



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

FEATUURES

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FOREIGN MISSIONS IN REVERSE

by J. Terry Young

Editor, The California Southern Baptist

Samuel Lawanson, a product of Southern Baptist foreign mission work in Nigeria, is now virtually a foreign missionary--to Visalia, California.

His witnessing to a cosmopolitan group in America is bearing fruit. On a recent Sunday he observed his pastor baptize college students from Hong Kong and Samoa whom he had led to Christ. As he watched he had at his side a Buddhist from Japan and a Moslem from Lebanon.

Officially, Lawanson is in Visalia attending College of the Sequoias, a junior college. And that is quite a story in itself.

Lawanson, who is 38 years old, had a strange experience many years ago that left him with the conviction that one day he would study in the United States. Years passed by without an opportunity to further his education here.

Lawanson became the first associational missionary to serve the association of Baptist churches in the area around Ibadan, the capital city of the western region of Nigeria. There are 52 churches in the association. Mr. Lawanson served in this post for eight years.

A few years ago a Presbyterian layman from the U. S. went to Ibadan as an exchange teacher in the Technical College in Ibadan. While there the layman wanted to see some of the mission work conducted in the area. Lawanson spent a good bit of time showing the American visitor the Baptist work in the area. A fast friendship grew.

After returning to America the Presbyterian teacher began making arrangements for Lawanson to come to America. He arranged for a scholarship for Lawanson and paid two-thirds of his passage from Nigeria to the United States. He met him in Boston and drove him to California. Even though he has two children in college to support, he is giving Lawanson monthly financial assistance. Incidentally, he has since joined a Southern Baptist church because of what he saw of Southern Baptist mission work in Nigeria.

Lawanson was born to Moslem parents. He attended a Baptist school in Northern Nigeria. While attending school he became a Christian. A sermon he heard in chapel was used by the Holy Spirit to bring him under conviction. For three years the text of the sermon, John 3:3, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven," disturbed him because he had not experienced the new birth. During a prayer meeting for his recovery from a physical illness he accepted Christ and was born again.

While he was a student at the Baptist Boys High School in Abeokuta, Lawanson was chaplain to the Queen's Own Nigerian Regiment for five years.

Lawanson is a graduate of a Baptist seminary in Nigeria, where college training is not a prerequisite to seminary work. He is an excellent preacher, according to Hooper Campbell, missionary in the Sequoia and South Tulare associations of California where Lawanson often speaks.

He hopes to spend two years attending College of the Sequoias in Visalia and then finish his college work in one of our Baptist colleges if he can make suitable arrangements. He also hopes to remain in America long enough to attend one of our Baptist seminaries after his college work is finished.

What has impressed him most in America? The freeways! "Nigeria has nothing like this."

What does he miss most? He wife and two children. His wife is a fourth grade school teacher in Nigeria. The Lawansons have two little girls, three and one years of age.

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Mrs. Lawanson and the two children may soon join Mr. Lawanson. Baptists in the Visalia area are seeking to raise \$1,500 to pay for their transportation here. The Woodland Drive Baptist Church in Visalia has already furnished a house for the family. Mr. Lawanson now is living there. Homer Walker, pastor of the Woodland Drive Church, is treasurer of the "Samuel Lawanson Fund," which hopefully will reunite the family. Mr. Walker reports that more than half of the necessary funds are now on hand.

In addition to his college studies, Mr. Lawanson works part-time to provide support for himself. He is custodian for two churches in Visalia, the Woodland Drive Church and the First Southern Baptist Church.



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January 12, 1966

**Historical Research Said
To Enrich Christian Faith**

WACO, Tex., (BP)--One of the foremost authorities in Old Testament history and criticism said here that the application of modern methods of historical research to the Bible have enriched the Christian faith, not destroyed it.

G. Ernest Wright, professor of divinity and curator of the Semitic Museum at Harvard University, was the final speaker in the Baylor University's fall distinguished lecturer series.

Speaking on "Archelogy, History and Theology" Wright said understanding of the religion of Israel requires that the researcher become deeply involved in the history of Israel for his primary knowledge.

"The Bible as historical testimony does not exhaust or even penetrate the mystery of ultimate power and meaning," he said. "Yet it does claim to reveal God as he would be known as our God."

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**Buckner Home Gets
Historical Plaque**

1-12-66

DALLAS (BP)--The Texas state historical survey committee presented an engraved plaque to Buckner Baptist Benevolences here as part of the annual founder's day observances at the world's largest Baptist children's home.

The plaque was displayed on the walls of the log cabin birthplace of Robert Cooke Buckner, founder of the original Buckner Orphan's Home here.

The cabin was moved to Dallas in 1912 from Madisonville, Tenn., where Buckner was born, Jan. 3, 1833.

Buckner founded the home in 1879 and served as its manager until his death in 1919.

The Buckner Benevolences system includes the main children's home here, two branch homes in Lubbock and Burnett, Tex., two homes for the aging in Dallas and Houston, two maternity homes in San Antonio and Dallas, and a family service center here.

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**You Dog! Don't Sleep
Through Prof's Class!**

1-12-66

MURFREESBORO, N. C. (BP)--A campus pet named Charley has a reputation at Chowan College here for typical classroom behavior.

Charley, a dog classified by some faculty members as "Alley Dog" or "Hound-57 Varieties," delights in attending classes at the Baptist school here.

His standard procedure is to edge into a classroom and stare for a while at the professor's desk.

If the professor is lecturing, Charley stretches out on the floor and goes to sleep. If the classroom is quiet, he leaves and seeks a room where he can sleep through a lecture.

"Like some other students," commented one professor, "Charley knows that it's easy to sleep through a lecture, but more trouble sleeping through a test."

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Largest and Longest Check
Comes To Indiana Baptists

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--The State Convention of Baptists in Indiana on January 4 received its biggest check in history--in more ways than one.

The check was the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering from Calvary Baptist Church, Evansville, and it measured over 12 feet long.

The amount of the check, \$3,000, also made it the largest in value ever received from a church in the convention office.

Indiana's goal for the foreign mission offering is \$30,000.

Otto J. Brown is pastor of the Evansville church.

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Nazareth Jews, Muslims
Mark Birth of Jesus

1-12-66

NAZARETH, Israel (BP)--"In a rare coincidence of dates, the month-long Muslim fast of Ramadan began the week of Christmas," Dwight L. Baker reports from Israel to the European Baptist Press Service.

"Local Muslim leaders were pleased that their holy days came during the Christian festival, giving opportunity to stress Israeli Muslims' desire for peace.

"Not to be left out in the converging calendar coincidences, Jews ended the Feast of the Lights, or Hanukka, with the lighting of the eighth Hanukka candle on Christmas Eve.

"It will be many years before the Holy Land's three great monotheistic religions, Islam, Judaism and Christianity, again celebrate major holy seasons in the same period."

Baker, a Southern Baptist missionary, states that a new mosque in Nazareth was dedicated in the week before Christmas, on the eve of the fast of Ramadan. It is named Peace Mosque.

A Nazareth sheikh explained that "Peace" is not a common name for a mosque in the Arab world but that the Nazareth mosque had been named after the Prince of Peace who brought renown to Nazareth.

The newly elected Muslim mayor of Nazareth, Abdul Aziz Zouabi, spoke at a Christmas reception for hundreds of pilgrims in Nazareth, Israel.

"From this city of peace," said the mayor, "we declare our loyalty to the lofty goals and teachings concerning peace and love which the Lord Christ handed down and have come to us over the centuries."

He called for peace in the world and, in particular, between Israel and her Arab neighbors, urging Israel's Arabs to build a bridge for peace between their country and the Arab states.

The reception was attended by heads of Greek and Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches in Israel. There were distinguished guests from abroad, including Episcopal Church Bishop James A. Pike of California.

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Mississippian Elected
By Education Fraternity

1-12-66

CLINTON, Miss. (NP)--J. W. Lee, dean of the graduate school at Mississippi College, has been elected second vice-president of Phi Delta Kappa, the international professional fraternity in education.

The election to the high international office came at the fraternity's recent 30th Biennial Council held at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

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Downtown Churches Face
Unprecedented Challenges

ATLANTA (BP)--The plight of downtown churches tends to offset rejoicing over fast-growing new congregations in the suburbs.

Welfare recipients and language groups seeking low-rent facilities are filling the gap, moving into dilapidated downtown housing; racial groups are meshing and tension grows, producing delinquency, crime, and personality maladjustment.

Compounding the problem, high-rise apartment units are attracting middle and upper-class families, leaving the church hard pressed to minister to both groups.

As a result of this hard period of transition, churches in these inner-city areas are faced with an ultimatum: adjust to reality and meet the unusual but startling needs, or fade into nonexistence.

These problems, and many more, were pinpointed recently in the first phase of a Home Mission Board-sponsored research project covering 20 metropolitan areas in the U. S. As reported in the January issue of Home Missions Magazine, project director G. Willis Bennett of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville outlined four major implications in the study for Southern Baptists:

1. What happens to Negroes and Spanish-speaking in the downtown areas? "Many of these people remain unsought and unchurched," Bennett reports. "Even though they, especially Negroes, are reached for weekday ministries, not many are retained for Sunday activities and still fewer find their way into church membership.

"It seems important, however, that educational and religious activities be provided to those who will engage in them. Many Negro churches cannot furnish this service."

2. What happens to Southern Baptist churches in areas of transition and racial integration? "Some move out, others decline, and only a few try seriously to adapt to change and enlarge their ministry," Bennett concludes. "One of our gravest problems is our inability to recognize early the beginnings of social change and take advantage of the change rather than be defeated by it."

3. What are our churches doing? Some have integrated, Bennett points out; some have established departments to minister to Spanish-speaking or Negro groups. But the most successful, according to Bennett have established a Baptist center and a weekday ministry operation.

4. How can Southern Baptists develop a team approach to meet the needs of people in these areas of transition? Bennett outlines three ideas to point the way: (1) "We must awaken a concern. Differences have tended to be resolved whenever Southern Baptists and other Baptists become acquainted." (2) "We must become informed. Who are the people... what are they like...what are their needs...how can we present the gospel in a meaningful way to them? (3) We must become involved.

"Spanish-speaking people have particular needs in the realm of social adjustment that are not unrelated to their religious needs," Bennett said. "Negro people are seeking to move into the full stream of American culture, and this is not unrelated to their need of responding to the gospel and the claims of Christ.

"Evangelism awaits," Bennett concluded, "But it cannot be grounded exclusively in traditional molds. Points of contact which show understanding and love must be found."

Christian Service Corps
Gets Brotherhood Assist

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has called on the Brotherhood Commission to help locate potential volunteers for the board's Christian Service Corps.

Six Baptist adult "pioneers" volunteered last summer, the pilot year for the short-term missions program. At least one has indicated a desire to return to the area of her corps assignment.

With the help of the Brotherhood, the Southern Baptist missionary organization for men, the board expects to more than double the task force in 1966. The volunteers will be sent to missions areas to serve from two to 10 weeks in various missions activity. "Pioneer" missions are in areas relatively new to Southern Baptists, mostly in the north and west.

"We have conferred with the Brotherhood staff and we have gotten their pledge of cooperation to assist us in recruiting people for the program," Warren Woolf, secretary of the board's department of special mission ministries, said. "The Brotherhood has a file of people who have volunteered to get into missions work. There are about 400 names of both pastors and laymen."

There is a need, Woolf said, for carpenters, plumbers, painters--all types of building trade workers; secretaries; Vacation Bible School workers; and survey workers.

In one pioneer missions area, Woolf said, a church has turned to the Christian Service Corps for voluntary help in complete construction of a new auditorium.

Corps volunteers in 1965 went to Alaska, Hawaii, the mountains of Kentucky, and a missions area in Ohio. Each filled a need on the home missions front, and according to reports from the volunteers, each received a blessing from his effort:

"Words are such poor substitutes...", wrote Mrs. Harry D. Wood Jr. of Leaksville, N. C., who served six weeks in Hawaii. "Suffice it to say that my life was enriched, my spirit revived and my love for missions accelerated by this summer's experience."

"The entire period was a series of interesting and worthwhile experiences," Miss Edith Killip of Middletown, Ky. reported after several weeks in Alaska. "I don't know how much my service was worth to the Alaska Baptist Convention, but each experience was a blessing to me. The greatest experience, I believe, was having the privilege of working with Valeria Sherard, our Home Mission Board missionary in the Arctic. Such dedication, consecration, love, and efficiency I have never seen before."

To qualify for a stint in the Christian Service Corps, volunteers must be: at least 35 years of age; in good physical and mental health; have no hindering family responsibilities; an experienced active member of a Southern Baptist church; able to care for own finances.

Volunteers are not provided salary or honorarium, but local forces are expected to arrange room and board. Although restricted now to the summer months, consideration is being given to expanding it to a year-round ministry.