

November 16, 1958

Churches Said Growing Immature Christians

By Adon Taft

MIAMI, Fla.--(BP)--Spiritual babies who flout Supreme Court rulings on integration and approve legalized gambling are being bred in today's churches, the president of the Florida Baptist Convention charged here.

In a strongly-worded opening address to the convention at Miami's Central Baptist Church, Julius H. Avery, of Panama City, asserted that "a large percentage of our people do not manifest real Christian maturity in meeting the crucial problems of our world today.

"It is yet true that too many of us are more a part of the problems than of the Christian solution to the problems of this day."

Avery, pastor of Panama City's First Baptist Church, hailed the work of Baptist predecessors who led in establishing freedoms in this country. "We need to recognize that our traditional position has its logical correlation in the dignity and sanctity of human personality irrespective of race.

"Let us be consistent and champion this glorious truth all the way. . . . Think of the continuing stigma and reproach it would bring upon the cherished name of Baptists if even one of our churches should lend its buildings for a purpose which is designed to circumvent and counteract the interpretation of law by the highest court in our country!"

"Surely no Baptist church will so flout itself in the face of Romans 13:1-5," he told the nearly 1,000 messengers and visitors from most of the state's 1,200 Baptist churches.

"A genuine Christian response to the urgent needs of our fellow Baptists of the Negro race here in the homeland could go a long way towards developing that Christian maturity of character in both races which this crucial hour demands," he declared.

"It is nothing less than tragic when prejudice and the lack of brotherliness on the part of nominally Christian America can raise their monstrous heads in terrorism and vandalism at home and also play our nation's department of state for an enormous loss in its struggle with Communism for the minds of men among the many millions of colored peoples over the world," he added.

Speaking from the pulpit of the church threatened only two days earlier with a bombing because a Negro sailor worshiped there, Avery said, "The kind of example which too many here in our nation have been flinging out before the world on this question also constitutes a serious handicap to the struggling efforts of our few missionaries in many foreign countries."

"As Baptists," he said, "we must not allow ourselves to be pushed into a shameful negativism on the race question. We must rise up and give the position Christian answer."

And, he added, "several flagrant evils have become legitimate businesses in our society---legitimate in the sense of legality and general acceptance."

"Legalized gambling is big business in our land. The incalculable curse and scourge of alcoholic beverages is dressed up with attractive respectability across our land."

Avery said the Baptist approach to missions is inadequate, particularly because it fails to aim at winning key people in government and cultural posts.

He suggested a world Baptist university with a top faculty in every field to attract key young people from every land. Thus the future of the world could be influenced with the message of freedom inherent in Baptist doctrines, according

to Avery.

Avery's address was followed by one from Rep. Brooks Hays, of Arkansas, who is president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Hays urged pastors to stand by their consciences on the race question, even if it cost them their jobs as his stand cost him re-election recently in Arkansas after 16 years in Congress.

Then he reviewed his visit to Russia and asked patient prayer for the beleaguered Baptists of that land.

Carl Howell, pastor of Murray Hill Baptist Church in Jacksonville, was elected president-designate of the convention. Hal Hunter of Crestview was elected president of the Baptist Pastors Conference. Lindsey Boyd of Jacksonville was elected president of the Baptist Religious Educators Association.

The convention voted to establish an old folks' home. Sites at Vero Beach and Tampa have been offered and will be considered by a committee to be set up to inaugurate the institution.

The messengers adopted an operating budget of \$2,050,000, with half of the amount going for state causes and the other for Southern Baptists Convention-wide enterprises.

They also voted to build a new \$400,000 State Convention office building in Jacksonville.

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Maryland Calls Hays
Christian Statesman

HAGERSTOWN, Md.--(BP)--The Maryland Baptist Union Association, in annual session here, sent a message to Rep. Brooks Hays (D., Ark.) commending him for his "Christian statesmanship."

Hays, whose Congressional district includes Little Rock, lost to a "write-in" independent candidate who filed against him as a political opponent just a week before the November general election. He is president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

It marked the first defeat for Hays after 16 years in the House of Representatives from that district.

The Maryland association also received the report of its state Christian life commission which commented on Hays's defeat thusly:

"Racial prejudice on last election day impaled to a political gibbet one of the Christian statesmen on Capitol Hill. The Honorable Brooks Hays, beloved president of our (Southern Baptist) Convention, fell victim to the bigotry of men. It is still evident that men prefer Barabbas instead of Christ."

The association appointed a committee to continue for a third year a study of the association's constitution and bylaws.

Convention leaders said that the existing constitution and bylaws have not kept pace with the changes in the organization of the association and with the policies of its board of missions. The existing constitution and bylaws do not clearly define some of the responsibilities of the board and other convention agencies, they said.

Maryland Baptist Union Association voted to adopt a 1959 Cooperative Program budget of \$360,000 for state and Southern Baptist objectives. However, the goal for the year was set at \$400,000.

Brotherhood and Royal Ambassador work will be elevated to department status during the next year. Allen J. Beck serves both as treasurer of the association and leader of Brotherhood and RA work.

Elmer F. Ruark, Salisbury, Md., layman, was reelected association moderator.

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The next session of the association will be Nov. 9-11, 1959 in Baltimore.

In other business transacted Maryland association:

Called upon district associations of churches and local churches to work for changes of law, where necessary, to prohibit sale of alcoholic beverages on Sunday, and within 100 yards of churches or public schools.

Heard Norman W. Cox, Nashville, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission say: "Our basic Baptist distinctive is redeemed personality ministering under the lordship of Jesus Christ. All other Baptist distinctives are derivatives of this inclusive statement."

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Huggins To Retire In North Carolina

DURHAM, N. C.--(BP)--Dr. M. A. Huggins, general secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, has announced he will retire next June 30. He has held that office since 1932.

One of the oldest of Southern Baptist "state secretaries" in years of service, Dr. Huggins said he was 68 years old. Employees of the state's general board have a mandatory retirement age of 68.

Dr. Huggins, employed directly by the convention, was not subject to mandatory retirement, but decided to retire at this time voluntarily.

The retirement was, in effect, announced during the annual session of the state convention here. When C. C. Warren of Charlotte, N. C., past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, stood to renominate Dr. Huggins, he said "The man I am about to nominate will not likely serve out his term of office."

Dr. Huggins later spoke to the convention about his retirement plans.

The state convention appointed an 11-member nominating committee to seek a successor to Dr. Huggins. The nominating committee chairman is Clyde Baucom, pastor, First Baptist Church, Wilson, N. C.

A special mid-year session of the state convention had already been scheduled in Greensboro, N. C., May 5-6 to consider recommendations of another committee for long-range convention plans over the next several decades.

The nominating committee will also make its report to the convention in this special session.

Dr. Huggins was born near Dillon, S. C., and is a graduate of Wake Forest College, an institution of the North Carolina convention. He was secretary of education for the convention from 1924-29 and taught at Meredith College in Raleigh, another convention school, from 1929 until his election to the general secretaryship.

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Tarhell Conventioneers Commend Brooks Hays

DURHAM, N. C.--(BP)--Congressman Brooks Hays received a telegram of commendation from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina meeting here and one of the convention speakers lauded him in an address.

Hays, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was defeated for re-election to Congress by a write-in campaign in Little Rock recently.

The telegram said:

"Your wise and courageous Christian leadership is appreciated. Men like you are needed if we are to reach a Christian solution to the complex problems facing America and the world today."

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In an address to the convention, R. W. Kicklighter, pastor, Blackwell Memorial Baptist Church, Elizabeth City, N.C., declared:

"A Christian statesman suffered defeat and Congress was deprived of one of its most valuable members because he attempted, with Christian concern, to mediate the tragic impasse which developed at Little Rock."

The Baptist state convention adopted a \$3,600,000 budget for 1959 but set a slightly higher goal for giving of \$4,200,000.

It re-elected A. Leroy Parker, pastor, Asheboro St. Baptist Church, Greensboro, convention president, and voted to meet in Greensboro in regular session Nov. 10-12, 1959.

The convention will also hold a special session in Greensboro next May.

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South Carolina Wants Minister Immunity Law

GREENVILLE, S. C.--(BP)--South Carolina Baptists, with a record messenger registration at their annual convention, discussed a possible convention-related college in Charleston. They voted also to seek legislation protecting confidences given to ministers during counselling.

The State Convention of the Baptist Denomination in South Carolina, meeting with First Baptist Church here, enrolled 1804 messengers and 377 visitors also registered.

Inspiration highlight of the convention was an evangelistic address by Billy Graham, who spoke on the closing day. Graham's address was carried by radio and television stations in the city.

The convention approved an effort by Baptists in the Charleston area to raise \$500,000 and provide a site for a convention-related junior college there. The college would be an affiliate of Furman University here, the convention's only senior college. It already operates two junior colleges.

The convention said that Charleston area Baptists would have to raise the necessary half-million dollars and provide a site before the convention would consider establishing the college.

The convention further asked the South Carolina legislature to enact a law protecting ministers in confidences they receive while giving spiritual counsel. It would protect the ministers from having to divulge confidences in state courts.

The action was the apparent outgrowth of concern several months ago when a Tennessee Baptist minister was held in contempt of court. He refused to divulge confidences received while counselling parties in a divorce suit. It was pointed out then that few states protect confidences given ministers.

The convention adopted a \$3,200,000 budget for 1959 and elected John L. Slaughter, pastor, First Baptist Church, Spartanburg, president. It voted to meet in Columbia Nov. 10-12, 1959.

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Mississippi Elects Two Laymen Leaders

JACKSON, Miss.--(BP)--Mississippi Baptist Convention, apparently for the first time in its history, has elected laymen as both president and first vice-president.

M. F. Rayburn, Meridian, was elected president and Cooper Walton, Jackson, was elected first vice-president.

The convention, however, has a policy of alternating between ministers and

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laymen in the president's office.

At its annual session here, the convention also adopted a record \$2,275,000 budget for 1959 of which \$780,000 goes to Southern Baptist Convention activities.

It authorized Mississippi College, Clinton, a convention-related senior college, to conduct a \$500,000 campaign for individual gifts. Money would be used for endowment and for constructing and equipping new buildings.

It further authorized the construction of new state Baptist office building on property purchased two years ago. The new state office building will be located one block from the present offices, also on the state capitol square. No further construction details were announced.

Announcement was made of a \$50,000 gift from a Jackson Baptist family ---the Leland Speeds---toward library construction at Mississippi College. Speed is a former mayor of this city.

The convention, which meets in Jackson each year, set Nov. 10-12 as dates for its 1959 session.

It took no action, nor did any of its affiliated organizations, toward the recent defeat of Southern Baptist Convention President Brooks Hays of Little Rock.

A small group calling themselves "Baptist laymen of Mississippi" asked Hays to resign Convention presidency. Convention leaders said this organization bears no relation to the state or Southern Convention.

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Louisianans Approve Organization Report

SHREVEPORT, La.--(BP)--Louisiana Baptist Convention at its session here adopted the report of its executive board which recommended definition of convention work and responsibilities of its boards and agencies.

The executive board recommendations were based on a survey conducted by Booz, Allen, and Hamilton, professional management consultants from Chicago.

The recommendations clarified and strengthened the administrative position of the executive secretary, outlined duties of employees of Baptist boards and agencies in the state, and covered relations of the convention to its boards and agencies.

These were designed to improve the organizational efficiency of the convention, leaders said.

The Louisiana convention elected Paul Roberts, pastor, First Baptist Church, Lake Charles, president. It elected the first layman in a number of years to high convention office when it selected H. C. Abbott, Shreveport clothing firm executive, first vice-president.

It adopted a 1959 budget of \$2-1/2 million of which one-third will be distributed to work supported through the Southern Baptist Convention portion of the Cooperative Program.

Bids were opened for a new state office building in Alexandria, expected to cost over \$1 million. The contract was to be let a few days after the convention closed.

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