

Work Being Done By Baptist
in Maryland

The Aim and Method

DELIVERED AT THE

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND



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Brother President, Brethren of the United Baptist Ministers' Conference of Baltimore and Vicinity, and our White Baptist Brethren:

You will, I beg, regard my appearance here this afternoon as an expression of the interest I feel in this and all other kindred institutions. I shall be glad, if able, to say one word that will contribute to the interest of this occasion. I have spent a little after accepting your invitation to address the colored and white Baptists and attempt to discuss this all important subject, Work Being Done by Baptists in Maryland, The Aim and Method.

I wish to state first of all, that there is no information more helpful and inspiring to the people of our groups than to have a knowledge of the accomplishments of our denomination here in Maryland. However, I think it will be quite helpful at this time for us to refer to the legacies of the past, which we will admit, have made the present rich and strong for us. Baptists have no extensive ecclesiastical appliances for gathering statistics and the figures do not show our full strength. However incomplete they may be, they are, nevertheless, very gratifying.

It has been stated by the Baptist Year Book that in the year of 1918 the total number of Baptists in the world was 8,070,762. Baptists of the world had increased at that time 8,000 per cent in 125 years, and they number one twentieth of the Christian population of the earth.

The year book for 1917 gives us in the United States 57,734 churches, 43,911 ministers and 6,534,132 members. We are second to the Methodists with 7,608,284 members and every one in our figures as Baptists, represents a person who has reached the age of accountability. Our ministers exceed those of the Methodists by 2,111.

Presbyterians number 2,171,601; Lutherans, 2,455,334; Episcopalians, 1,078,435; Disciples of Christ, 1,337,450; Church of Christ Scientists, 85,096; Unitarians, 71,110. Excepting the Methodists, Baptists outnumber any three denominations in the United States. From 1850 to 1900 the population of this country increased three and a half times while the Baptists increased almost six times. Figures released by the Census Bureau, May 2, 1918, give for the Baptists in the United States 7,256,650.

The stronghold of Baptists is the South. There the white members number 2,844,301 and the colored 2,150,929. Their growth has been rapid. In fifteen years Southern white Baptists increased sixty-one per cent in membership, twenty-eight per cent in churches, one hundred and five per cent in baptisms, three hundred and fifty-three per cent in contributions to missions and three hundred and thirty-three per cent in total contributions.

In the year of 1818 a colored Baptist preacher, whose name is forgotten, but whose labors are remembered, came to Baltimore and preached about a year to a few Baptists in a private house on Potter Street, near Fayette. However, he did not organize a church. At this time the race was in slavery, and occasionally a meeting was held in some private house.

There were only a few colored Baptists to be found. In 1834 a Mr. William Crane came here from Richmond, Va., and made a special effort to gather them into a distinct body so as to enable them to extend the truth among the large numbers of their kindred dwelling among them. He advised Moses Clayton, a former slave, who had come here from Norfolk, Va., to make an effort in this direction.

Clayton had learned to read and write and could speak with some fluency. His piety and earnestness had a reward so far that he gathered in some eight or ten believers, formed a church and was ordained as pastor. This marks the first colored Baptist church in Baltimore, Md. It was organized February 20, 1836, with the assis-

tance of the ministers of the First Church, Second Church and High Street Baptist Church, white. Today the First Colored Baptist Church stands at Caroline and McElderry Streets, with a membership of about 2,000.

Following this, the denomination has been increasing by leaps and bounds, until today it is represented in Maryland by more than 75 Baptist churches, 40,000 members and over 50 local missionary ministers of the gospel. The colored Baptists in this State own and control about \$1,231,000 worth of church property.

A number of our churches have been built without the aid and co-operation of our white Baptist brethren who are entitled to much consideration. Among the churches built by our own brethren are Shiloh, Mt. Sinai, Faith, Bethlehem, Metropolitan, Morning Star, Mt. Ararat, Fulton, Unity No. 1, Unity No. 2, Mt. Calvary, Wayland, Mt. Joy, Israel No. 1, Israel No. 2, and others that time will not allow us to mention. These churches may be considered the unfortunate, but, however, they have wrought well. We thank God for the aid of the white brethren that was given in laying the foundation on which some of our great churches are built.

The white Baptists of the Maryland Baptist Union Association are entitled to the honor of giving money and lending money on so many occasions to the following churches: First, Macedonia, Perkins Square, Sharon, Calvary, Union, Trinity, Psalmist, Leadenhall, Antioch, Enon and no doubt many others.

Therefore, these churches cannot write a complete history without giving credit to the Association and honor to the Rev. George F. Adams, D. D., Rev. R. Fuller, Rev. S. P. Hill, Mr. A. Sterling and others for their help. The minutes show that from 1909 to 1924 there was an outstanding amount of more than \$3,000 or \$4,000. The name of this Association shall live when burning worlds

and fading stars shall melt away into the vaults of eternity.

The denomination is wonderfully progressing. We have in our city and state men who are creditable to the Baptist family and also to our race. Work among the young folks of our churches has been very inspiring, intellectual and worth while. During the past year a Bible Institute was held here by Dr. S. N. Vass, A. M., D. D., a national character who has been an efficient Bible teacher for over 35 years. The meetings were well attended by Sunday School and Baptist young people workers throughout the city and state. Much knowledge was derived therefrom. Meetings of this kind should be held more frequently in this city and state for the purpose of strengthening and spreading Christian influence.

The aim of the Baptists is to have better spiritual conditions in our churches, to put more life into our prayer meetings, to encourage every man who has a small congregation and is struggling for the advancement for the kingdom of Christ. We propose to evangelize this entire state by exalting the names of Jesus Christ. We do fervently believe what He said in John 12:32. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me."

We are endeavoring to put a good man on the field whose duty will be to encourage the work, find out the real conditions and report the same to our board. It is the aim of the denomination to have a journal through which we can speak on all occasions in our behalf and defense. It is in our minds to have a regular Baptist year books, which will take in all the Baptist churches and their locations in order that no preacher will be without knowledge as to the location of our brethren.

We are striving to have one united Baptist convention in the State of Maryland which will represent all the Baptists in the State; also a record of names and addresses of all the Baptist ministers. It is the aim of the

Baptists to establish a printing office for the denomination, where we may be able to employ some of our boys and girls who are coming out of school year after year.

We also intend to secure a large farm in Maryland improved by one or two buildings, where we can send our boys and girls rather than see them go to Cheltenham. It is our object to maintain an Old Folks' Home in Baltimore. Especially do we aim to make the spiritual and numerical strength of our denomination felt in and throughout the city and state. We further propose to have in Maryland a Baptist Association that will work in conjunction with the Convention. We shall strive to elect a man in whom we can confide, to represent us in all civic affairs.

Our aim is to use our best influence to avoid so many splits in our churches and to use precaution as to how we give our support to any man or set of men who attempt, because of their ambition, to separate and break up the peace and harmony of any Christian church. We should have a better understanding about members moving from one church to another without letters of recommendation. But in these days of greed for additions to the numerical strength of churches, many have left the old practice of Baptist churches, and have admitted to their churches for membership any and all who may chance to come to them; even though they come from a sister church without letters of recommendation and dismissal. All of this we are striving to overcome.

We aim to promote the general welfare and progress of the Negro race, to develop and strengthen the work of the denomination throughout the State of Maryland, and to promote institutes and other means for the training of workers in religious education and other forms of Christian service.

Our attention is called to the value and importance of our rural population and rural churches. Nothing as much as these has influenced the world for good. But

They will need your close, wise, and sympathetic advice. Wherever there ought to be a church of any kind, it should be a Baptist Church. I feel that our pastors living in the city and having rural churches so close to their access should count it a joy to go with their congregations periodically on Sunday afternoons and strengthen these churches by their presence, service and contributions.

The Ministers' Conference of Baltimore and vicinity should take upon itself the exclusive task of directing the construction of a home for its old, retired ministers who have given their lives and time for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ. This is an urgent necessity, for it is a reflection on the Baptists in this State to work to death on inadequate salaries their ministers and then discharge them to die without a home or an income.

Despite the fact that many of our young folks are engaged in effective religious work, too many are being lost to the church. This is a very sad and tragic loss. Today our churches are not reaching the young people as they should. One of the greatest tasks for us today is to stress religious training. It has been said that the Negro in his religion was too emotional. I cannot say this, but I do believe that our churches now need to adopt a program that will properly season and direct the emotions of their members. We must emphasize more and more that religion is life, the life of God brought to men by Jesus Christ .

It is the work of the church to place within the reach of its membership religious education. It is up to us to bring our young people under and have them respond to the demands of religion. We should increase their number in Sunday Schools and in other religious training departments of our churches. We believe that if our aims are worthy, if our aspirations are high, if our designs are

wise, and if our purposes are steadfast, we can hope to reach the goal of our ambition, and surely win some object worthy of a life's endeavor.

Let us consider the method suitable and convenient to our proceedings. Our method should be to develop a more competent leadership in our churches. This must of a necessity start from the pulpits. We will never elevate our churches and young people unless they have confidence both in the integrity of our character and in our intellectual ability. We hope to organize not only one church, but many churches, Sunday Schools, Baptist young people's unions and women's auxiliaries. Our method shall be to co-operate with our white Baptists all over the state in every way to further establish the work of the denomination, as the southern White Baptist Convention has been co-operating with the National Baptist Convention.

Dr. L. K. Williams, president of the National Baptist Convention, Inc., said in his address that "the Southern White Baptists for years, up to a certain amount, have been giving this board dollar for dollar for missionary work in the south. Their gifts and sympathy have aided us much in our efforts to extend Christ's Kingdom. We have done well, but not without them. I believe this Convention should maintain this co-operation, and seek to increase its good influence. I believe we should increase our own gifts to missions, express our appreciation to the Southern Baptist Convention for the aid it has given us, and ask it to increase in the future its contributions to this work. For years we have been seeking the co-operation of the Northern Baptist. This year they have agreed to co-operate with this Convention in its missionary operations in the fields where it works."