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July 19, 1974

SBC President Urges New Evangelism Concepts

By James Lee Young

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (BP)--The president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) said here that interpreting new concepts of missions and attitudes of Christianity and evangelism around the world should be given more attention by western Christians - particularly Southern Baptists.

Attending the International Congress on World Evangelization here in the Palais de Beaulieu, Jaroy Weber, a Lubbock, Tex., pastor and recently elected president of the SBC, told Baptist Press that "Southern Baptists should step up their total mission and outreach worldwide" but said they "should be aware that other nations are now sending missionaries to our country."

Weber, a congress participant along with about 90 other persons who identified themselves as Southern Baptists, said, "The principle here--the congress seems to be saying--is that every body of believers (in Jesus Christ) has been given the Great Commission to go to the ends of the earth."

The SBC president said the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Boards are in the forefront of leading in the changing of attitudes toward evangelizing the rest of the world.

"They're trying to interpret the message for the rest of the constituency. It's a continual job and should be given priority in the total denominational structure."

He continued, "Sometimes when we read convention budget figures, it implies that evangelism isn't getting the priority it should."

Nevertheless, Evangelist Billy Graham, first in a series of congress speakers from all corners of the evangelical world, paid special notice to Southern Baptists, who, he said, are among the "more evangelical denominations showing a steady growth."

He noted, "It is true that old traditional denominations with theologically liberal tendencies are declining."

Graham told the multi-lingual congress, for which interpreters and electronic translating equipment have been provided, "The evangelistic cutting edge of the church of Jesus Christ worldwide is here to seek how we can work together to fulfill Christ's last commission as quickly and thoroughly as possible."

The world famous evangelist expressed the hope that congress participants would frame a "Biblical declaration on evangelism," saying the "time has come again for the evangelical world to speak with a strong, clear voice as to the Biblical definition of evangelism."

He challenged the World Council of Churches (WCC) assembly, set for next year in Jakarta, Indonesia, to "study such a statement carefully and prayerfully with the idea of adopting more evangelical concepts of evangelism and missions."

Emilio E. Castro, director of the WCC commission on missions and evangelism, Geneva, one of five WCC visitors to the congress, said the WCC would welcome such a statement from the congress and would hope to include it in the Jakarta meeting.

Reactions from Southern Baptists to the conference, were, on the whole, favorable.

C. B. (Bill) Hogue, director of evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, told Baptist Press he believed the congress was dealing with the central issues vital to a strong thrust of evangelism.

"One thing they are trying to do--something that few conferences have really tried to do--is to define 'evangelism,'" Hogue said.

Jack P. Lowndes, former president of the Home Mission Board's board of directors and a current member of the board, said the unique thing about the congress is the crossing of denominational lines with a major emphasis on evangelism.

"Obviously no one denomination--including Southern Baptists--will evangelize the world, said Lowndes, pastor of Memorial Baptist Church in Arlington, Va.

Weber recalled a statement by a conference program personality, R. Keith Parks, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board secretary for Southeast Asia who noted that every group, regardless of its size, location or whatever, has the same responsibility in the Kingdom of God--to evangelize.

"We shouldn't be appalled, then," Weber said, "when other countries begin sending missionaries to the United States."

Weber said, "Our attitude has been that (Americans) have the heathen world out beyond us and we have tried to penetrate it--in a limited fashion.

"Now we have to recognize that we're all part of the great population mass--in the United States and other parts of the world--which has rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"True evangelism," Weber said, "will reach out the hand of care. It includes political and social, but these will be secondary in their nature to the proclaiming of the gospel."

The congress, involving evangelical representatives from numerous nations and every continent, is intended, according to officials, to develop a strategy for worldwide evangelization.

To emphasize the point of how urgent the congress planning committee felt the matter of worldwide evangelism to be, a computer in the lobby of the Palais de Beaulieu ticked off the number of births in the world since the congress began. Also listed were the number of births since the last such congress in Berlin, 1966.

Southern Baptists, named as congress program personnel were Parks, W. Maxey Jarman of Nashville, also a member of the congress planning committee, and Kenneth L. Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church in Houston.

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Possible Baylor-Dallas
Baptist Merger Postponed

7/19/74

DALLAS (BP)--A proposed merger between debt-plagued Dallas Baptist College and Baylor University in Waco, Tex., has been postponed--for the immediate future, at least.

The executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas voted to continue financial and moral support of the school, but delayed any long-term recommendation until after an in-depth study.

Trustees of the financially troubled four-year college in southwest Dallas asked for merger with stronger and better financed Baylor University.

During two weeks of study, special committees from Baylor, the Texas Baptist Christian Education Commission, administrative committee and executive board have probed the problem.

The study of DEC has uncovered a debt of more than \$7.3 million, requiring debt service of \$433,000 every year "before a book can be bought or a teacher paid."

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William Cardin, a member of a three-man committee appointed by the executive board in 1971 to look into the financial woes of the college, said other problems include lack of an aggressive student recruitment program, failure to attract capital gifts, poor management and poor judgement on spending.

"This is the fifth time DBC has come before the executive board asking for special help," Cardin told board members, noting the "problems of DBC did not arise overnight and are not the result of one man, one group or one agency...."

"Until recent weeks, top management refused to admit the gravity of the situation. They now have no line of credit, no operating cash flow, their good will accounts are seriously overdrawn and their financial integrity is seriously questioned," he said.

The school's president Charles Pitts, resigned amid the deepening financial crisis in mid-June, prior to the request for merger by trustees.

The executive board pledged nearly \$600,000 to meet the financial crisis and gave "assurance that the Baptist General Convention of Texas will recognize a moral responsibility for the indebtedness of Dallas Baptist College."

Options discussed include merger with Baylor, merger with another Texas Baptist school and the "least desirable alternative" of closing down the school, selling the facilities and absorbing the deficit into the Texas Baptist budget.

Officials are watching enrollment with a wary eye. Projections indicate about 1,400 students will be present for the beginning of the fall semester in mid-August.

However, some say that if enrollment drops to the 1,000 mark or lower, the death knell has been sounded for the fledgling school, which has been in financial trouble since it moved from nearby Decatur, Tex., in 1965 to become a four-year college.

As the meeting ended, executive board members praised the school as an educational institution and pledged support, both moral and financial.

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Baptists Plan Latin American
Urban Evangelism Conference

7/19/74

RICHMOND (BP)--Seeking solutions to the worldwide challenge of reaching urban residents with the gospel of Jesus Christ is the goal of a Latin America-wide conference in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, August 13-20.

The conference on urban evangelism, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, will attract representatives from among national Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries in 16 countries and feature urban strategy experts on its program.

Pointing up the urgency of the conference topic, planners point out, are the current population figures for Latin America. Half of the population lives in urban areas of 20,000 or more residents; one fourth, in cities of 500,000 or more.

"We want this conference to be so dynamic that the representatives will leave with a wider vision and a deeper burden for the cities of Latin America," said J. Bryan Brasington, the Foreign Mission Board's field representative for northern Spanish South America and chairman of the steering committee for the conference. "We want the conference to be a 'how to' meeting."

"Many churches in Latin America are setting aside August 11 as a special day of prayer for the conference and for winning the cities for Christ," reported Brasington. "Many pastors will be preaching messages around the theme of winning the city."

A prayer rally is to be held that day on one of the hills overlooking Cali, Colombia. Brasington hopes Baptists in the States will join in prayer on August 11.

"The conference is, to some degree, a laboratory experience," said Donald R. Kammerdiener, the board's field representative for Southern Spanish South America. "It is hoped

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reports given concerning experiments in urban evangelism that have been tried will tell us the things that don't work, as well as the ones that do."

Representatives will come from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and from the Baptist Spanish Publishing House, El Paso, Tex., which is operated by the Foreign Mission Board.

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Stewardship Commission
Sets Budget, Elects Officers

7/19/74

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's Stewardship Commission, in annual session here, elected officers, approved a budget for 1974-75 and promoted a staff member.

Paul Cates, Lubbock, Tex., businessman, was re-elected to a second one-year term as chairman of the Stewardship Commission.

Commission members, who are elected as representatives from their state conventions by vote of the SBC, approved a 1974-75 budget of \$750,500. Approximately 25 per cent of the Commission budget, or \$185,000, will come through receipts from the Cooperative Program unified budget. The remainder comes primarily from sales and commission services. The commission also authorized the executive director-treasurer, A. R. Fagan, to request a Cooperative Program appropriation up to \$250,000 for the budget year, 1975-76.

Fred M. Chapman, who has been serving on the Stewardship Commission staff as associate director of endowment and capital giving promotion, was promoted to director of endowment and capital giving promotion, effective Oct. 1. This staff position has been vacant for over a year. Chapman joined the commission in January, 1971.

After hearing presentations on the 1973-74 SBC-wide Cooperative Program receipts, which were reported to be 13.22 per cent ahead of the same period for 1972-73, the commission commended the entire Stewardship Commission staff for their efforts in promoting effective church stewardship as a basis for continued growth of Cooperative Program giving.

Other officers elected were vice chairman, Charles McKay, professor of Bible at California Baptist College; secretary, Lyle Garlow, associate executive director, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma; chairman, Cooperative Program promotion committee Paul Faircloth, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Bladensburg, Md.; chairman, endowment and capital giving committee, Harry Bonner, executive secretary-treasurer of Northwest Baptist Foundation; and chairman, stewardship development committee, Dillard S. Miller, pastor, First Baptist Church, Mena, Ark.

The commission heard and accepted reports from each of the three program committees and set May 13, 1975, for its next meeting.

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