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February 3, 1971

**Secularism May Force Baptists
Catholics Closer, Sherman Says**

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Growing secularism within society may force Baptists and Catholics to cooperate with each other, a North Carolina Baptist minister told a regional Baptist-Catholic dialogue conference here.

"If God is willing to use both of us for the salvation of the world, we might be willing to lean upon each other for the task," said Cecil Sherman, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C.

Sherman and Bishop John L. May, of Mobile, Ala., spoke to about 100 Baptist and Catholic conference participants on the subject, "Salvation, Its Meaning and Relation To Christian Social Responsibility."

The Asheville pastor suggested that since the secular world tends to view Baptists and Catholics as standing under the same umbrella, the two groups might attempt to view each other in like manner.

"I come to this conference with the high hope that Baptists and Catholics are on the same team," Sherman said.

In his presentation, May told the group: "I would hope that we might see what each others' beliefs in salvation mean to the world today."

Both May and Sherman capsuled their views on salvation within the context of their denominational backgrounds. Although there were points of differences, they generally agreed on salvation's relationship to social responsibility.

"The business of the church," May said, "is to read the signs of the times and apply to the shifting problems of society those unchanging guidelines of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

He cautioned that the church should not neglect the proclamation of the gospel and instead become a platform for airing social grievances; but he also condemned the Christian who retreats, overwhelmed, from the world and its problems with no thought of returning.

Explaining that the converted person has his point of view changed, Sherman added that "a lot of people within Baptist churches don't have a point of view other than that which society forces onto them."

Sherman spoke of members of his own congregation who seem to see no relationship between biblical teachings and social responsibility.

May said that for the Catholic, "serving Christ as Lord means serving people he meets every day."

The bishop described social righteousness as "a moral obligation of Catholics."

"It is not enough to salute Jesus Christ as Lord; this faith must be lived," Bishop May declared.

The Baptist-Catholic conference was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's department of interfaith witness, and by the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The three-day meeting brought together for the first time on a regional basis Catholic and Baptist clergymen who have direct contact with the local congregation.

OEO Funds First Grant
To Study Voucher Plan

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) announced here that it has made the first of several grants for an eight-week feasibility study that may lead to an educational vouchers experiment.

Under a \$23,028 grant, the Institute for the Advancement of Urban Education will study Gary, Ind., as a possible site for the voucher experiment.

According to announcement by Frank Carlucci, director of OEO, other grants similar to the Gary funding will be announced soon.

Under a voucher system, public education money would be given directly to parents in the form of vouchers or certificates, roughly equal in value to current per pupil costs in the community. With the vouchers the parents could purchase their children's education at the public or private school of the parents' choice.

Baptists and a score of other national organizations have voiced opposition to the proposed experiments in the grounds that it would be an improper use of public funds.

In its semiannual board meeting last fall, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs pointed out that "there is a dangerous blurring of the separation between church and state as public funds are channeled into religiously owned and operated schools."

The Public Affairs Committee also expressed the belief that the proposed voucher system would weaken public education, would become an objectionable continuing program, and would "lead towards further polarization and fragmentation in the nation."

The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, in its September 1970 meeting, also adopted a resolution which opposed "the implementation of any educational voucher system which would permit the use of public funds either directly or indirectly by private church-related elementary and secondary schools."

In addition, several Baptist state conventions meeting in November adopted resolutions opposing the proposed voucher plan.

In a statement issued here, OEO said that parochial schools will be permitted to participate in the education voucher experiment "only if arrangements for their participation can be made without violating their state's constitution or the U.S. Constitution."

While administrative details will be determined by the community, OEO will require that all aspects of the voucher system "be designed to prevent racial and economic segregation of any kind," the statement continued.

OEO's guidelines for the education voucher experiment, according to the release, will try to determine "whether giving poor parents the opportunity to choose a mode of education for their child will:

--"Make the parents, and the community as a whole, feel that their needs are met by the education provided through the voucher system.

--"Results in improved education for children.

--"Be administratively feasible.

--"Result in improved integration patterns."

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SBC Cooperative Program Gifts
For January Increase 13 Per Cent

2/3/71

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists started the year 1971 with a 13 per cent increase in giving to world missions through the denomination's Cooperative Program unified budget, the Southern Baptist Executive Committee reported here.

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Gifts through the denomination's mission support plan for January, 1971, totalled \$2,954,576, an increase of \$340,996 or 13.05 per cent compared to January, 1970 contributions of \$2.6 million.

In addition to the \$2.9 million given through the unified budget, a total of \$4.6 million was contributed to designated special mission causes during January, an increase of \$481,805 over the \$3.9 million in designations last year.

The combined total reached \$7.5 million for the month of January, an increase of \$1 million over the previous year's first month, or 15.61 per cent.

John H. Williams, financial planning secretary for the SBC Executive Committee which prepares the monthly report, said that the figures were "encouraging," but added that they needed to be balanced with the previous December's six per cent decrease in Cooperative Program giving.

Williams said there was the possibility that some of the January receipts reflected a carry-over from December contributions which state conventions were not able to send to the SBC before the books closed Dec. 31.

One state, Kentucky, was not included in the January 1970, financial report, but was in the January 1971, figures, thus making last year's figures slightly lower than the comparative 1971 amount, he explained.

Seven of the smaller state conventions in the SBC did not send in their January, 1971, allocations before the report was tabulated at the end of the month, he added.

Of the \$4.6 million in designated gifts, \$4.5 million went to the SBC Foreign Mission Board. Most of the amount was given through the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions in December. Of the \$7.5 million in total gifts, about \$6 million went to foreign missions.

The amounts included in the report reflect only gifts to support national and worldwide programs of the Southern Baptist Convention, and do not include contributions to state and local Baptist programs.



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