



# BAPTIST PRESS

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## Baptist Survey Reveals Black-White Relations

By Tim Nicholas

ATLANTA (BP)--A Southern Baptist Home Mission Board survey just completed indicates that there are approximately 75,000 black Southern Baptists out of 12.6 million and showed that black pastors in general take a more aggressive role in black and white relations than white pastors.

The survey--sent to Southern and National (black) Baptist agencies, state conventions, associations and local churches--showed few whites (15 per cent) and many blacks (75 per cent) participating in interracial committees, fewer whites (44 per cent) in integrated pastors' conferences than blacks (66 per cent) and more black pastors (86 per cent) observing Race Relations Sunday in their churches than whites (60 per cent).

It also showed an increase in black employes in Southern Baptist organizations but that paternalism is dying hard.

"The whole intent of the survey was to find out the actions and trends of and possible future for black and white Baptist cooperation," said Victor Glass, secretary of the mission board's department of cooperative ministries with National Baptists.

The 1973 survey, sent by a random representation selection process to 2,000 Southern and 2,000 National Baptist pastors, drew response from 559 Southern and 142 National pastors.

"Of course we have to realize," said Don Mabry, secretary of the board's department of survey and special studies which monitored the survey, "that the black respondents were highly motivated about the subject, but the small response indicates that too many studies are being done in the black community. That shades the survey somewhat," Mabry said.

About 8.5 million blacks belong to the three major National Baptist bodies--National Baptist Convention of America, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., and the Progressive National Baptist Convention--and another two to three million black Baptists are non-affiliated.

The survey updates one taken in 1959 by a Southern Baptist inter-agency committee. Over the ensuing 14 years, the structures of the two surveys reveal subtle changes in racial attitudes. Both National and Southern Baptist pastors received the 1973 survey, but the 1959 survey went only to Southern Baptists.

Interracial relations have increased since 1959 with more blacks in Southern Baptist Convention level agencies and a black Southern Baptist layman, Herbert Cotton, serving as president of the Alaska Baptist Convention.

In 1959 only a few blacks worked in mailing rooms or janitorial positions in SBC agencies. Now, although totals fluctuate, 130 blacks work on the agency level--10 staff and 120 clerical--and 110 blacks serve as home missionary personnel and two as foreign missionary personnel. No data exists on the number of blacks working in state convention or associational offices, other than home missionaries.

"There are no lines or barriers to the appointment of blacks as foreign missionaries other than the limits of the SBC, which is that all appointees must be members of Southern Baptist churches," said Jesse C. Fletcher, the Foreign Mission Board's mission support division director. "We hope the picture will change as the SBC continues to change," he added.

"If we do have the estimated 75,000 blacks as members of our churches (as the survey indicates), we should begin to enlist more of them in the future," he said.

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SBC seminaries have had an interest in black studies programs, such as Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, which uses the services of a black professor from a nearby college, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, which has a black studies "minimester" program coordinated by a black, Emmanuel McCall of the Home Mission Board, and uses two visiting professors, one black.

As for enrollment of blacks in Baptist schools, no exact totals are available for undergraduate schools, although the SBC Education Commission reports that "none of the 53 schools are segregated, nearly all have black students and many have black faculty."

But statistics do indicate that the six Southern Baptist seminaries have about 45 black students among them.

On the state convention level, 28 state Baptist conventions, in cooperation with the Home Mission Board's department of cooperative ministries with National Baptists, have at least one person assigned to promote the work.

But, despite the advances, "the survey showed that, organizationally, paternalism is still evident in that most programs move from white to black, both in personnel and in budgeting," Mabry said.

Social intermingling is one indication of racial acceptance. Ninety per cent of the black pastors responding had eaten in a restaurant with a white pastor and 71 per cent of whites had eaten with black pastors in restaurants.

But only 26 per cent of the white pastors had eaten in the homes of black pastors and 55 per cent of the blacks had eaten in white pastors' homes.

Although the survey indicated that 66 per cent of the blacks were in an integrated pastors' conference, it also showed 93 per cent would like to be. Only 44 per cent of the whites were in an integrated pastors' conference, and in response to the question "would you like to be?", more than 50 per cent didn't answer the question.

The survey also revealed that 731 predominately white Southern Baptist churches have black members--an average of five per church.

Mabry said 68 per cent of the white churches responding said they would actively seek black members and 82 per cent of the blacks would seek whites; 91 per cent of the white churches would be willing to receive black members and 96 per cent of the blacks would receive whites; 80 per cent of the white churches would be willing to elect a black member to an office and 89 per cent of the blacks would elect whites; three per cent of the white churches have a black in an elected office and 12 per cent of the blacks have whites in office.

More than 65 per cent of the black pastors responding have preached in white churches, while only 50 per cent of the white pastors have preached in black churches, the survey indicated.

Joint worship is another rarity among white churches while fairly common among black churches. Sixty-three per cent of the black churches reported participation in joint services, choir exchanges or joint committees with white churches. Twenty-three per cent of the white churches reported the same with black churches.

Some Southern Baptist state executive secretaries who responded admitted shortcomings. One, mentioning lack of strong financial support from affiliated black churches, wrote: "We are aware, of course that they had mission obligations before joining our convention. We know, too, that we must meet their needs and make our programs and ministries relevant to them."

The survey indicated more interracial activity in areas outside the South, such as Oregon, Michigan and California. Only seven of the 19 predominately black SBC churches are in seven southeastern states. Of the 191 churches, 125 are dually aligned with SBC and at least one other nationwide black Baptist convention.

Barriers--historical, racial, geographical, cultural, economical--all come between cooperation between black and white Baptists. But since the SBC and the three National Baptist conventions have nearly the same articles of faith, cooperation cannot be disclaimed on religious grounds.

"This survey not only indicates current trends and actions," said Emmanuel McCall, associate secretary for the Home Mission Board's cooperative ministries with National Baptists, "but will be used to help chart the course for future relations between black and white Baptists."

Feature

American Bible Society  
Program Aids New Readers

## By the Baptist Press

Jen, a 57-year-old woman, had been an epileptic child and never went to school. After having the Bible read to her all her life, a volunteer teacher taught Jen to read.

Among her first reading materials were scriptures from the American Bible Society's (ABS) new scriptural literacy program, Good News for New Readers.

"It is an astonishing fact that throughout the world when most people learn to read there is nothing for them to read," said John D. Erickson, an American Bible Society spokesman.

In many countries, after basic literacy training, more than 50 per cent of new readers lapse back into illiteracy. The new reader must have material at his level, Erickson said.

Good News for New Readers is an ABS project to help the newly literate of the world, such as Jen, attain normal reading abilities by providing them with scriptural reading materials at various skill levels.

The literacy selections start readers with simple words and short parables and stories from the life of Jesus and move to more complex materials until they are reading at the normal language level of their country.

The Good News literacy selections were successfully field tested five years in Latin America and received overwhelming response, with over 10 million of the booklets distributed during that time, the ABS reported.

A breakthrough in the project came when the government of Guatemala began to give each new graduate of their literacy training a complete set of ABS literacy selections--350,000 the first year, said Miss Alice Ball, ABS official.

So far, the materials have been prepared in 98 languages for use in 37 countries. They are planned for 200 languages within the next five years, according to the ABS.

The materials were developed by a team working under Eugene A. Nida, ABS translation consultant.

"We are taking our knowledge of linguistics and the Bible and applying it to the problems of the new reader," Nida said.

The American Bible Society spent more than 20 years researching and developing the literacy selections to ensure faithfulness to the original texts, to reflect cultural implications and provide the experience needed by new readers to increase their skills, the ABS reported.

These scriptures may be the first reading materials millions of semi-literates in the world ever actually own, said Miss Ball. People who never had anything but food and clothes can own and read parts of the scriptures through the ABS project, she added.

The American Bible Society was founded in 1816 to translate, publish and distribute the scriptures. At the end of 1972, they had distributed 1,500,375,745 copies of scriptures. Churches in America will commemorate American Bible Society Sunday on November 11.

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Georgia Church Sponsors  
High-Rise Retirement Home

10/26/73

DECATUR, Ga. (BP)--Clairmont Oaks, a retirement home for the elderly, sponsored by First Baptist Church here has broken ground for a 298-unit facility to cost almost \$6 million.

The site, across the street from the church, is sponsored by the church through a non-profit corporation it established.

Construction is expected to be completed in early 1973.

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