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April 23, 1970

Crusade Committee Urges Fellowship Continuation

LEESBURG, Fla. (BP)--The Crusade of the Americas Central Coordinating Committee, meeting here at Lake Yale Baptist Assembly for its final session, evaluated results of the hemispheric four-year evangelist effort and urged the 50 participating conventions to appoint representatives to conserve and continue the fellowship and spirit created by the crusade.

In his final report to the Central Coordinating Committee, Crusade of the Americas President Rubens Lopes of Sao Paulo, Brazil, called the crusade "the greatest evangelistic campaign in the last 100 years."

Crusade of Americas General Coordinator Henry Earl Peacock of Sao Paulo said that incomplete reports from 25 to the 50 participating national Baptist conventions in the 30 countries in North, Central, South America and the Caribbean indicated a total of 494,018 decisions for Christ during 1969, the climactic year of the crusade.

The 46 members of the coordinating committee present for the meeting adopted a lengthy nine-point "Declaration of Results" of the crusade.

"All the results of the crusade cannot be measured in statistics," said the declaration. "There is, for example, no way to measure the new sense of responsibility that Christians feel in regard to the giving of the Christian testimony and the proclamation of the gospel.

"One of the most remarkable facets of the crusade was the unity established among Baptists of the different countries of the Americas, without distinction of race, color or culture--a unity in the proclamation of the gospel that presents all men as equal in the sight of God," the declaration continued.

"Another extraordinary blessing of the crusade was the rediscovery of the importance of laymen in the proclamation of the gospel," said the declaration.

Other results cited by the declaration, prepared by a three-member subcommittee, included such things as "the conversion of thousands of souls," the "awakening of thousands of Christians to the Lord's work," and the projection of a new image of Baptists in many countries.

Some churches, said the declaration, have doubled the number of their members during the two years of the crusade. "Between 1965 and 1969 the number of Baptists in Latin America grew by more than 40 per cent. The growth rate was greater than the general population growth rate."

The committee expressed hopes "that the spirit that reigned during the crusade will continue to prevail in the Baptist churches of the Americas..." and that "the permanence of that spirit will produce a blessed world explosion of evangelistic zeal...in order to shake the whole world with the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Only Hope."

In addition to the nine-point declaration, the Central Coordinating Committee adopted four different recommendations aimed at seeking to conserve the fellowship and spirit of the crusade in the future.

One recommendation urged the Baptist World Alliance to sponsor "a great world-wide effort of evangelism and reconciliation in which all Baptist groups of the world may participate," and authorized the president and general coordinator of the crusade to attend the Baptist World Congress in Tokyo to present their concern for a world-wide crusade.

Three other related recommendations urged each of the 50 conventions and national bodies participating in the crusade to appoint a representative to "make up an informal continuing cooperative committee to maintain interest and retain relationships" realized through the crusade.

Each of the six regional areas involved in the crusade were urged to "continue the fellowship of the cooperating conventions" and to promote "the causes of evangelism in each convention as well as cooperative efforts in the region."

The final recommendation asked that the committee created by the participating conventions to continue the fellowship of the crusade "be recognized as the proper group" to implement organization of one or more Latin American Baptist fellowships to be related to the Baptist World Alliance. Though no mention was made of them in the recommendations, these "fellowships" would perhaps follow the pattern of the North American Baptist Fellowship or the European Baptist Federation, both existing fellowships within the Baptist World Alliance.

The new committee, whenever appointed by the cooperating conventions, would be called together for its first meeting by the representative from Brazil, the recommendation said.

Prior to the meeting of the crusade Central Coordinating Committee, Baptists from the Caribbean area met to discuss the possibility of organizing a Caribbean Baptist Fellowship group.

Another group meeting in connection with the coordinating committee was the Pan American Union of Baptist Men, an organization of Baptist laymen in North, Central and South America plus the Caribbean. Many of the sessions met jointly.

A total of about 160 persons, including 46 members of the Coordinating Committee, attended the sessions. Every member of the committee from outside the United States was present, but "we missed the presence of some of the North American brethren," Peacock said.

Only about nine Southern Baptists attended the sessions (excluding 16 Southern Baptist missionaries who came as guests of the Pan American Union of Baptist Men), and only one was there for the entire period. The meeting was scheduled at the same time as the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's regular session.

Although each regional coordinator in the crusade were to bring reports on the results within the six regions, there was no total report on results in North America. Wayne Dehoney, North American Coordinator for the crusade, said each of the seven cooperating conventions in North America represented at the meeting brought separate reports on results in their bodies.

Kenneth L. Chafin, evangelism secretary for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said that because of a time problem two speaking assignments he was to have were cut to one, and no report on results within the Southern Baptist Convention was actually presented.

According to a statistical report released in February, conversions (baptisms) in the Southern Baptist Convention decreased in 1969, the climactic year of the crusade, from 373,025 in 1968 to 368,225 in 1969, a drop of 4,800.

Peacock, a Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil and general coordinator for the crusade, said that the effort as a whole had three main results.

He listed them as (1) the conversion of multiplied thousands of persons, perhaps as many as one million during the three-year period; (2) spiritual awakenings of churches that were stagnant or dying; and (3) the development of a new spirit of cooperation among Southern Baptist bodies of the Americas.

"The crusade has brought a better understanding among races, nations and Baptist bodies," Peacock said. "As they have met together, they have developed a new spirit of mutual understanding."

He added that a new day had come in evangelism and that though "evangelism had been pushed to the side in some circles, during the Crusade of the Americas it has made headlines..."

The year 1970, the final year of the crusade, has been designated "The Year of Conservation of Results."

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Baptist VIEWpoll
Martin B. Bradley, Director

Baptist Leaders Oppose
Legalized Abortions

by Kenneth Hayes

NASHVILLE (BP)--A recent survey conducted by Baptist VIEWpoll reveals that more than three-fourths of the Baptist leaders surveyed are opposed to legalized abortions.

When asked, "Would you favor or oppose a law which would permit a woman to go to a doctor to end pregnancy at any time during the first three months?", 79.8 per cent of the pastors and 75.9 per cent of the Sunday School teachers answered "oppose."

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However, 19.6 per cent of the teachers and 12.7 per cent of the pastors indicated they would "favor" such a law.

The remaining 7.5 per cent of the pastors and 4.5 per cent of the teachers on the VIEWpoll panel had "no opinion" on the controversial subject.

Male Sunday School teachers were found to favor a legalized abortion law in slightly greater proportion (21.4 per cent) than were female teachers (15.7 per cent).

Using the same item, the Gallup Poll learned that 50 per cent of the American public is opposed to a legalized abortion law, while 40 per cent of them would favor it. The remaining 10 per cent of the American people had "no opinion" on the subject.

According to Gallup, those who favor a legalized abortion law appear to do so on the basis of a humanitarian identification with the expectant mother. Those who oppose the law do so on the basis of moral and religious convictions involving the unborn fetus.

The VIEWpoll panel is composed of more than 500 Southern Baptist pastors and Sunday School teachers selected to represent a cross section of Southern Baptist churches in all geographical locations and of all membership sizes.

Current VIEWpoll findings are based on a 92 per cent response of the panel members.

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Missionaries In Trinidad
Safe, Could Be Evacuated

4/23/70

RICHMOND (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries in Trinidad have been advised to follow plans of the United States Embassy should evacuation become necessary while the government attempts to put down a military mutiny apparently inspired by the island's black power elements.

"The SBC Foreign Mission Board received a cable from the chairman of the Trinidad and Tobago Mission confirming the safety of the four missionary families living in Trinidad," said Charles W. Bryan, area secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean at board headquarters in Richmond.

The United States dispatched a six-ship naval squadron April 22 to Trinidad waters to be ready to evacuate U. S. citizens if their safety appeared to be endangered.

Bryan said each family would make its own decision about evacuation and the choice would be made on the spot as the local situation demanded. One option open to the missionaries is a move to a nearby island until the emergency is over.

Southern Baptist missionaries presently in Trinidad are Mr. and Mrs. David L. Martin, mission chairman of Silver Spring, Md.; Mr. and Mrs. John C. Sanderson of Murray, Ky.; Mr. and Mrs. Reginal A. Hill of Barnwell County, S.C.; and Mr. and Mrs. Shelby A. Smith of Bessemer, Ala.

The four families have a total of 12 children with them in Trinidad.

The Martins and the Sandersons are stationed in Port of Spain, the capital where rioters clashed with military factions.

The Hills and the Smiths are stationed in San Fernando, in Northern Trinidad.

Southern Baptist work in Trinidad began in 1962, when the two islands of Trinidad and Tobago became an independent nation and a member of the British commonwealth. Because of the year-round warm weather, Baptist work there emphasizes camps and retreats.

Trinidad and Tobago are the most southerly of the Caribbean chain of islands and lie about seven miles off the Venezuelan coast, slightly north of the equator.

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