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July 7, 1969

**Baptists Could Solve Racism  
Problem Negro Ministers Say**

NASHVILLE (BP)--White and Negro Baptist laymen could, if they would really apply Christianity as they should, solve the racial problems facing the nation, five Negro Baptist ministers said here.

They were major speakers at a nationwide Baptist Men's Congress on Evangelism and Lay Involvement here which attracted about 300 Baptist laymen from nine different Baptist conventions throughout the nation.

Joseph H. Jackson of Chicago, president of the 5½ million-member National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., said there are two groups who could solve the problem of racism without bloodshed and confusion--the lay people and Baptist leaders of the white South, and the Negroes of this country.

Added Kelly Miller Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church of Capitol Hill in Nashville, "If the Southern Baptists alone had long ago decided to be genuinely Christian in their relations with others, the problems we are picking away at now would be solved."

Jackson, in a major opening-night address, offered three specific suggestions for white and Negro Baptists to apply towards problems of race relations.

He suggested: (1) we must banish fear, (2) we must commit ourselves to the fundamental principles of Christianity and America's federal constitution, and (3) we must develop a politic of cooperation and working together to save our great nation.

Unless justice and freedom are released in this work, there is no peace, Jackson said. Faith is the only thing that can save the world today, he added. "It matters not the color of your skin or the texture of your hair, if you have met Jesus Christ."

Man alone is not good enough to build a perfect society, the Negro Baptist leader said. "We need an eternal hand to lift us out of sin and imperfection. "God's power and strength are rich enough to solve the problems of poverty and racism, he added.

The outspoken Negro preacher took a slap at black militants who have demanded reparations from white churches, calling them people who don't love America who are using civil rights to further their own cause.

Later in his speech, Jackson singled out James Forman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, saying that he frightened the people of Riverside Church in New York so much they fled the church.

He declared that the so-called "Black Manifesto" is mis-named, for it isn't black and it isn't new. The manifesto is identically the same as the ideology, methodology, and philosophy as the Communist Manifesto written in 1845, he charged.

"It isn't black, It has another color--red," He declared.

Jackson said that his convention wouldn't accept "reparation" funds even if they were offered, for "whoever is frightened enough to pay reparations ought to pay them to the man who frightens them."

He called on Baptists to banish fear between races, and to cooperate with each other for the cause of Christ and America.

In a later address, Smith told the Congress that if the followers of Jesus Christ had been the chief ones concerned about justice in the nation, the racial crisis might never have happened.

Instead, however, Christians have projected an inadequate image of Jesus Christ and have molded and shaped Christianity after what they have seen in culture.

He chided white churches that finally at long last voted to let Negroes in if they wanted to join, asking the question: "What kind of low-key evangelism is this? Did not Christ tell us to 'go out into the highways and hedges and compell them to come in'?"

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Speaking on the topic, "I Recommend Jesus," Smith said that the Jesus Christ he recommends is the Christ who initiated a poor peoples' campaign at the inception of his ministry, the Christ who is not bound by tradition, the Christ who is concerned about all the problems of man.

"Christ has not failed," Smith declared. "We have failed him."

A Negro Baptist minister from Dallas, Robert Wilson of St. Johns Baptist Church, said that the institutional church has failed to eradicate the disease of racism from among its members.

"How many churches exist for the sheer benefit of their members?" Wilson asked. "How many churches in our nation show no concern for the great social evils of our day?"

"Such groups," he said, "are not worthy of being called churches of Christ. They ought to adopt new names, and maybe call themselves such things as status quo clubs."

He chided churches that have put their emphasis on building bigger buildings and bigger staffs, saying such churches are failures.

"The failure of the institutional church as we have fashioned it does not mean the failure of the Church as God has planned it," Wilson added.

T. B. Brown, academic dean at Mississippi Baptist Seminary in Jackson, Miss., said that racial barriers cannot be legislated out of the way. "We must change them from the inside, not the outside."

"Men, who are naturally against each other, are made brothers when they accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord," Brown said.

A Negro minister from Houston, William Lawson of Wheeler Street Baptist Church, said that the church has done a pretty good job in Christian ethics and education and a lot of other things, but has done a poor job in bringing people to Christ.

Calling for a stronger masculine influence in the church, Lawson said that churches need laymen with the courage and audacity to do some things and say some things that might not be popular.

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Spend As Much To Save Lives  
As For Bullets, Baptists Urged

7/7/69

NASHVILLE (BP)--A medical doctor and Baptist layman from Pittsburg issued a challenge here for Americans to spend as much for medicine to save the lives of dying and diseased people as they do for bullets in the Vietnam War.

Citing figures he said he obtained from the U. S. Defense Department, Dr. Robert Hingson of Pittsburg said that every American each year buys more than 5,000 bullets that are used to kill in Vietnam.

He told a Baptist Men's Congress on Lay Involvement and Evangelism that Americans ought to be more concerned about the one-third of the world's population that is sick unto death.

"One half of the children of the world went to bed tonight hungry, and one-third of them are sick unto death," said Dr. Hingson, who heads an organization called Operation Brother's Brother dedicated to inoculating the masses against disease.

Dr. Hingson told of his organization's interfaith, interracial, international efforts at inoculating millions of people against smallpox, diphtheria, measles, and similar diseases by using an instrument he invented called the "Peace Gun."

The unique "peace Gun" shoots a dose of serum into the skin at such high pressure that it is not necessary to remove clothing. It does not use a needle. Dr. Hingson said that 1,000 persons an hour can be inoculated with the "Peace Gun."

He showed a filmstrip graphically picturing the ravages of disease upon little children and adults, and told of personal experiences in trying to help the people of the world.

"We would be able to save from death 50,000 babies in Latin America this year if we only had the money for the serum, at two cents per dose," Dr. Hingson said.

He issued a plea for Baptist laymen to buy 5,000 doses of serum each to provide ammunition for his "Peace Guns," buying as much ammunition to save lives as they do to kill in Vietnam.

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Establish Justice, Freedom,  
Stassen Urges Baptist Laymen

NASHVILLE (BP)--During a July 4 holiday weekend conference, Former Minnesota Governor Harold E. Stassen challenged Christian laymen to establish true peace, justice, and freedom in America during the next seven years before the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Stassen joined the Governor of Tennessee, the mayor of Mobile, Ala., a state legislator from South Carolina, and a former congressman from Missouri, all of whom urged more involvement of Christian laymen in the affairs of government during addresses to the nation-wide Baptist Men's Congress on Lay Involvement and Evangelism here.

The major question facing the nation and the world today, said Stassen, is: "How shall races live together with equality, and how shall nations live together in peace?"

The way that America moves in the next seven years toward answering these questions depends greatly "on how we seek to see a clear and complete picture" of the problems, and "how we seek to relate the great principles of religion to the difficult and perplexing problems of our day," Stassen said.

The Philadelphia attorney and former president of the American Baptist Convention told the 300 Baptist laymen present that they should not underestimate what they could accomplish, even though the group was small in number.

He pointed out that the nation was born with religious principles as a strong basis for the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, but he added that still the people of the nation have not fully and completely established true freedom justice and peace in the land. Then he said:

"But just as there was never another nation such as ours born as free as it was, there is no other nation that has accepted as many races and nationalities with as much respect and dignity and equality and freedom as America."

Stassen urged Christian laymen to use the next seven years prior to the 200th anniversary of the founding of the nation to work for peace and justice and freedom on the basis of deep religious principles.

Two such religious principles he cited included the principle that all men of all races and nationalities are the children of one God, and that Christians must seek peace and be peacemakers.

On the basis of these principles, Stassen suggested that Baptist laymen especially work to help promoting young black people to own their own businesses and property, and to work for the modernizing and strengthening of the United Nations, including expanding it the U.N. to involve countries not now members, such as mainland China and Germany.

"We must recognize from our religious principles that you should not try to kill your way through international problems," said the oft-time Republican presidential candidate who ran for party's nomination last year on a "peace ticket."

Earlier, in interviews with newsmen, Stassen said he favored faster de-escalation of the Vietnam war, and recognition of the Viet Cong. He added that the Nixon administration's most important action so far has been de-escalation of the war, but it hasn't gone fast enough and hasn't permitted recognition of both Vietnamese governments.

In his speech, Stassen said that youth are often turned off by religion because they know that the nation was founded on religious principles, yet they see the nation following "such a violent policy as we have in Vietnam."

The three-day congress opened with Tennessee Governor Buford Ellington saying that most of the perplexing problems in today's world will not be solved until there is a change in the hearts and minds of men.

"It would be great," the Governor of Tennessee said, "to get to the place when we look at a man and see a man and not his color, and look at a person and see not his race but an American."

Gov. Ellington called for Christian laymen of all denominations to work together to solve the problems of society.

The mayor of Mobile, Ala., Lambert Mims, urged the Baptist laymen to pray for him and all other political leaders, adding that "only by the grace of God can the temptations of the modern-day politician be met."

He added that no Christian should have to wear a sign saying he was a Christian politician, a Christian doctor, a Christian lawyer, etc., "because if you are the kind of Christian you should be you are a marked man and people know where you stand."

Mims, a Baptist deacon, told of his conversion, saying he was a Baptist for 15 years before he ever became a Christian. He said it matters not how many churches or denominations a person joins, he is not a Christian until he makes Jesus Christ his master, and follows Christ's mission of reconciling men to God.

Former U. S. Congressman O. K. Armstrong of Springfield, Mo., told the congress that the Christian's primary task is evangelism, but allied with that are the efforts of Christian people for the betterment of mankind and creating a better society.

If the church hadn't left civil rights up to the government and allowed it to get into the political arena, the nation would not have had so much trouble in civil rights, said Armstrong, a staff member of the Reader's Digest.

He called for more involvement of Baptist laymen in helping their state governments pass legislation fighting alcoholism, narcotics, gambling, and pornography.

State Representative Preston Callison of Columbia, S. C., urged more lay involvement in denominational affairs. Callison, himself quite active in Southern Baptist Convention denominational work, quoted some ministers as saying that "you just can't get laymen involved."

"To get this kind of involvement is going to necessitate some changes." The Columbia attorney urged local churches to pay the expenses of laymen to attend denominational conventions, and laymen to be more informed on denominational affairs.

"We must have laymen standing side by side as equals with ministers at all levels of planning and execution in denominational work," Callison said.

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#### Baptists Use Situation Ethics On Race, Justice, Chafin Says

7/7/69

NASHVILLE (BP)--While condemning situation ethics in private morality, Baptists have through the years practiced situation ethics regarding public morality in the areas of racial and social justice, a Baptist seminary professor said here.

"You can cry out against situation ethics if you want to, but when it comes to racial and social justice, Baptist churches of every type have been basically situational," said Kenneth L. Chafin, professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Speaking at a nation-wide Baptist Men's Congress on Lay Involvement and Evangelism, Chafin said that in too many cases, Baptist churches have said in effect that they know what the Bible says, but they just couldn't do much in the area of race and social justice "in our situation."

"Imagine how a generation that is idealistic about justice feels about a church that basically has operated on a situation ethic concerning public morality," Chafin said.

He made the comment while offering four major suggestions on how Baptist churches can make their evangelism effort more relevant. Chafin suggested that Baptists (1) become more sensitive to the moods of the day, (2) that they become more adult-oriented in evangelism, (3) that they seek to evangelize all people, and (4) that they realize modern man has no questions that are not religiously oriented.

Often, the mood of the day and the mood of the church comes into conflict, and too often, the church exhibits a mood of irrelevance when there is no real irrelevance there, Chafin said.

Explaining that this is a service-oriented, justice-oriented, and change-oriented generation, Chafin put it this way:

"Take a service oriented generation and stick right in the middle of it a survival-oriented church and you have nothing but frustration. Take a generation of people who think they ought to be helping people and stick right in the middle of them a church that thinks everybody ought to be helping it, and you can see what happens.

"Or take a church that is very rigid on personal morality and a church that has gotten most of its moral preachments out of the mores and folkways of society than it has out of the Word of God and you can see how nervous it would feel with a generation of situation ethicists."

Chafin related that he was brought up in a culture where often a major decision in a revival meeting had to do with giving up playing dominoes. "You can see how a group of people who felt religious because they gave up dominoes might feel intensely intimidated by a generation that doesn't have any nos or yeses or rights or wrongs."

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He observed that a "mood of irrelevance" results when a change-oriented society sees a church that argues for three hours over what the name of Training Union is going to be.

The church must learn to listen to modern man and realize that man does not have a question about life that is not religiously oriented, but that he just doesn't state his questions in King James terminology, Chafin said. Man is groping for meaning in life, he said.

"There never was a day when the word of the Gospel is more relevant than it is today, but you and I must discover this relevance again for ourselves," Chafin said.

He added that the churches must become more adult-oriented and provide opportunities for the study of the Bible and its application to life at a deeper adult-level, and that the church must "break out of the cocoon of making evangelism a collection of people who are basically like us."

Just before Chafin spoke, Frank Foster, assistant pastor at National Memorial Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., told of his church's interracial ministry in the ghetto area one block from where \$1 million damage was done in rioting and looting last year.

Saying that the people of the church were "tired of playing church," Foster added that the church decided long ago to seek to minister to the surrounding community with an interracial approach. "We shouldn't even debate that question," he added.

Foster stated that the main work of the church is in the world, and that it must be aware and sensitive to the needs of the world, for the world is going to hell.

"Baptists have the greatest reservoir of good intentions, if we could only get our eyes open to the world and be sensitive to it," Foster said.

He urged the Baptist laymen present to "find out what your eyes see, what your hearts feel, what you have interest in, and then do your own thing."

"Don't use the excuse that you can't get your pastor or the whole church to go along with you," Foster said. "If you see and feel, then act....Too often we have forfeited the leadership of our churches to fearful, afraid losers."

He told of his own church members' ministries to dependent children in an institution, saying that a few church members have done more good than a whole welfare department "because they see something, feel something, and do something."

He also told of the church's seven-day-a-week Vacation Bible School that lasts all summer long, its day care ministry for working mothers, and its work with juvenile groups that could well become gangsters if the church did not help them, and his own ministry as a Christian slum landlord, renting apartments at a fair price to the poor.

Saying that the day of denominationalism is over in the big cities, Foster urged cooperative ministries with churches of other denominations to meet human need.

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#### FINAL WRAPUP

Baptist Laymen Challenged  
To Evangelize, Minister

7/7/69

by Jim Newton

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptist laymen from nine different nation-wide Baptist conventions were challenged here to become deeply involved in evangelistic witnessing and in service and ministry to their fellow man, regardless of race.

The occasion was the Baptist Men's Congress on Evangelism and Lay Involvement. The historic meeting marked the first time that Baptist laymen from nine white and Negro Baptist conventions had met together to share concerns.

The challenge came from nearly three-dozen speakers who addressed the Independence Day weekend congress; but more especially, it came from Owen Cooper of Yazoo City, Miss., who envisioned and programmed the meeting.

In his closing address to the laymen gathered for the sessions at two public auditoriums here, Cooper urged the Baptist men "to go out into the world as witnesses, proclaimers, evangelists, and to commit ourselves anew to involvement in ministry to our fellow man."

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"I am convinced," said the president of the Mississippi and Coastal Chemical Corp., "that the next great upsurge of Christianity awaits the commitment and involvement of laymen in this kind of ministry."

Involvement of laymen in evangelistic witnessing and in ministries to meet human needs, plus Baptist efforts at solving race relations problems and cooperating with other Baptist groups were the major themes that ran throughout the meeting.

Paradoxically, only about 300 laymen attended the meeting on lay involvement and evangelism. In corridor comments, many of the laymen observed that too many Baptist laymen are so uninvolved that they were not willing to give up a holiday weekend to come.

"Don't worry about how many people are here," Cooper told the opening night "crowd" of 200. "It isn't how many we are, but how much we are."

After the congress was over, Cooper said in an interview that he was disappointed in the attendance at first, but that he felt in every other area, the congress was a tremendous success. "The program was balanced, the spirit was good, the fellowship was great," he said.

Although he more than any other person was responsible for the program, Cooper took a seat on the back row during most of the meeting. Before he delivered his closing address, the laymen gave Cooper a standing ovation in appreciation for his work as president of the Pan American Union of Baptist Men, the hemisphere-wide layman's organization that sponsored the congress.

Several speakers pointed out the historic nature of the meeting. Chester Dixon, laymen's leader for the Progressive National Baptist Convention from Chicago, added that the tragedy was that Baptist laymen from nine conventions had to wait until 1969 to get together.

Former Minnesota Governor Harold Stassen of Philadelphia, a former president of the American Baptist Convention, warned the 300 laymen not to underestimate the impact of the meeting. "This congress is just a beginning, a first," he said.

Stassen was one of several government leaders who addressed the congress, including the mayor of Mobile, Ala., a state legislator from South Carolina, and the governor of Tennessee. All urged more involvement of Christian laymen in politics.

Stassen stressed the importance of applying religious principles to the problems of world peace and racial justice and freedom, saying that all men of all races and nationalities are children of one God, and that man must not try to kill his way through international problems.

State Legislator Preston Callison of Columbia, S.C., called for more involvement of laymen in denominational affairs and denominational "politics." He urged Baptist churches to send laymen to the conventions just as they do their ministers.

Mobile Mayor Lambert C. Mims told of his conversion experience, saying that he was a Baptist for 15 years before he was really converted. Mayor Mims urged the laymen to be stronger in their evangelistic efforts.

Layman Walter Kennon of Union City, Tenn., said that "soul winning is my business." He told of his lay ministry in leading soul-winning clinics in connection with revival meetings, and of his efforts to witness to at least three people each day. "The business of every born-again Christian is soul winning," Kennon declared.

In an earlier address, former Longview, Tex., attorney Clifton Brannon who now does evangelistic work, said that too many laymen don't know how to go about leading someone to Christ. Brannon, who called himself "a gypsy for Christ," said that all a laymen needs is one of the "Soul Winner's New Testament" that he publishes, plus "compassion in your heart" to win others to Christ.

Reuben Lopes, president of the hemisphere-wide Crusade of the Americas evangelist campaign and pastor from Sao Paulo, Brazil, told the congress that too many laymen are "fishing for souls in shallow water instead of launching out into the deep waters where the fish are."

Lopes said that Baptists have fine buildings and "we set our nets only for those who come to the church building. We go down every Sunday to see if the fish are wise enough to come into our nets." Instead, laymen ought to be going out into the world and winning the lost to Christ.

Layman Kenneth Rose of Maryville, Tenn., declared that every Christian must do his part to win others to Christ and lead them to proclaim the whole gospel, or becomes "a traitor to the cause of Christ."

Speaking with a strong Mississippi accent and calling himself a "fertilizer peddler," Jerry Clower of Yazoo City, Miss., said it made no difference how much education a man had, or what color his skin might be, so long as he knew Jesus Christ. He urged Baptist laymen to "be yourself, and get involved," in personal witnessing.

Clower, salesman for the Mississippi and Coastal Chemical Corp., said he was taught until he was 12 years of age that a Negro did not have a soul, but he found out that was wrong when he became a Christian. "I don't care who you are and what color you are and what you think, I can get along with you if you've got the son of God in your heart," he said.

More than a half dozen speakers at the meeting, both white and black, called for more involvement in improving race relations.

Joseph H. Jackson, president of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., said that white Southerners and Negroes of the nation could solve the country's racial problems if they would banish fear, truly commit themselves to Christian principles and those of the federal constitution, and learn to work together cooperatively.

Kelly Miller Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church of Capitol Hill in Nashville, observed that if the Southern Baptists alone had decided years ago to be genuinely Christian in their relations with other races, the racial crisis of today would be solved.

Dallas Negro Pastor Robert Wilson warned that the institutional church had failed and was sick with the disease of racism.

In another area, Medical Doctor Robert Hingson of Pittsburg told the congress that one-half of the world's children go to bed each night hungry, and one-third are "sick unto death." He called for laymen to spend as much for medicine to heal the sick as they do for bullets in the Vietnam war.

Washington Pastor Frank Foster said that the gospel can't be clearly communicated until it is demonstrated. He urged laymen to go into the cities and turn loose the gospel with ministries to help people in the ghetto.

"Find out what your eyes see, what your heart feels, what you have interest in, and then do your own thing," said Foster. "Don't use the excuse that you can't get your pastor or the whole church to go your way. If you see and feel, then act," he said.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Kenneth L. Chafin said that unfortunately, most pastors don't want to free laymen for the tasks they should assume in helping people and winning others.

Chafin urged laymen and ministers alike to be more sensitive to the mood of today's generation, to become more adult oriented in their evangelism, to seek to evangelize all people regardless of race or class, and to realize that modern man has no questions about life that are not religiously oriented.

Southern Baptist Missionary Roy Lyon of Venezuela told of his work among laymen in Venezuela, and said that ministers must learn how to channel the tremendous power of laymen into effective ministry.

Added Negro Minister Bill Lawson of Houston: "We've listened to enough enthusiasm and audacity this week to send us back with renewed spiritual muscle to do what we might never have done so fervently."

Former Southern Baptist Convention President Wayne Dehoney of Louisville, in a brief message, told the laymen that they might be the only one present from their church, but they could go back home and make a difference in their church.

Dehoney said later that in an interview that he personally felt that the laymen's congress was even more significant in long-range effect than the Southern Baptist Convention attended by 17,000 just a few weeks earlier.

The conference, which was held as a part of the Crusade of the Americas in an effort to stimulate lay involvement and concern, may not be the last, Cooper said.

An evaluation sheet was to be mailed to each congress participant, asking if he felt future meetings along similar lines would be helpful, either on a national or state level. Cooper said that there was a good chance some future meetings would be held.