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Criswell Calls Negro Rejection
By Churches "Manifest Hypocrisy"

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NASHVILLE (BP)--The immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, W. A. Criswell of Dallas, said here it is "manifest hypocrisy" for a church to reject membership applicants because they are black.

Criswell, outspoken pastor of the 15,500-member First Baptist Church of Dallas, was asked during a news conference if the SEC would change with time on the race issue, and about the significance of 300 members walking out of First Baptist Church, Birmingham, in protest because the majority refused to accept two blacks as members.

"All we are doing when we speak of changing the SBC is taking the plain word of God and living it," Criswell replied. "To change the word of God to deny it is one thing, but to take the truth of God and incarnate it is something else.

"You are not living the word of God when you say to a (black) fellow, 'Now God loves you and God died for you and we want you to be saved...but I don't want you in my church, my congregation, my fellowship.'

"That is manifest hypocrisy," Criswell declared. "That's not God's word...When we become Christians, we are all brothers and sisters. To say you skin doesn't quite come up the pigmentation of mine and those in our services is ridiculous, impossible, and our people are getting away from it."

Criswell said that in his own life, he had made an unbelievable about face. "I used to be not happy about colored people thinking about joining our churches. I was ignorant, unChristian. I needed to learn about the Lord. I needed to grow in grace."

Asked how many blacks were members of the 15,500 -member Dallas church, Criswell replied: "Not a whole lot."

Asked about theological liberalism in Baptist seminaries, Criswell said that "the preacher that is being turned out by denominational seminaries today is of a different stripe than I was acquainted with in my day."

He cited as an example a conversation with one young minister who told Criswell the seminaries were teaching preachers to be "the conscience of our community." Criswell said he was just rehashing what radio commentators, editorial writers and politicians were saying.

"The man who goes to church does not want to hear fifth rate editorializing," Criswell asserted. "The layman wants to know, 'Does God have anything to say to me?'"

Asked what could be done, Criswell replied: "I don't know." Asked if a partial answer might be the Criswell Bible Institute, an evening school offered by First Baptist Church, Dallas, using seminary faculty members teaching Bible studies, Criswell replied that it may be "in a way."

At the close of the press conference, called by Broadman Press to promote Criswell's new book, *Scarlett Thread through the Bible*, Criswell predicted that Carl Bates, pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., would be reelected to a second term in June as president of the SBC, but beyond 1972, he said he had no idea who might be president of the convention.

New Mexico Board Revises
Student Work Organization

575

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (BP)--In a compromise move, the State Mission Board of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico voted to reorganize its student work program and continue full-time student directors at three of the state's university campuses.

The action reverses one phase of a total convention reorganization proposed at the state convention last November in Alamogordo, N.M. Under that plan, full-time paid directors at five state colleges and universities would be discontinued in favor of volunteer student workers at each campus.

After long deliberation, the convention's State Mission Board voted in its January session to continue to Baptist student work directors at Eastern New Mexico University, Portales; University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; and New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.

As part of the approved reorganization, part-time assistants would also be retained or created at each of these three centers, and at the Western New Mexico College, Silver City, and New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, N.M.

According to the board action, the Las Vegas associate would work under the supervision of the Albuquerque director, and the Silver City associate would be responsible to the Las Cruces director.

The entire student work program would be under the administration of the Education Division of the state convention, and the shift of personnel and program alignment would be made on or before Oct. 1.

No personnel assignments for the student work reorganization, or for any of the other reorganized convention staff assignments were adopted by the State Mission Board during its January session.

Under the reorganization approved last November, several personnel cuts were authorized. There were five divisions created under an executive director and business manager, including a Division of Special Ministries (one executive); a Division of Communication Ministries (one executive); a Division of Education Ministries (two executives); a Division of Mission Ministries (three executives) and a Division of Foundation and Church Loan Ministries (one executive).

Thus, the executive staff would be reduced from 15 staff members to a total of 10 executives. The 15 does not include five campus student work directors.

Strong debate at the convention came over the student work reorganization proposal, which would have eliminated the five paid directors and put student work under the Division of Education Ministries which would have two executives to promote student work, Sunday School, Training Union, and music.

The State Mission Board, which was asked by the convention to come up with a final plan, first defeated a motion to continue the student work program with its current plan and staff, but then indicated that it did not favor the original recommendation of part-time directors at all five campuses.

A report in the Baptist New Mexican, weekly state Baptist paper published by the convention, indicated that the final action was a shift toward middle ground from both of the opposite viewpoints.

The board, on authorization of the convention, also adopted a budget of \$610,002 for 1971, which includes \$130,977 (or 27 per cent) for worldwide mission causes through the SBC Cooperative Program, \$125,000 in "exempted" items for joint SBC-state promotion efforts, and the remaining \$404,025 for state causes.

The 1971 budget is a decrease of \$16,116 from the 1970 budget of \$626,168, although the decrease is actually greater since the 1971 budget includes \$47,500 in debt retirement not reflected in the 1970 budget.

Missouri Baptist Group
Opposes Student Aid Plan

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JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--The Christian Life Commission of the Missouri Baptist Convention issued a statement here opposing a plan to provide financial assistance to students attending private colleges and universities in Missouri as proposed by Gov. Warren E. Hearnes.

"Our commission is distressed and alarmed" at the proposal, said Hugh Wamble, newly elected chairman of the commission and professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City.

In a message to the Missouri legislature, Gov. Hearnes, a Baptist, recommended the creation of "a student assistance program...to fill the more than 8,000 existing classroom vacancies at private colleges and universities."

Since most private colleges in Missouri are under church control, the governor has actually proposed financing church-controlled education out of state tax funds, Wamble argued.

The statement pointed out that Missouri's constitution "forbids using tax money directly or indirectly from any public fund whatever to help support sectarian purposes or church-controlled schools. It further pointed out that another constitution provision forbids grants of public money to private individuals.

"The governor's own task force raised questions about the constitutionality of state aid to church-controlled institutions or private individuals so they can attend these schools," Wamble said. "Only one person on the task force went on record as stating an opinion that there is no constitutional obstacle, and he did so in a footnote."

"It seems strange indeed that the governor would recommend using tax funds in a way that his hand-picked task force has such grave reservations about," the statement said.

Wamble also pointed out that the Missouri Baptist Convention meeting last October adopted a resolution opposing "the taxing of all citizens to finance church-related education."

Wamble added that Missouri Baptists own and operate three colleges, "but we do not think the government has any right to tax us or other people to finance them."

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NOTE TO BAPTIST STATE PAPER EDITORS: The elected Sunday School Board of the SBC will meet in annual session Tuesday, Jan. 26, at 1:15 p.m., 127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville. Baptist Press will provide coverage.

--Baptist Press