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July 20, 1970

Final Roundup

Baptist World Congress Ends,
Emphasizing Peace, Reconciliation

By Jim Newton

TOKYO (BP)--The 12th Baptist World Congress, after hearing a score of speeches on the themes of racial equality, peace, justice, hunger, disease, evangelism, Christian unity, and reconciliation between people and nations, adopted a manifesto, a message to its churches, and a half-dozen resolutions dealing with the same basic issues.

The six-day congress ended with a message by Evangelist Billy Graham on the roles and responsibilities of youth, while about 50 Japanese young people protested the prominent clergyman's presence on the program.

Theme for the congress was "Reconciliation through Christ," with most of the speakers repeating and amplifying the topic again and again.

The 8,556 registered Baptist delegates from 76 countries, though voicing their unity repeatedly in sermons and the resolutions, frequently displayed their differences.

For the first time in the 65 year history of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), the presidential nominee suggested by the nominating committee of the 31-million member organization was contested from the floor.

But the delegates, in a sparsely-attended business session, elected the committee's nominee, V. Carney Hargroves, 70, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Germantown, (Philadelphia), Pa., as president, 841 to 636.

Hargroves, a former president of the American Baptist Convention, won over Herschel H. Hobbs, pastor of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

While the 15,000 seat Budokan Hall, built for the Olympic judo matches, was filled with as many as 10,000 persons on the opening and closing nights, many of the delegates and guests went sightseeing in Tokyo, Osaka, Nikko, Hakone and other scenic Japanese spots during the daytime sessions.

The congress opened with a keynote address by Theodore F. Adams, retired minister from Richmond, Va., who issued a plea for Christians to unite in breaking down the barriers of racial prejudice, social customs, and political differences that divide nations and individuals by applying the reconciling gospel to life.

While the former BWA president spoke, about 30 Japanese youth passed out copies of a resolution critical of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Tokyo. It decried the renewal of the U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty. A later leaflet opposed Billy Graham's presence on the program because of Graham's close ties with U.S. President Richard M. Nixon.

No real demonstrations occurred, however. The most vocal opposition came while Graham was speaking. Youths sitting in the balcony began to clap and shout a Japanese word meaning "nonsense". Graham patiently waited for a moment and then went on with his address when the noise subsided.

A protest was also shouted out during the opening "Roll Call of Nations" when the Russian flag was carried on the stage along with those of the other nations represented. A former Rumanian Jew converted to the Lutheran Church, Richard Wurmbrandt of Burbank, Calif., shouted, "The blood of Christians is on that flag" as the Russian Baptist representative walked off the stage. Later, police quietly removed Wurmbrandt, who was not a delegate or a Baptist.

The Roll Call of Nations, one of the most colorful ceremonies of the congress, combined with dramatic presentations on Baptist work in each continent, music from the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and numerous international musical groups to add inspiration and drama to the congress.

Issues were discussed mostly in morning panel presentations, evening addresses and in the resolutions, manifesto and message to the churches.

On the subject of peace, the congress urged world statesmen to intensify efforts to find world peace by strengthening the United Nations and making it representative of all peoples.

The peace resolution adopted by the delegates declared: "We cry out against the continued tragedy of the conflicts in Indochina and the Middle East and urge that the killing be stopped."

In two of the strongest speeches during the congress, United Nations General Assembly President Angie Brooks-Randolph of Liberia and former Minnesota Governor Harold Stassen, now an attorney in Philadelphia, Pa., called for strengthening the United Nations as a means of reaching world peace.

Stassen, a several-time candidate for the U.S. Presidential nomination in the Republican Party and one of the original signers and drafters of the U.N. Charter, told the congress he believed the charter should be rewritten to include both Chinese governments, both German governments, both Korean governments, and both Vietnamese governments.

The Liberian United Nations official, Mrs. Brooks-Randolph (nee Angie Brooks), said that while the world's masses want justice and peace, world government leaders show by inaction they really don't want this. She said the church, by its silence, is failing to prod government leaders to obtain peace.

If the church does not speak out on the issues of peace, poverty, war, human environment and others, the church might ultimately find it is not able to be a positive influence in the world, she said.

Another major speaker, German Baptist executive, Gerhard Class, said he felt sure that the Baptists from each of the 76 countries represented were convinced that each country really does desire world peace, and yet all efforts to obtain world peace have failed.

Class said the task of Christians is to take the initiative in reconciling mankind as the major step toward world peace.

On the related subject of race relations, a Black pastor from Second Baptist Church in Los Angeles, Calif., Thomas J. Kilgore, hit hard at racism in the church and in America, saying the North American church is the worst offender in racial injustice.

"The churches have more to repent of than anyone else," said Kilgore, immediate past president of the American Baptist Convention. "They have failed to fulfill their role."

Another Negro Baptist pastor from America, John W. Williams of Kansas City, Mo., said in the congress sermon that Christians cannot permit, without protest, a divided world that pits brother against brother because Christianity proclaims that "every homicide is a fratricide and every war a civil war."

In another major address, David S. Russell of London, England, said the issues of race and world poverty are "ugly-headed monsters which strike deadly blows at decency and dignity and must be resisted and slain in the name of God who came to destroy the dividing walls between man and man."

Russell, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland said that the church must be interracial at all levels and must eliminate "social hatred and prejudice and bigotry of all kinds."

A resolution on reconciliation and racial discrimination called racism a "repudiation of the teachings of Jesus Christ." It also lamented the presence of racism in "our own places of worship and in some of our respective communities and nations."

The resolution pledged efforts toward "the total elimination of every vestige of racism" in the church and said, "We repent of the sins of racism."

A black Baptist minister from the States, William Lawson of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, Houston, spoke on the program instead of Mrs. Coretta Scott King, widow of slain Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. Mrs. King had been scheduled to speak but had to cancel a few weeks before the meeting, Lawson said.

Lawson issued a plea for youth and the older generation to work together in changing the world "for God, for your neighbor, and for yourself." He declared that the older generation had relied too much on big business, big government and the military to change the world.

He said adults need the honesty and idealism of youth, but that youth need the experience, patience, and knowledge of unseen dangers. "You need us (adults) as much as we need you," Lawson said to the youth.

He urged youth and adults to work together to draft a plan for changing the world for good and to teach Christians to love neighbors.

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"How do you convince Southern Baptists, who practiced slavery a century ago, that the non-white world still finds them arrogant?" he asked.

Several speakers commented that the congress was dominated by Americans, and by Southern Baptists in particular. Of the 8,556 delegates, about 5,800 were from the United States and about 5,000 from the Southern Baptist Convention.

Russell of England said that too often Christians give the impression theirs is a western religion.

"We have dressed it (Christianity) in western garb and exported it to other countries as if it were just another commodity we had manufactured and wanted to sell in another part of the world. May God forgive us for our stupidity and our self-assurance," he lamented.

U. Kyaw Than, general secretary of the East Asian Christian Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, said Christians should tackle the issues of peace, hunger, and reconciliation between nations and people.

"While two-thirds of the world is begging for bread, the wealth of the nation that could provide bread is spent on a space venture to bring back a rock from the moon," Than decried.

During a commission's report on religious liberty and human rights, an American seminary professor said that social action by the church is the only way to change systems which oppress people.

Said Culbert Rutenber, former president of the American Baptist Convention and professor at Covina, Calif.:

"It is an act of love to feed the hungry, but it is also an act of love to attack the roots of poverty. It is an act of love to bind the wounds of a soldier, but it is also an act of love to attack the roots of war."

A call for Baptist churches around the world to participate in a world evangelistic effort of reconciliation between 1973-75 was presented by Rubens Lopes of Sao Paulo, Brazil, president of the Brazilian Baptist Convention.

For the first time, a commission on Cooperative Christianity presented a report on Christian unity, discussing ways Baptists can relate closer with those of other denominations. "We should spare no effort to restore unity in the church, but how to achieve this is one of the great issues of our day," said George Beasley-Murray of Spurgeon's College, London.

A resolution urging more participation and representation of youth in the Baptist World Alliance was adopted, calling for youth to be involved in the planning process for the organization and congress sessions every five years.

Graham concluded the congress with a sermon on youth, saying that adults are in danger both of ignoring youth and worshipping them.

"Youth has become an obsession with the older generation," Graham said.

Graham said he has made a constant effort to understand and have dialogue with youth, and is convinced that young people lack purpose in life "because they have been robbed of moral values and religious faith."

He concluded with an evangelistic appeal for youth to respond to the Christian faith. An estimated 200 visitors and delegates responded to Graham's invitation to come forward and make some kind of decision for Christ.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Four Baptist Press photos from Tokyo are being mailed to state Baptist papers.

Lawson Urges Youth, Adults To Change World Together

TOKYO (BP)--Declaring that the older generation is a prisoner of the power of big business, big government and the military, a black Baptist minister from the United States issued a challenge for youth and adults to join hands in changing the world "for God, for your neighbor, and for yourself."

The appeal came from William Lawson, pastor of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church in Houston, in a feature spotlighting youth during the 12th Baptist World Congress of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) at the Budokan Hall.

He spoke in place of Mrs. Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, slain civil rights leader. Mrs. King was scheduled to address the congress but had to cancel a few weeks before the meeting, Lawson said.

Praising both for their efforts in race relations as Baptists, Lawson lamented that neither of the Kings were able to address previous sessions of the Baptist World Congress.

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Lawson said that youth and adults must combine efforts in trying to change the world from its emphasis on big business, government and militarism, to an emphasis on love, peace and justice for all mankind.

Speaking of the older generation, the Negro Baptist minister said, "We endorse big government because we have been persuaded that it is the most efficient way to handle society. We accept big military operations," he continued, "because we grew up believing that national differences could be solved by wars. And we favor big business because in the affluence of the few we become blind to the hunger of the many."

After citing faults of the older generation, Lawson gave this warning: "Do not laugh young person--if you live long enough, you will become a prisoner of your environment too."

Turning to an evaluation of today's youth, Lawson said, "you have a weakness too." He observed that too often youth are naive.

"You may be hypnotized by young people with dazzling charisma, and follow them blindly down dangerous paths before either you or they have seen the dangers," he said.

Lawson specifically cited the use of drugs, following of militant anarchists, and violence as a protest against social order as the naive mistakes of youth.

He was quick to add, however, that the younger and older generations need each other. "In your simple honesty," he said to youth, "you need us (adults) as much as we need you."

"We (adults) do not have your quick mind, your clear visions, your still-pure ideals. But you do not have our patience and our knowledge of unseen dangers and the signs of human weakness."

Lawson urged youth and adults to bridge the generation gap beginning in their own homes and then to respect the strength of each other in dealing with the divisions of men beyond their doors.

"You have said that we need more active passions of mercy," he reflected. "Help us to learn compassion. But you will need our experience and skills in implementing that compassion...."

"You may need to point out to our dull eyes the starving brother, but we must draft the plan and gather the finances to build the station of mercy--to feed the hunger of many," he said.

"You must challenge the churches to have consideration for all men," he said to youth. "It is hard to teach Christians to love neighbors."

"How do you convince Southern Baptists, who practiced slavery a century ago, that the non-white world still finds them arrogant?" he asked.

Another major speaker at a later session, David S. Russell of London, England, told the congress that the issues of race and world poverty are explosive points in modern society to which the Christian Church cannot turn a blind eye.

"Racism and poverty are ugly-headed monsters which strike deadly blows at decency and dignity and must be resisted and slain in the name of God, who came to destroy the dividing walls between man and man," Russell said.

The British Baptist leader, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, said that the church must be interracial at the local and national levels and must be involved in eliminating social hatred and prejudice and bigotry of all kinds."

Russell observed that all too often Christians give the impression that theirs is a religion of the Western hemisphere.

"We have dressed Christianity in western garb and have exported it to other countries as if it were just another commodity we had manufactured and wanted to sell in another part of the world," he said.

"May God forgive us for our stupidity, and our pride and our self-assurance," he lamented. "We have deceived ourselves as well as others it (Christianity) isn't the preserve of the west or an expression of western civilization. It is for the whole wide world--for every nation every race, every culture."

Another European, Gerhard Class of Germany, took a similar stance, saying that Christian missions all too often support the policy and work of the colonial powers in exploiting former colonies.

"The policy of the industrial nations is making the underdeveloped countries more and more dependent on us," said Class, general secretary of the Union of Evangelical-Free Churches (Baptists) in West Germany.

"The need in the underdeveloped countries can no longer be met by gifts and missionary offerings alone," he said.

Class added that the disillusionment and embitterment is growing and often leads to the expulsion of Christian missionaries.

Hitting hard at anti-semitism among Christians, the German Baptist leader declared that "Christians, of all people, have often nurtured anti-semitism."

He charged that the Christian church has sometimes sown poisonous seeds by saying that "Jews are evil, for they crucified the Lord Jesus, or that "the great whore spoken of in the Bible is Rome and political Catholicism," or that "Communism is the anti-Christ."

Class said he believes Baptists from each of the 76 countries represented are convinced that each country really does desire world peace and is working towards it, "and yet, all efforts to achieve peace have failed.

"I come from the land which fanned the flames of the last world war," the German Baptist continued. "Today, precisely 25 years after capitulating, we still have no real peace in our land."

Class said that the task of Christians is to take the initiative towards reconciliation among brothers as the major step towards world peace.

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Racism Scored By Speakers At Baptist World Alliance

TOKYO (BP)--Alleged "white systemic racism" in North America came under attack here by Thomas J. Kilgore, black pastor of the Second Baptist Church, Los Angeles, Calif., and immediate past president of the American Baptist Convention.

"The systems of America are racist," Kilgore told delegates to the 12th Baptist World Congress of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) meeting in the Budokan during a symposium on race relations.

"We spend our time talking about saving souls when we really need to go beyond that and save the system, the power and the principalities which govern our world," Kilgore asserted.

"Racism in North America began with the Indians when the white people took their land away from them," Kilgore added. "Then it continued with slavery of the black man and finally reached the Hispanic people who had their land taken away."

Kilgore referred to white racism in housing, education, politics, and religion as the most critical areas confronting black people today.

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He accused the established North American church as being the worst offender in racial injustice.

"The churches have more to repent of than anyone else," he said. "They have failed to fulfill their role."

Kilgore also said he believes James Foreman did more good with his Black Manifesto than all the revivals conducted last year in America's churches.

"Foreman put his finger on the problem," Kilgore said. "He called on the church to share their great wealth with the needy people in America."

Others on the symposium included Samuel Kho, a businessman from Bangkok, Thailand; Chris W. Parnell, general secretary, Baptist Union of South Africa, Transvaal; and Siman H. Sircar, youth leader, Dacca, East Pakistan.

Parnell observed the essential differences between race are caused "not by a skin relation but by a heart relation."

Kho, who said there are few racial problems in his native Thailand affirmed that "most racial problems stem from the fact that people don't understand and respect one another."

Following the symposium E. Luther Copeland, a Southern Baptist, continued with the theme on "Race Relations in Christian Perspective."

Copeland, professor of missions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., said it was "an historical accident that white supremacy arose in North America.

"The white peoples of the Western Hemisphere were blessed with great energy and technological development," he said. "Thus they came to dominate the other peoples of the world."

He added, "White superiority in technology led to the feeling of superiority in other areas, and thus racism began."

Copeland referred to South Africa and North America as the two areas where the problem of racial supremacy is particularly acute.

"In South Africa the white minority rules the black majority," Copeland pointed out. "In the United States the black minority has been handicapped and hindered by the effects of slavery imposed on them by the white majority."

Copeland said the Bible clearly affirms that all races comprise one family. "What a great day it would be if the world would just recognize this elementary fact," he exclaimed.

"The Bible also recognizes that family ranks are torn by many divisions," he said. "Yet God is seeking to gather together a family of Christians who will try to heal these divisions and tear down the dividing wall of hostility."

Racism is something in humanity which "cannot be exorcised without trauma nor removed without repentance:"

Copeland suggested three practical solutions for the betterment of race relations: (1) dealing creatively with one's emotions, (2) determining what can be done for racial justice in one's own situation and (3) practicing patience and holding on to hope.

"We have a dream, we Baptists, we Christians," Copeland concluded, "a dream of a brotherhood in Christ which transcends all dividing lines.

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Two Southern Baptists Among 12 BWA Vice Presidents

TOKYO (BP)--The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) has elected 12 new vice presidents from around the world, including two Southern Baptists.

Delegates to the 12th Baptist World Congress in Tokyo completed election of officers after Herschel H. Hobbs, defeated candidate for the BWA presidency, pledged his support to the new president, V. Carney Hargroves.

Hobbs, Southern Baptist from Oklahoma City, had been nominated from the floor in the first contested BWA presidential election in 65 years.

The former president of the Southern Baptist Convention said, "Mr. Hargroves has been presented as your president. I present him to you as my president for the next five years."

Hargroves, 70, an American Baptist from Philadelphia, Pa., responded, "Your pledge of cooperation is one I deeply appreciate. Together we can accomplish much for the Baptist World Alliance."

The new vice presidents come from Africa, Asia, Europe, South America and North America.

Southern Baptists elected were Miss Alma Hunt, executive secretary of the Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham, and Owen Cooper, a businessman from Yazoo City, Miss.

L. Venchael Booth, a Negro Baptist pastor from Cincinnati, was also elected to a vice presidential spot.

Other vice presidents are Isamu Chiba, educator, Tokyo; J. T. Ayorinde, general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, Ibadan; Daniel Y. K. Cheung, pastor, Hong Kong; Janos Laczkovzki, pastor, Budapest, Hungary; Rubens Lopes, pastor, Sao Paulo, Brazil; Austin Masa, general secretary, Philippine Baptist Convention, Iloilo City; T. B. McDormand, educator, Amherst, Nova Scotia, Canada; B. R. Moses, secretary, Baptist Union of India, Vellore; and Rudolf Thaut, seminary president, Hamburg, Germany.

Delegates also elected two treasurers--Carl Tiller, an American Baptist layman from Washington, D.C., and M. G. Polson, a lawyer from London, England.

In other business, delegates adopted a message to the churches, urging them to foster good relations with other Christians.

The message dealt with striving for freedom and liberty of conscience, turning the tide of secularism, political and social action and reconciliation.

"Our understanding of the nature of the church involves our recognizing as members with us in that one church all who truly believe in Christ," the statement said.

It also said, "There must be frank recognition of differences of political judgments and of the fact that different Baptist communities are in quite different situations as to the extent to which they can influence public opinion and initiate or encourage action."

On the subject of reconciliation, the congress theme, the message said, "This we know to be the answer to the needs of our time--personally, in the community and in the nation."

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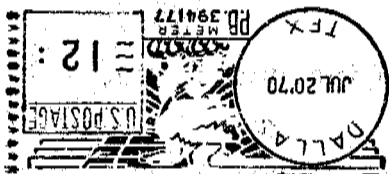
NOTE TO EDITORS: Arthur Blessitt's rally and prayer vigil in Washington story will be mailed tomorrow (July 21).

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