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Liquor Store Chaplain
Has Little Competition

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By Orville Scott
Editor, Charity and Children

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)--As a liquor store chaplain, George Colgin hasn't much job competition, but he's where the people are who need him and that counts most.

Colgin's beat includes the Alcoholic Beverage Control outlet and 46 other businesses in the sprawling Thruway Shopping Center of Winston-Salem.

Every store in the center carries a neat stack of cards beside the cash register identifying Colgin as "counselor"--not minister, because many people don't like to admit their problems are spiritual.

"Basically," Colgin says, "all problems are spiritual, but we don't start there. We start with the person and after building a relationship, we get to the matter of his relationship with God."

Since January, about 150 visits have been made to Colgin's shopping center office. All visits are by appointment.

The shopping center ministry may be the first of its type in the U.S. utilizing no religious trappings. Colgin's headquarters is a real estate office.

Much of the credit for the marketplace ministry must go to Knollwood Baptist Church which loans out Colgin, their associate pastor, for up to 15 hours a week.

"It's important that people see we're not here to sell any particular faith," he says.

"We may not add greatly to our membership, but it has enhanced respect for Knollwood among people of the community because the concept is to help people and not just ourselves."

They come from all walks of life seeking help through the ministry in the marketplace: physicians, school teachers, business people, housewives, mill and textile workers.

Doctors in the adjoining medical center for which he is also chaplain, often refer patients for counseling.

Take for example the obese 38-year-old woman whose second marriage was on the rocks. Her first marriage failed because her husband was unfaithful, and now she highly suspected that her second husband was doing the same.

Through the counseling she confessed for the first time to anyone that as a teen-ager she had illicit relations with an older boy on the night her father died of a heart attack. All through the years she had carried the guilt intertwined with her father's death.

Colgin was able to help her see that God would forgive her if she forgave herself. This began a transformation for her, both spiritual and physical. She was able to lose weight, reclaimed her husband and became a more beautiful Christian.

It was the tragic death of a young woman that started Colgin on the idea of a ministry in the marketplace.

After he was named associate minister of Knollwood in 1962, he and the pastor, Jack Noffsinger, usually exercised at a health club on Thursday afternoons. The cashier seemed a cheerful enough person, and then one day they learned that she had committed suicide.

"What a tragedy for our society," Colgin thought, "that she didn't know there were trained counselors so near, ready to help."

The dream materialized in 1965 when the president of the merchant's association told Colgin that the merchants had met and "would like to use you as chaplain." For ten years the employees of one large department store had never had a period of prayer together.

In order that the counselor could get personally acquainted with employees at the shopping center, informal coffees were set up at a steakhouse. Also, Colgin visited in stores, giving every employee his calling card with the phone number where he could be reached.

The first two or three months were fairly uneventful, but then "the lid blew off, and we knew the ministry was on its way."

Most of his counselees are shoppers, and they come from all denominations including Jewish and Catholic.

One Catholic woman who was referred to the counselor came hesitatingly. "I may have to get permission from my priest," she said.

Colgin told her he didn't think she would have any problem. Her priest had been one of the first to assure the shopping center chaplain of his support.

Colgin even found himself counseling in his real estate office headquarters with more of his own church members than ever before.

"The fascinating thing is that once you go from the church where God is at work in the world, it validates your ministry.

"It is a most exciting thing in that it puts you right where the people are living; it gives a new dimension to evangelism."

He feels that he is reaching people he could never reach strictly through the church. There are referrals from a nearby nightclub. Recently he was called to counsel with a young mother found drinking by herself at one o'clock in the morning.

Henry Nadine, manager of the shopping center, a Methodist, calls the program "an example of the church moving out" and feels that all industry ought to be interested in such a ministry.

"I know from personal experience that you will never get a person's soul in business just with money. People want self identity. From a purely selfish standpoint, if something is wrong with an employee, his efficiency is way down."

"This is a brand new approach, and it's a message that industry and business need to hear."

At another Winston-Salem shopping center, Reynolda Manor, a group of about seven churches is seeking to start a ministry similar to the one at Thruway.

Colgin's six years as a staff member in the department of pastoral care at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem helped to equip him for his specialized ministry.

He still must meet regularly with others in the same field because "you can't have self objectivity without another person as a frame of reference."

Since 1963, he has been leading a group seminar which meets every Tuesday morning at Knollwood Church. The counselor's group, which is limited to 12 and permits no more than two unexcused absences, consists of Colgin and Noffsinger, Claxton Hall, John Compere, Fred Rochte, Larry Williams, Parker McLendon, Bob Dendy, Tom Gatewood, Clarence Eden, Henry Crouch and Jack Boston.

Knollwood, founded in 1957 and one of the state's fastest growing churches with some 1,000 members, has found itself hard pressed to build rapidly enough. Construction will begin soon on a sanctuary to adjoin the large modern educational building that is usually well filled on Sunday.

Pastor Noffsinger feels that ministries like the one for which Colgin is loaned "is the only way the church is going to make any contacts, getting out to where the people are.

"When you talk about doing things the way Jesus did, remember he ministered to all types of need, to Mary Magdalene and the woman at the well in Samaria.

"George talks to many a 'woman at the well'."



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SEC Publications To Begin
One Devotional Reading

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists will have one set of daily devotional readings in Southern Baptist Convention publications to follow beginning Jan. 1.

Different readings now printed in Sunday School, Training Union, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood periodicals will be coordinated beginning the first of the year.

Common readings will continue to be selected on the basis of their devotional content, with a key verse or text emphasized each day.

The multiplicity of readings in the different publications was the reason given for the change. Southern Baptist curriculum leaders felt the coordinated readings would receive a higher degree of readership than previous readings.

Coordinated readings will not be lesson-related. The Sunday School department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board cited different programs and curriculums as the factor which will prohibit making readings lesson-oriented, and said such a program would require "a change of policy."

Cross references to the location of the missionary prayer calendar are to be printed in periodicals when the calendar is not printed.

As part of a continuing Bible emphasis, the board's Training Union department will introduce in Oct., 1968 a course to develop skills in Bible usage.

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Seminary Prof Decries De-Emphasis of "Words" 561

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--A Baptist seminary professor speaking here chided social-actionist Christians to de-emphasize the importance of the preached word, saying that only getting into the action is important.

J. Winston Pearce, professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., told 2,430 Baptist attending a Training Union leadership and youth conference at Glorieta Baptist Assembly:

"We are in a time when words are really being blasted, and we are being told that we must get in the action. Words are no longer important. It is getting in the action that counts."

Pearce urged, however, Christians to place a high premium on words.

"Many things are wrought by words that could not be wrought by action," he said.

Special feature during the conference was a 15-minute drama entitled "Who Cares Anyway?" Author of the drama was Dorothy Russell Murphree of Maryville, Tenn.

The conference, sponsored by the Training Union department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, emphasized "The Church Fulfilling its Task Through Training To Minister."

Training Union is a program for training in church membership.

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Holmes Named To Mercer 562
Atlanta Development Post

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ATLANTA (BP)--Thomas J. Holmes, assistant to the president at Mercer University in Macon, Ga., will move to Atlanta July 1 to lead an expanded development program in the metropolitan Atlanta area.

Holmes, former pastor of the Tattnell Square Baptist Church in Macon, will direct a special campaign to raise \$1½ million for the Southern School of Pharmacy, a division of Mercer. He will also enlarge Mercer's general development program.

The pharmacy school has purchased a new site in DeKalb County and hopes to begin construction on a new campus early in 1968. This is the goal of the financial campaign.

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Columbia Baptist Leader 563
Receives Honorary Degree

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GREENVILLE, S.C. (BP)--The assistant general secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, A. Harold Cole of Columbia, received recently the honorary doctor of divinity degree from Furman University here.

A 1941 graduate of Furman, Cole received the bachelor of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

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Kendall Berry Elected 564
Foundation's Executive

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Kendall Berry, prominent Baptist businessman and banker from Blytheville, Ark., has been named executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Foundation, effective Aug. 1.

Berry will succeed J.W. Storer, who retires Aug. 1 after 10½ years as head of the foundation, which invests reserves, endowments and trusts for agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The newly-elected foundation executive is a former Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria, a former pastor, and a former newspaper editor.

Currently, Berry is a director for three banks, director of the Arkansas-Missouri Power Co., vice chairman and director of the Blytheville (Ark.) Warehouse Co.

A deacon for 22 years active in denominational affairs, Berry was chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, 1959-60. He currently is chairman of the finance committee for the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary board of trustees.

Storer, who had announced plans on March 16 to retire when a successor could be named, said he was delighted over Berry's election, and added that he has "all the qualities this position needs."

When asked about his future plans, Storer said that at least for the present, he and Mrs. Storer will continue to reside in Nashville at the Windsor Towers, 4215 Harding Road.

Storer for 45 years was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Tulsa, Okla., before heading the foundation in 1957. "Perhaps a bit of relief from labor will do me good," the 82-year-old Storer added.

"The foundation, and all phases of Baptist life are indeed fortunate in his acceptance of the position," said Storer following Berry's election.

Berry had earlier told the executive committee of the SBC Foundation, "It will be my purpose to expand the excellent program of the Southern Baptist Foundation to the fullest possible financial undergirding of all our Baptist causes.

"It will be an opportunity," he said, "to serve the denomination as we work together toward building the foundation into a service institution for all other Southern Baptist agencies in providing investment service, writing of wills, trusts or any other financial advice for the benefit of Baptists in relation to our denomination as a whole."

The Southern Baptist Foundation is an agency of the SBC which invests and administers wills, trusts, endowments and reserves for the benefit of SBC agencies and related organizations. Total amount held and invested during 1966 was \$8.6 million.

Berry, 60, was born and reared in Prentiss, Miss. He attended the University of Mississippi, Oxford and graduated with the bachelor of journalism degree from the University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.

He has had careers as a weekly newspaper editor, publisher, commercial printer, banker and investments expert.

He was part-time pastor of the County Line Baptist Church, Turkey Creek, La., 1925-29, and was a Southern Baptist missionary in Ogbomoshu, Nigeria, 1930-52.

Berry and his wife, Thelma, have two sons, Alan and John.

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BP PHOTO mailed to state Baptist papers.

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