

1961 Southern Baptist Convention
Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis, Mo.
W. C. Fields, Press Representative
Theo Sommerkamp, Assistant

FOR RELEASE: 4:05 P. M.,
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News Summary-Christian Life Commission Report
Nashville, Tenn.

The Christian Life Commission told the 1961 Convention it moved through a period of change last year, but continues to progress with its emphasis on applied Christianity.

Foy Valentine, Nashville, executive secretary, became the Commission's top administrator when Dr. A. C. Miller retired in 1960.

"Believing that there is an adequate biblical basis for this emphasis and that an imperative command to action is inherent in the gospel message, the commission worked as extensively as its budget would permit in helping Southern Baptists to come to a better understanding of the practical aspects of the Christian faith," Valentine stated.

Plans have begun for emphasizing Christian social ethics through Convention agencies which have more direct contact with the churches than does the commission. Through Sunday schools, Training Unions, Woman's Missionary Unions, Brotherhoods, and Baptist student groups such subjects as family life, race relations, moral issues, economics and daily work and citizenship would be pictured in their Christian implications.

Special assembly weeks each summer are provided at two Southern Baptist Convention-wide assemblies--Ridgecrest, N. C., and Glorieta, N. M.--for Christian life conferences. "Christianity and Political Action" was the theme for the 1960 conferences, according to Valentine.

The commission participated in two conferences on the aging. One, sponsored jointly by the commission and Carver School of Missions and Social Work (a Southern Baptist school), was held at Carver in Louisville, Ky., in 1960. The commission's executive secretary helped to plan the religion section of a White House Conference on the Aging for Washington early in 1961.

The commission ministers through printed materials. Valentine said it has 24 pamphlets in print on applied Christianity. They discuss family, race, citizenship, daily work, alcohol, salacious literature and gambling. The commission also prepares articles in the field of Christian social ethics to be printed in various Southern Baptist publications. It provides assistance to others writing in these fields.

About half the affiliated state Baptist conventions have their own Christian life commissions or committees, Valentine reported. Missouri, Tennessee, and District of Columbia Baptists organized new ones during 1960.

The commission, from a program standpoint, promotes its aims through conferences, literature, special activities, speaking and articles. It keeps files on subjects of concern out of which it may prepare articles or aid others in research on these subjects.

The agency also has been assigned responsibility for having a Southern Baptist observer at United Nations. The executive secretary is that observer, with Gainer E. Bryan Jr. of Baltimore, editor of the Maryland Baptist, as alternate observer. Several articles were written during the year about U. N. visits and activities of particular interest to Baptists.

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Foy Valentine is executive secretary of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention with office in Nashville. He was director of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas for seven years before coming to Nashville. He has a Th.D. degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth. He is author of numerous pamphlets on applied Christianity.

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For Background Information

Southern Baptist Work in Cuba

An indirect report from Southern Baptist missionaries in Cuba indicates "business as usual."

"We have not been bothered personally, nor has our work been interfered with," Mrs. Herbert Caudill of Havana, wife of superintendent of Baptist mission work, reported in a telephone call from Cuba to relatives in the United States.

"Your father is in the interior seeing after the work," she told her son, Herbert Jr. "We are proceeding with the work as usual." The family call was in turn reported to the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board office in Atlanta. The Home Mission Board directs Cuban missions.

Four of the missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Caudill, leaders of mission work in Cuba since 1929, and Mr. and Mrs. David Fite, are located in Havana. Mrs. Fite is the Caudill's daughter. Mr. Fite is the son of Pastor and Mrs. Clifton E. Fite of First Baptist Church, Comer, Ga. The Fites have two small sons with them.

The other two Home Mission Board workers in Cuba, Miss Lucille Carrigan and Miss Ruby Miller, are serving in an isolated village deep in the Pinar Del Rio province.

"Our missionaries are registered with the Swiss embassy," said Loyd Corder, of Atlanta, secretary of the language groups ministries for the board. When the United States broke off diplomatic relations with the Castro government in 1960, they were instructed to leave the island whenever they felt it wise.

Two Home Board couples have already left the island. The Tom Laws left in October and the Hubert Hurts about Jan. 1. The Laws are now in Texas and the Hurts in Panama.

Law had been teaching in the Havana Baptist Seminary and pastoring an English-speaking church, most of whose members left with the break in diplomatic relations. Hurt pastored a suburban Havana church and taught in the seminary, as does Fite.

Redford has reaffirmed the policy of allowing the missionaries to come out of Cuba when they see fit.

All American Baptist Convention appointed missionaries have left the country since the diplomatic break. They worked in the eastern half of the island, while Southern Baptists work in the four western provinces where about 67 per cent of the Cuban people live.

The Home Mission Board has assisted Cuban Baptists for more than 60 years, but most of the work of the Cuban Baptist Convention is led by nationals. In its annual meeting in early April, the convention reported 85 member churches with 611 baptisms and \$205,000 in receipts in 1960, of which \$25,000 went to the Cooperative Program, Cuban Baptists' unified mission budget.

The Havana seminary has about 30 students and graduated four in 1960.

The Home Mission Board has already put more than \$10,000 into a relief program for Cuban refugees in Miami which it coordinates with the Miami Baptist Association. The program provides medical supplies, food, clothing, and job assistance.

Religious News Service reported that the Castro regime arrested a Catholic auxiliary bishop and a priest for "counter-revolutionary activity." The government radio has bitterly attacked the Roman Catholic Church for not having issued a pastoral letter denouncing the invasion.