Friday morning by the denomination's Christian Life Commission which hits out at extremism on both left and right.

The recommendations affirm "our deep conviction that extremism of whatever variety and wherever found does not communicate the spirit of Christ, and that we stand fast against any man or group who would subvert truth and corrupt justice through fear, suspicion, divisiveness and violence."

It also urges Baptists to "seek to remedy those conditions which foster extremism and breed violence by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God."

The statement condemns extremism of left and right equally. "Those of the left would turn the church into an agency of political pressure for radical restructuring of society while ignoring the supernatural dimension of God's saving grace in Jesus Christ as it changes individuals," says the report.

"Those on the right declare that the church's concern is only for man's soul and seek to force every member into a right adherence to the Bible as they see it, while ignoring the strong, pervasive emphasis of our Lord upon a costly discipleship which places moral and ethical demands upon every Christian in all personal and social relationship," it continues.

Major business items on the agenda include consideration of a record \$27,158,119 budget, reports from 21 different agencies and organizations of the convention, and election of officers.

Major reports will deal with results of a hemisphere-wide Baptist evangelistic effort this year called the Crusade of the Americas, and with efforts by each of the SBC agencies, especially the Home Mission Board, to implement "A Statement Concerning the Crisis in Our Nation" adopted by the convention last year in Houston.

New curriculum and denominational plans for the 1970's will be revealed, as will a new name for Training Union, the Sunday evening church training program of Baptist churches, as a part of another major report.

A total of five hours during the convention will be devoted to miscellaneous business, when any issue or question can be raised from the convention floor. Convention officials pointed out that there is no way to accurately predict what might come up during these miscellaneous business sessions.

A half-dozen pre-convention sessions are slated to deal with a broad range of issues, including such things as theological openness and freedom, racism, birth control, war and peace, ecumenical evangelism, poverty, drug usage, and other issues. Any one of these could come up during the main convention later in the week.

Students who picketed the convention last year will meet jointly with adults who have organized a group called the "E.Y. Mullins Fellowship," on Monday, and then split into separate meetings on Tuesday at St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church.

The students, members of a loosely-organized group called "Baptist Students Concerned," will devote their Tuesday sessions to planning strategy for influencing the main convention through resolutions, student participation, recommendations, etc.

The Mullins Fellowship, which was organized by several Richmond, Va., pastors and several professors who are leaders in the Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, will mainly deal with the theological issue of openness and freedom of biblical interpretation. The professors' association adopted in February a resolution protesting the nature of publicity surrounding the book by Convention President W. A. Criswell, entitled Why I Preach That The Bible Is Literally True, saying the publicity implied the book espoused an official convention position.

Several published reports indicated that the Mullins Fellowship, or individual members of the group, might push a candidate in the convention election of a president. If tradition is followed, however, Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, would be re-elected to a second term as president.

A wide range of issues will be on the agenda for speeches in the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference at the New Orleans Municipal Auditorium, Monday and Tuesday. The issues include separation of church and state, birth control, situation ethics and the new morality, the radical pulpit, preaching on social issues, poverty, and Baptist doctrine.

Another issue which might draw fire is a proposal from the SBC Committee to move the starting time for the 125th anniversary convention next year in Denver up from Tuesday to Monday evening, and that the Executive Committee study this proposal concerning future conventions.

A former president of the SBC Pastors' Conference, Jess Moody of West Palm Beach, Fla., has written an article opposing the idea and defending the SBC Pastors' Conference.

Whether these or any other issues, however, will break open during the convention, no one knows for sure, including convention officials.

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Phelps Takes Position
With Little Rock Bank

5/27/69

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. (BP)--Ralph A. Phelps, president of Ouachita Baptist University here, for the past 16 years, has accepted a position as vice president and trust officer with the largest bank in Arkansas.

Effective June 1, Phelps will join the staff of The Little Rock Bank. He had resigned as president of the Baptist school on March 13, and was named president emeritus by the board of trustees.

At the time of his resignation, Phelps said that there were too many ultra-conservatives in the Arkansas Baptist Convention who wanted to make Ouachita into a Bible institute, and that furthermore the convention would not give the school enough support, financial and otherwise.

In announcing his decision to take the banking position, Phelps said that "the fact that I am going to make my living at 'tent making' for a while will not, I hope, mean that I am less involved in church work.

"If working for someone else for a living and for the Lord on one's own time makes one a second-class Christian, then I guess I will join the Apostle Paul in that category," Phelps quipped.

Phelps has been involved in "tent making" before. In 1967 he took a year's leave of absence from the Ouachita presidency to become regional director of the Office of Economic Opportunity's Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta. He left after six months, however, saying he was disappointed with the federal War on Poverty.

It was rumored in 1966 and 1968 that Phelps might run for governor, but he never actually tossed his hat in the political race.

Only one president of the school, J. W. Conger who founded Ouachita, has served longer than Phelps as president.

Almost exactly one-half of the graduates who have completed their work since the school was founded in 1886 have finished their degrees under Phelps' administration. Enrollment has tripled and the endowment has doubled under his administration, while assets have increased from \$1.8 million to \$8.4 million.

Phelps is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, with the doctor of theology degree.

Time For Church Critics
To Help Heal, Editors Told

ATLANTA (BP)--Those valid but forcefull critics of the church should now devote their energies to helping preserve the church, a church scholar told a group of religious journalists here.

Albert Outler, professor of theology at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, was speaking before about 500 editors at the joint meeting of the Associated Church Press and the Catholic Press Association here.

"The most helpful role for at least some of us--now that what we fought against is pretty well discredited but what we are fighting for is in mounting jeopardy--would be to become the Church's critical but loyal supporters," Outler said.

The prophets who berated Israel for her unrighteousness in relatively stable times, he said, had to "turn conservative" in the grim days of exile and restoration.

"There are times when prophets are called upon to heal, to help, to lend a hand in trying to held the Church together in order that there may still be a church for mission and prophecy--of proclamation and service," he said. "I would argue that ours is just such a time."

The church should be seen and depicted as a conserving force in a chaotic society, he said, "a community of love and freedom but not lust and license, of justice and humanity but not violence and vengeance of hope but not Utopia."

Speaking on the crisis of authority in the church and in society, Outler said, however, that such loyal support should not be interpreted as unquestioning acceptance of status quo authority structures.

New patterns of authority, he said, must derive from a convergence of critical insight, human sensitivity and "un-self-righteous love."

"This notion of authority as the convergence of insight and love in the atmosphere of freedom holds all the hope I have for the recovery of vital community in our churches," Outler observed.

Such a concept of authority, he said, would stress persuasive insights rather than enforceable systems and lead back to the scripture as the source of Christian revelation and insight.

Most leaders in Protestant churches, he said, are eager for reform, "provided only that their status quo isn't changed too drastically."

A Catholic scholar, Walter J. Burghardt, paralled Outler's thoughts and added insight into the crisis of authority in all churches when he predicted an increasing sense of personal responsibility among Catholics.

The new look of authority compels personal decision-making, he said, and frees individual Christians for responsible action.

"I am reasonably confident that the contemporary crisis of authority can prove creative and need not be destructive," Burghardt said.

"I am not blind to the many tragedies which the authority-freedom conflict has occasioned, but neither am I blind to the calamities which an exclusively vertical approach to authority has generated over the centuries," he said.

"The new vision of authority, with its stress on personal dignity and service to community, is profoundly insightful, basically biblical, splendidly Christian," Burghardt added.

As guidelines for implementing such a concept of authority, Burghardt suggested "as much freedom as possible, and only as much restriction as necessary."

Generation Gap Bridged
At Student Consultation

By Robert O'Brien

FORT WORTH (BP)--About 25 students who took part in a National Consultation on Baptist Student Work here came away with the impression that Southern Baptist leaders are "real people" who can communicate and perhaps even bridge the generation gap.

This was the opinion of Jack Maguire, a 22-year-old student from Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Ga., who was a vocal spokesman for student reaction to their 4½ days of elbow-rubbing with 250 adult leaders from all echelons of Southern Baptist life.

The occasion was a nation-wide dialogue session as part of a Southern Baptist depth study of Baptist student work. The study, being conducted by a special committee appointed by the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, will make specific recommendations when the study is completed in time for a report to the 1970 Southern Baptist Convention in Denver.

Maguire, a past Baptist Student Union (BSU) president and future US-2 Missions volunteer, said, "At first, we couldn't figure out what we were doing here. Then we began to realize that these men were people we could communicate with--people who accepted our ideas seriously and thoughtfully."

Maguire, who presided effectively over one of the consultation sessions, said the students had decided to return to their campuses with news that the generation gap has been bridged--at least on one front--and that SBC types are "real people."

Consultation participants probed and brainstormed seven basic areas, which have already been the subject of 180 interviews, five research projects and 12 study papers.

Further winnowing of workbooks full of material will be continued by a 39-member subcommittee of the SBC Executive Committee in meetings in Nashville in June and November of this year. Final recommendations will be hammered out by the Executive Committee itself for presentation to the 1970 SBC.

The seven areas under consideration are the Christian college student; basic assumptions for conducting Baptist student work at campus, state and national levels; basic understanding of work on these three levels; campus problems; state problems; and national problems.

Since the consultation results are subject to change and refinement, they could not be reported with finality--only from the standpoint of the general direction they took, according to Albert McClellan of Nashville, program planning secretary for the SBC Executive Committee and staff coordinator for the study.

Participants recognized student work leadership problems on all three levels and suggested possible solutions. The problems included lack of staff, continuing education of workers and, on the national level at least, "indistinct and uncertain" leadership which "has failed to secure adequate attention for BSU" and has lacked "quantity and quality sufficient to give state and campus programs proper support."

Other problems touched on finance, present structure and location of the national BSU office, failure to adequately communicate the story of Baptist student work, and lack of currency and relevancy of program content.

More attention will be given in future meetings to a possible name change for BSU, relocation or restructuring of the national student work office, and ways to relieve tensions between Baptist colleges and BSU over division of funds and the place of BSU on the campus.

Recognizing that incoming college freshmen are often ill prepared, consultation members explored ways student workers on the campus, state and national levels can orient high school students.

In profiling the Christian college student, the consultation participants said: "The student needs an arena to express himself and yet be loved. Let him try new ideas, even at the risk of failure."

Work groups mulling over special problems faced by Baptist and Christian college students decided that students often are unprepared by their churches and religious experiences to confront the secular and scientific mood of the college campus.

One consultation study group concluded that the Christian student runs squarely into religious insecurity--a result of the anti-religion element on campus which challenges the student's lack of biblical orientation by churches in pre-college days.

Consultation leaders preached what young Maguire said they practiced: "Listen to college students. Be sensitive and aware of the contribution that the student can make and is making."

Underlying the consultation was a concern that relevant ways be found to communicate the Christian gospel to the entire academic community in a way which will pierce the defenses of the changing world.

Several questions, left open-ended, indicate the magnitude of the problems for future student work meetings: "How can we lead our churches to accept and understand the changing patterns of today's college generation?" "How can we overcome the communication gap between students, pastors and other church youth leaders?" "Why has the present generation of college students taken a critical stance toward ministries?"

Answers to these and other questions concerning SBC student work will be eagerly awaited by those who wish to hone their ministries to reach effectively the church and community leaders of the future.

The conference participants returned to their homes realizing that the study may not provide all the answers, but it is a big step in the right direction.

The nation-wide study of student work by the SBC Executive Committee was requested by action of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, which currently coordinates the Southern Baptist student work program.



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