

September 18, 1970

Jekyll's "God Squad"  
Impresses Newsmen

by Lawrence E. Webb

JEKYLL ISLAND, Ga. (BP)--The "God Squad" at this coastal resort meant a lot to young people this summer by "just being available."

This was the opinion of an Atlanta reporter whose daughters met three summer missionaries sponsored by the Georgia Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Bob Harrell, whose regular reporting assignment takes him around Georgia in a camping rig, used a recent column in the Atlanta Constitution to say "thank you" to the student missionaries.

His daughters, Martha, 18; and Mary, 17; worked at the state-owned island resort during the summer, and met the Baptist student summer missionaries here.

Young people at Jekyll Island gave the "God Squad" title to Michele Walker from New Mexico, Cheryl Sorrel from Arkansas, and Terry McMillan from Mississippi.

"Just being available is pretty important when young people are working away from home," in Harrell's judgment. "Having someone to 'rap with' is most important when the only other recourse is to write a letter home."

The newsmen said when his daughters wrote home about attending an "Instand Coffee House" on the beach, "my fatherly concern came to the surface."

A phone call from Harrell revealed that the student missionaries pitched a tent on the beach, called it a coffee house, and invited kids to attend.

"If the kids wanted to talk about religion, the Squad could handle it. If the kids wanted to talk about the effect of smoking 'grass,' the Squad could handle it," Harrell said.

One of the Harrell daughters said, "There were a lot of kids on the island looking for answers. The Squad had some of those answers. I guess the one big thing that impressed me was that the Squad had a kind of happiness a lot of us wanted."

In addition to brewing instand coffee houses, the student summer missionaries conducted Vacation Bible schools, worked in an associational youth camp, helped with informal church services on the beach, and sang in area churches.

Summing up the influence of the students, Harrell said, "There is evidence in at least one home that the God Squad touched a life or two. Not that there has been any sudden announcements about prospective missionary work in the of foreign jungles.

"But there is a maturity and understanding and a caring for others which I suspect the God Squad might have sparked, if not lit the fuse," Harrell observed.

The reporter indicated that he said a prayer of thanks for the Squad when his daughters showed an eagerness to go to church when he was tempted to sleep late on Sunday morning.

FMB Sends Cholera Vaccine  
To Missionaries In Africa

RICHMOND (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board had dispatched about 50 vials of cholera vaccine to Missionary John C. Mills in Accra, Ghana following reports of cholera outbreaks in West Africa.

The vaccine will be given as a precautionary measure to missionaries working in West Africa, according to Dr. Franklin T. Fowler, the board's medical consultant.

A courier was arranged by the public relations director of Pan American Airways at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York to take the vaccine from New York to Ghana.

The board has also urged all furloughing missionaries from the affected areas to be inoculated before returning to their overseas assignments. Persons who have not received cholera inoculation might be quarantined for two weeks upon entering some countries, Dr. Fowler said.

In other instances, travelers coming from an infected area with a valid international certificate of vaccination showing only a single dose of cholera vaccine may be quarantined or placed under restrictive surveillance for up to two weeks. Two doses would be mandatory to assure immediate entry, he added.

The concern for inoculation followed reports of cholera in parts of the Middle East, Southeast Asia, the U.S.S.R. and North and West Africa.

According to a New York Times article, the failure of some countries to report cholera cases has concealed the fact that the disease has spread into Africa through the Middle East.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that sub-Saharan Africans have been afflicted by cholera for the first time in a century. WHO representatives met with 102 doctors from 34 African countries to teach them newly developed techniques that prevent the disease from being the scourge it once was.

Health ministers from seven Arab countries also met in Syria to coordinate measures to combat the disease.

In the past, Dr. Fowler said, many countries have not required cholera inoculation for entry. Now, however, mass inoculations and strict requirements for vaccination certificates at ports of entry and frontier points are customary in much of the world.

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Progressive Baptists Elect  
D. C. Pastor As President

9/18/70

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Negro Baptist pastor of a church affiliated with the Southern, American and Progressive Baptist Conventions has been elected president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

The new president of the Negro Baptist body is Earl L. Harrison, pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church here for 40 years. He succeeds E. R. Searcy, pastor of Mt. Zion Second Baptist Church in Atlanta.

Shiloh Baptist Church is affiliated with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, a state Baptist body aligned with both the Southern and American Baptist Conventions. The 3,800-member congregation, almost totally black, is also affiliated with the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

Harrison is a native of Texas and a graduate of Bishop College (Baptist) in Dallas. In addition, he did graduate study at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University in New York City.

He is currently chairman of the board of the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) in Washington, D.C.

The Progressive National Baptist Convention, organized early in the 1960's, is a convention of more than 800 churches. Its headquarters office is located in the nation's capital.

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1,500 Hear Converted Black Panther,  
Graham, Chafin At Evangelism Meet

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--A wide assortment of speakers ranging from Evangelist Billy Graham to a former Black Panther converted to Christianity addressed more than 1,500 black and white ministers and laymen attending what is believed to be the first inter-denominational evangelism conference organized and led by Negro ministers.

The program also featured such speakers as Kenneth L. Chafin, evangelism director for the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board, and Jack Sparks, who founded a ministry among radical Christian youth living in Berkeley, Calif., who call themselves "the Jesus Freaks."

Purpose of the conference, according to Edward V. Hill, director of the conference and pastor of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles, was to present realistic Christian answers from practical experience to problems of drugs, militancy, racism, a general moral decline in the nation, and spiritual apathy.

Almost all the speakers admonished those attending to get serious about spreading the gospel as the answer to the ills that beset the nation and world.

James Weston, the former Black Panther who now concentrates on reaching militants for Christ, pulled no punches in his talk. "I'm going to talk straight," he told the conference.

"We're not playing games," Weston declared as he told of the urgent need to reach young people for Christ. He warned churches and Christians to "stop playing intellectual gymnastics" and become involved in ministering to the needs of people who live in the streets.

Weston told of his own experience of life in the ghetto. He said he joined the Black Panthers in Berkeley, Calif., in 1968 because he thought it was dedicated to the black man and the poor. "Then, I believed that real liberation came through a gun."

"I used to think Christianity was the worst thing a black man could get into, but since I found Christ, I realized that was wrong," Weston declared.

"The only real freedom is spiritual freedom, and I want people to see Christ in me," Weston said.

"I don't believe that freedom comes out of the barrel of a gun," declared the 22-year-old black, who wears his hair in a bushy Afro. "I believe in justice for everyone, and not just for us (Blacks)."

He said he views many young black radicals, not as revolutionaries, but as simply rebellious. "They reject Christianity because they see it as a vestage of the past and irrelevant to today's values and more particular to the needs of black persons."

"I tell them Christ died for the human race, not for the white or black race, but for the human race," Weston asserted.

He pointed out that "young people turn away from the church because they don't see the personality of Christ in the church. You don't see Christ in the church or in the life of the people," he added. "There is too much emphasis on the dollar" and other things.

Quoting scripture liberally for a man who has been a Christian only a year or so, Weston paraphrased one passage by saying, "Christ didn't come to give us 'religion' so we could have it more abundantly, but to give us life.

"The only time we need to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ is when we are not living it," he added.

Sparks, another unique speaker at the conference, told of the work of the Christian World Liberation Front he founded among radical students living on the streets in Berkeley, Calif.

"The kids are not going to come into your churches, at least not in great masses," he warned the conference delegates.

He observed that many young people today identify the church with an American establishment that they don't like.

"But we're not called to make them like the American establishment, but to introduce them to Christ," he said.

Sparks urged churches to show young people that they don't have to conform to someone else's image of "the right way" to minister. He added that they must be led by the Spirit and get directly into the action in their own way.

Several black ministers were on the three-day conference program. They drew raves from Graham, who praised them for their oratorical ability and said, "I believe the best preachers are in the black churches."

Graham urged the white Christians attending the conference to "get some fire back into their religion," drawing a chorus of "amens" to his remarks.

The famed evangelist, repeating a theme he has emphasized in recent months, told the delegates they may be taking part in the last great push of God's army and said, "We are beginning to see the beginning of the end of an age dominated by the devil. He urged Christians to get ready for the second coming of Christ."

Chafin, the top evangelism leader of the Southern Baptist Convention, had words of praise for the conference, saying it would help both black and white ministers to become more articulate about evangelism.

In three different addresses dealing with evangelism, Chafin offered suggestions for more effective evangelism, urging a strong spiritual and theological foundation for evangelism, rather than depending on slogans or gimmicks.

"You can't have instant evangelism like you have instant potatoes, for instance," Chafin said. "You have to prepare for evangelism in the future with solid spiritual foundations now."

Chafin said that the role of the preacher must change, for he must equip the laity for evangelism like a coach trains his players, rather than trying to be a quarterback who always carries the ball.

He also urged ministers to give more consideration to young people, calling them "potential evangelists to the new generation."

Chafin said that youth have been made "second class citizens in the church." He added that ministers need to turn to them and say, "We need you to help reach other young people for Christ." Chafin said he regarded the high school age group as "the most open group to the gospel."

Other speakers at the three-day conference included Bill Bright, president of Campus Crusade for Christ; C. A. W. Clark, pastor, Good Street Baptist Church, Dallas; O. M. Hoover, pastor Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, Cleveland; Howard O. Jones, a Negro evangelist affiliated with Graham's organization; D. James Kennedy, pastor, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; M. L. Price, president of the Missionary Baptist General Convention of Texas; M. L. Scott, pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Los Angeles; and Walter Smyth of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

Sessions were held at the largest Negro Baptist church in Kansas City, the St. Stephen Baptist Church. Host pastor was John W. Williams, a former vice president of the Baptist World Alliance.



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