



PROGRESS REPORT

Baptist JUBILEE ADVANCE

EVERY BAPTIST WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

SPONSORING CONVENTIONS

American Baptist Convention
Baptist Federation of Canada
Baptist General Conference of America
National Baptist Convention of America
National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc.
North American Baptist General Conference
Southern Baptist Convention

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 3, 1958

Rivalry and "scorn of any brethren" will not be tolerated among the seven Baptist bodies of North America that are taking part in the Baptist Jubilee Advance.

This was said in a history-making 500-word statement adopted unanimously by the Baptist Jubilee Advance committee meeting in Oak Park, Illinois, February 27 and 28.

"Unhappy tensions" that have marred relationships were faced squarely. It was stated that "it is a most hopeful and healing sign that this fact is frankly acknowledged by representatives of bodies cooperating in the Baptist Jubilee Advance. This very sense of regret and of charitable resolve to build bridges of communication and understanding augurs well for results from the Baptist Jubilee Advance program which shall partake of the true character of Christ's Kingdom of light and love and power."

The committee provided for the chairmanship to rotate among the participating denominations. The Rev. Dr. Casper C. Warren, Charlotte, North Carolina, will continue as chairman until September.

Prayer meetings in 75,000 Baptist churches in the United States and Canada, on December 31, 1958, will inaugurate the Advance. Prayers for the Advance will be offered in Baptist churches on June 1, 1959, according to the Rev. Dr. Leonard Sanderson, Ft. Worth, Texas, chairman of the committee planning the emphasis on evangelism in 1959-1960.

Faculties and student bodies on college and university campuses will be included in the evangelism program, the Rev. Dr. Jitsuo Morikawa, New York, New York, American Baptist director of evangelism, told the committee at its Oak Park meeting.

Thirteen television programs will be another part of the effort to evangelize America in 1959. The programs will start on January 4, 1959 on stations throughout North America. They are being produced under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Paul Stevens, Fort Worth, Texas, director of radio and television for the Southern Baptist Convention.

Posters, leaflets, and publicity through the Baptist press and the secular press will give additional support to the Advance.

The committee adopted a statement of objectives for the Advance. It declared, in the first of six objectives, that the Baptists of North America propose "to win through compassionate and concerned witness.....a great host of people, at home and beyond the seas." This statement was written by the Rev. Dr. Thomas B. McDormand, general secretary of the Baptist Federation of Canada.

STATEMENT ON BAPTIST RELATIONSHIPS

(Adopted February 28, 1958, by the Baptist Jubilee Advance Committee, meeting in Oak Park, Illinois.)

Seven North American Baptist bodies, differing conscientiously in some areas of polity and practice, have banded themselves together in the Baptist Jubilee Advance for the purpose of fellowship, mutual aid, shared objectives, and a common passion for the redemption of men through the proclamation of the Gospel.

In this Baptist Jubilee Advance each cooperating unit desires and prays for the strengthening and advance of brother Baptists of other bodies and areas. None desires to grow at the expense of others, none believes it has a right to say to another, "We must increase and you should decrease."

Each believes that "where one member of the body rejoices, all the members rejoice with it." Each believes that Baptist advance in North America should be an advance on every Convention and Conference front. Each cooperating unit will use its distinctive organization and its particular methods and resources. Each will strive for the enlargement of its particular fellowship in the faith. But this spirit-prompted ambition will not tolerate scorn of any brethren, nor that type of rivalry which flouts the principles of brotherhood in order to resort to tactics of predatory warfare.

It cannot be denied that unhappy tensions have, at times, marred relationships amongst Baptist bodies in North America, even when these bodies have affirmed their oneness in things essential, and their membership in one great world family of Baptists. Neither can it be denied that at times one or another body has appeared to ignore the rights, feelings and best interests of fellow Baptists, even though such practice has at times resulted from preoccupation with unilateral concerns.

It is a most hopeful and healing sign that this fact is frankly acknowledged by representatives of bodies cooperating in the Baptist Jubilee Advance. This very sense of regret and of charitable resolve to build bridges of communication and understanding augurs well for results from the Baptist Jubilee Advance program which shall partake of the true character of Christ's Kingdom of light and love and power.

Members of the various Baptist Jubilee Advance committees are of one mind in the conviction that all North American Baptists need a deepening of devotion to Jesus Christ,

a quickening of evangelistic zeal, a worthier level of stewardship, a more vital and fruitful church life. To advance together in these areas of humbling challenge is our earnest hope. To establish many needed Baptist churches in all parts of this continent and its growing population and its multitudes of people outside the fold of Christ is the responsibility of all bodies united for fellowship in action within the Baptist Jubilee Advance. Not as competitors, but as compatriots; not in fear of one another, but with deeper faith in Another; not with jealousy but with shared joy, Baptists of North America should march forward toward a nobler destiny.

Within the wide liberties of the children of God, and in the clear light of the Spirit who guides us into all truth, and gives us every valid victory, we of the Baptist Jubilee Advance go forward, certain that our labours together in the Advance program will do much to strengthen our unity and our witness, to resolve our differences, to clear away the misunderstandings which stand in the way of our finest advance to the glory of Christ in this fateful generation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE BAPTIST JUBILEE ADVANCE

(Adopted February 28, 1958, at Oak Park, Illinois, by the BJA committee)

Seven Baptist conventions of North America unite in a cooperative Jubilee Advance inspired by a common interest in observing the 150th anniversary of organized Baptist work in this continent, and moved by a mutually-felt, Spirit-led purpose:

1. To win through compassionate and concerned witness to Jesus Christ a great host of people, at home and beyond the seas, who have not, as yet, experienced a saving faith in Him as their personal Lord and Saviour, Redeemer and Friend.
2. To interpret the supreme Lordship of Jesus Christ in reference to the opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges of Christians in these days of destiny, and in reference to the nature and functioning of His Church.
3. To make the Bible a vital reality as the sufficient, constantly-renewed rule of faith and practice for Baptist churches and people as they witness to Jesus Christ in every relationship of life.
4. To make clear to our own people, and to others, the nature and abiding relevance and authority of our historic Baptist principles, and to indicate why and how they must be creatively and courageously expressed in these times by and through Baptist individuals and churches.
5. To build our Baptist churches into genuine communities of the redeemed, nurturing young and old in Christian growth and fruitfulness, and manifesting to all the world the beauty and strength of Christian love and unity as marking the life of the people of God.
6. To cultivate the spirit of fellowship and interdependence amongst Baptists of the North American continent in this fateful hour of history, to the end that they may enrich and supplement each other in joint efforts for the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom, the enrichment of the Baptist cause, and the strengthening of all cooperating Baptist bodies for a greater work, witness, and advance in their respective spheres of responsibility and opportunity at home and abroad.