



Christian Life Bulletin

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News of The Commission and Its Work

A conference on the aging sponsored by the Christian Life Commission was held at the Nashville offices on April 4. The purpose of this conference was to emphasize the need for further study of this growing opportunity of service and the importance of keeping a broad perspective in planning our strategy and approach to this new area of work. Dr. H. C. Brearley of Peabody College brought an address on the subject which will be published in the May issue of *The Baptist Program*. Other facts about the conference and the picture story of it will be shown in that magazine.

The Advisory Council of Southern Baptists met at Nashville March 5 and 6. This Council is composed of representatives chosen by the agencies of the Convention to coordinate the work with Negro Baptists. Special and timely addresses were brought by Dr. Baker James Cauthen of the Foreign Mission Board, Dr. Orin Cornett of the Education Commission, and Dr. T. B. Maston of the Southwestern Baptist Seminary. The report of W. B. Grigg, chairman of the committee on Ministerial Education, was received with its recommendations for advancement in this work. Other progress reports were presented and well received. The Council will hold its next meeting at Nashville on February 25 and 26, 1957.

Dr. Willis J. Ray invited us to participate in the World Missions Conference held at Phoenix, Arizona, March 12-14. It was encouraging to have this opportunity to report on the work of our Commission in its relationship to the acceptance of our witness on home and foreign fields.

At Southwestern Seminary on March 1 and 2 we presented the work of our Commission to large classes of alert and interested students in the classes of Dr. T. B. Maston and C. W. Scudder. At the invitation of President J. Howard Williams we conducted chapel worship on March 2.

At Southeastern Seminary on April 10 and 11 we discussed the work of our Convention through the Christian Life Commission with the very fine classes of Dr. Olin T. Binkley and Garland Hendricks. President Stealey extended to us the courtesy and opportunity of the chapel hour on April 10. In the afternoon and evening of this day we attended organizational meetings and conferences at Raleigh held for the purpose of establishing a Raleigh Chapter of the Protestants and Other Americans United. The Executive Director of this national organization, Dr. Glenn Archer, addressed these meetings. He spoke in chapel at Southeastern Seminary the next day. His address aroused interest in the formation of a POAU Chapter for that campus.

A Christian Life Conference was sponsored by the First Baptist Church of San Marcos, Texas, on March 5-9 under the direction of the pastor, Prentiss Chunn, and with the cooperation of Dr. Foy Valentine, director of the Christian Life Commission of Texas. Four discussion groups were held each evening. Dr. C. W. Scudder of the faculty of Southwestern Seminary led the group on "Christian Citizenship." Dr. Foy Valentine was in charge of the group on "Marriage and the Family." Dr. John Davidson, from the ministerial staff of the First Church of Austin, directed the group on "Race Relations." The writer led the group on "The Christian and His Daily Work." Dr. Herbert Howard, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church of Dallas, brought the sermon each evening at the close of the discussion periods.

A Counseling Clinic will be held at Nashville on October 1 and 2 of this year. It is being sponsored by a joint committee named by representatives of the various Convention agencies that have need of this ministry in their work. This committee is composed of Joe W. Burton, Wayne Oates, S. F. Dowis, Orin Cornett, and A. C. Miller. The full program will soon be released through Baptist Press. It will be carried in the May issue of the *Christian Life Bulletin* if we have space for it.

Report of Christian Life Commission Released for Publication

The full report of the Christian Life Commission to be presented to the Southern Baptist Convention in its meeting at Kansas City has been released to all of our state denominational papers. All of us understand that the faithful editors of these publications receive more material from Convention agencies than they can possibly use. We can hardly expect them to publish this report in full, although they are at liberty to use it all or any part of it.

Since we have had some inquiries about what our report will say on the current racial question, we have sent to the papers a shorter release giving the total section on this issue from our report as it will appear in the Book of Reports. We will not initiate any recommendations on this subject at this meeting of the Convention.

The section of our report on the racial issue is as follows:

"On a sundial in Brighton are the words, 'It is always morning somewhere in the world.' This is the word for us today. Throughout the world conditions in human affairs are as unpromising as darkness and as ominous as the grave. But God still lives. Even now it is morning somewhere and after a while it will be morning everywhere.

"A World in Conflict

"It is nothing new for us to say that we live in a world in conflict. Some call it simply a world in change. Others describe it as a world disintegrating. But regardless of what may be our viewpoint, we are in the midst of a great awakening among the peoples. Can it be that God is preparing the ground for his ultimate triumph in the evangelization of the world? If so, He must not be hindered by political expediency nor by the racial exclusiveness of those who follow him. He does not promise us there will be no conflicts, but he does promise us the power to overcome them and a peace that will sustain us in the struggle.

"The reason for these surging movements throughout the world is unique and challenging. For many centuries of human history the struggle was for material possessions—nations fought for wealth and a place in the sun. While that struggle still continues in some parts of the world, the major conflicts of our century are caused by long submerged peoples fighting for their recognition as persons and their inherent freedoms. The

major cause for their awakening is the spread of the gospel over the earth. Wherever the Christian gospel has been preached it has awakened in the people a sense of their dignity and worth and has set them straining at the shackles of their bondage.

"The Courage of Prudence

"In view of our responsibility as a major group of world Christians we must be mature enough in our faith and strong enough in our fellowship to face with forthright sincerity the issues among us that vitally affect our gospel witness at home and around the world. There is no reason for us to avoid these issues or couch them in evasive language or sentimental speech. The hard realities of our present situation demand honesty, integrity and a humble sense of responsibility. Our tragic situation calls for courage, but it should be the courage of prudence and of intelligent conviction.

"With such courage and conviction we must face the present controversy in our relations with the Negro people. On this issue we are divided in opinion but let us not be divided in fellowship. No one person or group has the wisdom to lead us to a solution of the difficult situation that has developed. Only God in his infinite love and patience can do that. The times call for prayer and deep humility. They call us to repentance toward God and to confessions for hate and hasty words toward our fellowman.

"The times call us none the less to meet this issue as Christians should. We must meet it with facts and scriptural truth. We must recognize the fact that the problem of race relations in America is rooted deeply in our history and is the product of a series of tragic social experiences that have left their marks on both our groups.

"These deep rooted social attitudes do not easily die. In some areas there can be no quick solution. And those who hope to achieve a peaceful adjustment must gird themselves with patience. The white man should seek to subdue the pride of his old mastery, the Negro the pride of his new achievement.

"The Christian cannot stop at the point of law. He is motivated by love and grace. In spite of all the hate that has been shown and the hasty words that have been spoken Christian people must move into this controversy to accomplish friendly and mutually helpful adjustments."

An Appeal For A Christian Spirit In Race Relations

Southern Baptists and Negro Baptist constitute the largest Christian groups in the South. The consequences of failure to find a Christian solution to the problems of tension in race relations will rest more heavily upon these groups than others. In view of the many influences that are contributing to an emotional approach to these problems, it becomes urgently imperative that Christians consider them calmly and on the basis of Christian teachings.

In response to a request from the Advisory Council for Work with Negroes—a group of workers serving with various agencies in Southern Baptist life—we have been given the opportunity to express our personal convictions about this matter.

We are speaking as individuals, desiring to witness for Christ, and have no thought of speaking for Southern Baptists or for any church or agency affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

We appeal to our Baptist brethren, white and Negro, and to other Christian friends, to give careful consideration to the following statement of principles, setting forth, we believe, the truth of the Bible and offered in the spirit of good will and Christian love:

1. God created man in his own image. Therefore, every man possesses infinite worth and should be treated with respect as a person.
2. Christ died for all men. Therefore, the Christian view of man, every man, must reflect the spirit of the cross.
3. God is no respecter of persons. Therefore, prejudice against persons or mistreatment of persons on the grounds of race is contrary to the will of God.
4. Christ said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Therefore, Christians are obligated to manifest active good will toward all people and to help them to achieve their fullest potentialities as persons.
5. Christian love, as exemplified by Christ, is the supreme law for all human relations. Therefore, Christians have the assurance that such love, conscientiously practiced, will resolve tensions and bring harmony and good will in race relations.
6. All true Christians are brothers in Christ and children of God. Therefore, they are obligated to cultivate prayerful concern for one another and to show confidence in one another.
7. Every person is accountable to God. Therefore, the right of individual opinion, tested by the teachings of Christ, and of freedom to express it, always in the spirit of Christian love, should be granted to all and respected by all.

We commit ourselves to seek new insights as to our Christian duty and to seek more grace in manifesting Christian love toward all men. We earnestly appeal to others to join with us in making this commitment and in the resolve to pray unceasingly that the Spirit of God will help us to create a fellowship that will be a witness for Christ to all peoples and all races around the world.

Signed:

THEODORE F. ADAMS, pastor, First Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, and president, Baptist World Alliance.

OLIN T. BINKLEY, professor of Christian sociology and ethics, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C.

WALTER POPE BINNS, president, William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri.

R. PAUL CAUDILL, pastor, First Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee.

BAKER JAMES CAUTHEN, executive secretary, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Virginia.

C. C. WARREN, president, Southern Baptist Convention, Charlotte, N. C.

R. ORIN CORNETT, executive secretary, Southern Baptist Education Commission, Nashville, Tennessee.

H. LEO EDDLEMAN, president, Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky.

HAROLD K. GRAVES, president, Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, Berkeley, California.

J. D. GREY, pastor, First Baptist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana.

RALPH A. HERRING, pastor, First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

H. H. HOBBS, pastor, First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

MISS ALMA HUNT, executive secretary, Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to SBC, Birmingham, Alabama.

C. O. JOHNSON, pastor, Third Baptist Church, St. Louis, Missouri.

MISS EMILY K. LANSDELL, president, Carver School of Missions and Social Work, Louisville, Kentucky.

DUKE K. MCCALL, president, Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

ROY O. MCCLAIN, pastor, First Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia.

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H. GUY MOORE, pastor, Broadway Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

LOUIE D. NEWTON, pastor, Druid Hills Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia.

W. R. PETTIGREW, pastor, Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky.

COURTS REDFORD, executive secretary, Home Mission Board of SBC, Atlanta, Georgia.

HOWARD M. REAVES, pastor, First Baptist Church, Mobile, Alabama.

PORTER ROUTH, executive secretary, Southern Baptist Executive Committee, Nashville, Tennessee.

GEORGE W. SCHROEDER, executive secretary, Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, Memphis, Tennessee.

S. L. STEALEY, president, Southeastern Baptist Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina.

W. R. WHITE, president, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

J. HOWARD WILLIAMS, president, Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

We Need More Light Than Heat

In our discussions of race relations we usually generate more heat than light. In fact some of our citizens seem to be averse to turning on the light. They prefer to "turn on the heat." They try to deny their pastor or any one else the right to express himself on this issue but they insist on spreading false information on this question while encouraging defiance to the law of the land.

Light From The Bible

The distinctions many refer to in the Old Testament in passages to "prove" that the Bible teaches segregation are based on tribal and national groups with differences in language and religion without reference to physical traits. The "curse on Ham myth" is simply a hoax. No reference to it is found anywhere in the Bible. Noah put his curse on one of the four sons of Ham whose name was Canaan (Genesis 9:25-27). Canaan and his descendants lived in Palestine and not in Africa (Genesis 10:15-20).

In the New Testament the distinctions referred to and often quoted in support of segregation grow out of differences in religion and national culture; but such differences were not made a basis of division in the fellowship of the early churches (I Corinthians 12:12, 13; Galatians 3:27, 28; et al).

Light From History

The word "race" is of uncertain origin. As it relates to distinctions among mankind it is not found in any language until the sixteenth century.

It was not until the 19th century that ideas about race, as we use the word, were formulated. Joseph Arthur Gobineau¹, a French count and

diplomat, published a book on *The Inequality of the Human Races* in 1853-55 in an attempt to prove the supremacy of Nordic (Caucasian) peoples and to justify the subjugation and slavery of less advanced peoples. Houston Steward Chamberlain² (1855-1914), born in England, educated in France, and who later became a German citizen, wrote a book based on Gobineau's called *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899).

Arguments based on the idea of racial inferiority in Gobineau's book were used to justify slavery in the United States and to forge the chains of mental and social slavery under the system of legal segregation. Together with the teachings of the German philosopher Nietzsche, Chamberlain's ideas glorifying the Teuton as the master race laid the foundations for World War I. His ideas were used by Hitler and the Nationalist Socialists of Germany and accounted for the letting of more American blood in World War II. And these are the very same ideas heard today about the Negro people.

The dark pity of this is that both of these books were spawned by a renegade French count and an exiled Briton out of their fertile imaginations and cannot be substantiated by the findings of science³ or the teachings of the Bible.

A lot of good people in our Southland have allowed themselves to be pulled into some very sorry company. The question calls for more light and more courage. Our silence will only spread darkness over the earth.—A. C. Miller

¹The Columbia Encyclopedia, 2nd Ed., p. 787.

²Ibid, p. 354.

³"Races of Men," World Book Encyclopedia, Vol. XIV, pp. 6732-34.

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