

January 14, 1974

Praises Observance

Pastor Asks for Wider
Race Relations Emphasis

By James Lee Young
Feature Editor, Baptist Press

A Spanish-American minister and member of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission (CLC) from California has called for a wider race relations emphasis among Southern Baptists.

Daniel Sotelo, pastor of the multi-ethnic, bi-lingual First Spanish Baptist Church in San Francisco, criticized what he said is the CLC's overemphasis on "getting black people into white churches."

Yet, Sotelo said, the commission-sponsored annual Race Relations Sunday observance, set for Feb. 10, 1974, is worthwhile.

"This is one beef I have with the Christian Life Commission, that they think more in terms of the South and getting black people into white churches," Sotelo said.

He observed, "In the West, these (racial) lines have been broken in many churches in many ways, so that we take a different approach to such matters."

Responding to the California pastor's charge was Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the CLC, who sympathized with his commission member's position but said, "The major thrust of the CLC's racial concerns through the years has been with black-white problems. It's the black-white problem that is dominant for Southern Baptists."

Valentine continued, "To have given equal attention to problems related to Chinese Americans or American Indians, for instance, would have been to dodge the dominant racial issues with which Southern Baptists have been confronted and to have afforded an escape when none was justified.

"In addition to attention previously given to black-white relationships in the past," Valentine said, "the time is now coming when we will give more attention to the varied dimensions of racism, such as those expressed by Mr. Sotelo."

Both Sotelo and Rochelle Davis, black pastor of the Temple of Faith Baptist Church in Detroit, a Southern Baptist congregation, said their predominantly non-white congregations plan to observe Race Relations Sunday.

But both warned there is in the emphasis a danger of appearing superficial or paternalistic towards persons and congregations of other ethnic backgrounds. They agreed, as did other pastors, that race relations has to be a year-round affair, for them.

Abe G. Watson, pastor of the all white, First Baptist Church in Brewton, Ala., said he has a "wholeness" concept about race relations that necessitates a de-emphasis of the annual observance among Southern Baptists.

"We've tried to convey that God loves all people, regardless of race. We must love all people, week in and week out, not just in February," he said.

Watson said that didn't mean he would necessarily ignore Race Relations Sunday. "I might preach a sermon related to race relations that Sunday (February 10), but I haven't decided yet."

Davis, whose congregation became aligned with Southern Baptists four years ago, said the church would observe Race Relations Sunday this year by exchanging pulpits with a white Baptist congregation.

On Monday, following Race Relations Sunday, the Greater Detroit Baptist Association hopes to involve at least 35 per cent of its churches in a seminar to evaluate the results of the annual observance, he said.

The results of the seminar will, hopefully, provide information to enable churches throughout the state to continue, and expand on, a "companion church ministry," where black, National Baptists and Southern Baptist congregations work together on a regular year-round basis. Davis' congregation is not dually aligned.

In the "companion" concept, "laymen and pastors--of both races, black and white--do things together," Davis said.

He recalled that two pastors--one black, one white--in the association sat down with calendars and planned their programs to coincide. They worked together, and the laymen of the two churches even began visiting in each other's homes, he noted.

"This is what needs to be done at this stage of race relations among the Baptist churches--concentrate on relating between the groups, rather than try to pull from one to another," Davis said.

Dual alignment of black churches (relating to more than one convention) shouldn't be the major emphasis, but, rather, relating to each ethnic group where they are, he added.

Sotelo said his church, which has 16 nationalities participating regularly, "will display flags of every country represented," on Race Relations Sunday and will observe the theme, "One Lord, One Command, One World."

There aren't any black members in the Brewton church but Watson and some members of the congregation are active in race relations. Watson participates in the national, interdenominational agency, Clergy Consultation of Problem Pregnancies, for which he counsels women and girls--blacks and whites.

The church participates in several seasonal, interracial worship services and in mission projects that are open to all races.

Watson, observed, "Our Baptist people are usually far more willing to change than pastors are often willing to ask. Most--particularly my own congregation--have a deep sense of what's right," and will do right in race relations and other areas if given proper leadership, he said.

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Home Mission Board Appoints
Missionaries; Personnel

1/14/74

ATLANTA (BP)--Five missionaries and seven missionary associates were appointed and a staff member promoted here by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's directors.

Mrs. John R. (Anita) King was named assistant director of the department of art services. Her duties will include supervising in the production of all the board's printed materials, which include pamphlets, brochures, books and special exhibits.

A native of Wynnwood, Okla., Mrs. King has worked for several years in the board's communications division. She received her associate degree in religious education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex.

Ralph and Melba Gardner were appointed career missionaries to California, where he will serve as superintendent of missions of the Feather River, Mother Lode and Sierra Foot-hills Baptist Associations.

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A native of Oklahoma, Gardner received his bachelor of arts degree from Grand Canyon College, Phoenix, Ariz., and his bachelor of divinity degree from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, San Francisco.

A native of Arkansas, Mrs. Gardner is the former Melba McCallister.

J. C. Matthews, a native of Hinds County, Miss., was appointed to career missionary status. Matthews is a missionary teacher at Mississippi Baptist Seminary, Jackson, a school for blacks. He received his bachelor of science degree from Jackson State College and his bachelor of theology from Mississippi Baptist Seminary.

Allen and Brenda Kay Oliver, also appointed to missionary status, will serve in Staten Island, N.Y., where he is pastor-director of the Richboro Baptist Church, for church extension.

Natives of Maryland, the Olivers both attended the University of Maryland, College Park, where he received his bachelor of arts degree. He received his master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Daniel and Vesnelle Rorris were appointed language missionaries. They are both attending Mexican Baptist Bible Institute in San Antonio, Tex., to learn the Spanish language.

Rorris, a native of Chicago, Ill., received his bachelor of science degree from New Mexico State University, University Park, and his master of divinity degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, St. Louis. A native of Elk City, Okla., Mrs. Rorris is the former Vesnelle Berger.

Also appointed as language missionaries are Paul and Berryl Seal. They will work with the Eskimos and Indians in Nome, Alaska. A native of Paragould, Ark., he is pastor of the Nome Southern Baptist Mission and received his bachelor of arts degree from Arkansas State University, State College, and his master of religion degree from Southern Seminary.

The former Berryl Prince, Mrs. Seal is a native of Jackson, Miss.

Natives of Valparaiso, Chile, Francisco and Juana Eris Bilbao were appointed missionary associates to Corpus Christi, Tex., where he is Spanish pastor of the Emmanuel Baptist Church.

John and Margaret Blake were appointed language missionary associates to the Indians in Roosevelt, Utah. Blake, a native of Manchester, N.H., is pastor of the Ute Baptist Indian Mission. Mrs. Blake is a native of Salt Lake City, Utah.

Also appointed as missionary associates to the Indians were Billy and Janie Jones, Oklahoma natives. Jones is the pastor of the Little Springs Indian Church, Oklahoma City.

Missionary associates to the deaf are Bob and Nancy Parrish, North Carolina natives. Parrish is minister to the deaf at the First Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark.

Three people were appointed student interns for Christian social ministries--Stephen Aycock of Russellville, Ark., and Donald Reams of Orlando, Fla., both students at Midwestern Seminary, and Samuel Beene, Georgetown, Tex., who attends Golden Gate Seminary.

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'Waltons' Creator,
Producer to be Feted

1/14/73

FORT WORTH, Tex. (BP)--Earl Hamner, creator of CBS' multiple award-winning show, "The Waltons," and Lee Rich, the show's producer, will be honored by Baptists when the two are presented Distinguished Communications Recognition Awards by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission during the agency's Fifth National Abe Lincoln Awards program February 7.

Hamner and Rich will join 11 broadcasters from across the nation on hand for the event at Fort Worth's Sheraton Hotel. Broadcasters will be honored for "significant contributions

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to the quality of life in America, both as private citizens and as professional broadcasters," a commission spokesman said.

For the first time, the spokesman said, the award series will consist of two top Abe Lincoln Awards--one to a broadcaster in radio and one to a broadcaster in television. Nine Abe Lincoln Merit Awards, all of equal importance, will be presented for outstanding achievement in specialized areas.

Frank Stanton, president of the Columbia Broadcasting System from 1946-1971 and vice chairman of the CBS Board of Directors when he retired in 1973, will be guest speaker for the awards program. Stanton is president of The American National Red Cross, a position to which he was appointed by President Nixon.

Hamner will be cited by the Baptist agency for "conceiving the novels which gave birth to 'The Waltons' and for his ability, as executive story editor of that series, to create warm and sentimental stories involving real people."

"We commend him for his skill in writing for radio, television and movies," said Paul Stevens, commission president. "As a creative work artist Mr. Hamner has added luster to all that to which he has laid his hand," Stevens added.

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William Jewell College
Names First Woman Trustee

1/14/74

LIBERTY, Mo. (BP)--For the first time in the 125-year history of William Jewell College here, a woman is serving as a member of its board of trustees.

Mrs. Lavonne R. Rukin, president of the Industrial Fumigant Company, Kansas City, has been elected to a term to expire in 1976 on the board of the Southern Baptist school.

A native of Norfield, Miss., she is a graduate of Mississippi State College for Women, Columbus, Miss.

The Industrial Fumigant Company was organized in 1939 by Mrs. Rukin's late husband. The company has branches in Illinois, Oregon, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and Missouri, with a home office in Kansas City.

Besides Mrs. Rukin, 24 business, civic, education and church leaders of Missouri serve as members of the board of trustees of William Jewell College, Missouri's oldest four-year private college, founded by the Baptists of Missouri in 1849.

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CORRECTIONS

In 3rd graph, 2nd line of Baptist Press story mailed January 9 headlined "Texas Baptists Record 'Million Dollar Year'," change the line to read--Lottie Moon Christmas Offering-- (instead of Easter).

In 7th graph, 2nd line of Baptist Press story mailed January 9, headlined "FMB Hears Reports, Calls Special Meeting," change the line to read -- 3,133 personal interviews-- (instead of 1,133).

--Thanks
Baptist Press