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**Baptizing New Converts
In Vietnam Poses Problems**

DA NANG, Vietnam (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries and Baptist military chaplains here face a unique problem in this war-torn country; where to baptize new converts.

Perhaps the problem is no more acute than any other country where there are not "Baptistries" located safely within the walls of a church building, but the problems are accentuated by the constant threat of an enemy attack while the baptism is in progress.

Missionaries and military chaplains here have come up with some creative approaches to providing facilities to immerse new converts according to Baptist beliefs, said Capt. Jack S. McMichael, a Southern Baptist from Daleville, Ala., who is commanding officer for the 863rd Transportation Co., here.

"Traditionally, Army chapels are not equipped with baptistries," McMichael said. "When a soldier desires baptism, arrangements are usually made with a local church in the states. But sometimes, military chaplains baptize believers who prefer not to wait until their return to the United States."

McMichael described in detail two unusual ways in which Baptist converts in Vietnam had been baptized.

"Braced against the pounding surf of the South China Sea at Da Nang," he wrote, Chaplain (Major) William K. Bagnal, Southern Baptist chaplain from West Columbia, S. C., baptized two new converts while a lifeguard "stood by as protection against the treacherous undertow which prevails during the winter months."

"The actual words of the service were lost in the noises of the sea, guns and airplanes," McMichael wrote, "but the chaplain's uplifted hand signaled the baptismal proclamation.

"In perfect timing with the incoming waves, each man was immersed in the briny water," he wrote. In the background was the sound of guns and the roar of airplanes.

The two servicemen, M/Sgt. Roy Hensley of Erwin, Tenn., and S/Sgt. Arnold G. Whitson of Spring Lake, N. C., after their baptism, were accepted into membership back home by the Calvary Baptist Church in Erwin, Tenn., and the First Baptist Church of Spring Lake, N. C.

Another unique baptismal service was held in the backyard of Southern Baptist Missionary Lewis Myers in downtown Da Nang.

A little child led a procession of 12 Vietnamese into the baptismal waters, the first such service Lewis had conducted since coming to Da Nang three years ago. Some of the new converts had been waiting for baptism as long as six months.

Significantly, the first person he baptized was his 10-year-old daughter, Laura. Looking on were about 200 Vietnamese, Mrs. Lewis, their three children, Missionaries Ron and Betty Merrell of Tulsa, Okla., their two children, and Missionary Journeyman Jim Bobo of Fort Worth.

Like the military chaplains, the five Southern Baptist missionaries in Da Nang had no baptistry. But they got help from the military in solving the problem.

Lewis asked Chaplain Bagnal for help in securing a suitable tank of some sort. Chaplain Bagnal and Capt. McMichael led in building a plywood tank lined with heavy canvas.

Fortunately, Lewis noticed a mistake in design of the tank. It was built for American size-people, not for the much shorter Vietnamese. A platform was quickly installed in the bottom of the tank, and a drapery backdrop was erected.

Beginning with his oldest daughter, Lewis baptized 13 new Christians in what McMichael, a former Sunday School superintendent at First Baptist Church in Daleville, Ala., called "a very impressive and beautiful ceremony."

Almost immediately afterwards, the 13 new converts, hair still damp from their baptism, joined other Christians in Da Nang in observance of the Lord's Supper.

While the South China Sea is perhaps the most frequently used "baptistry" in Vietnam, any pool of water can serve well.

At Dong Tam, Chaplain (Major) Marvin C. Hughes of El Paso, Tex., baptized a new convert in the base camp swimming pool in the Mekong Delta.

Obviously, the problems of baptizing new converts in Vietnam are not insurmountable, but they are symbolic of some of the hardships Southern Baptist missionaries and servicemen in Vietnam face in this war-torn nation.

BP Photo Mailed to Baptist State Papers.

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Burcham Becomes Weekday And VBS
Consultant At Sunday School Board

3/4/68

NASHVILLE (BP)--Arthur Burcham, former pastor of Highland Baptist Church, Tullahoma, Tenn., has been named consultant in Weekday and Vacation Bible School programs by the Sunday School department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here, effective March 16, 1968.

As consultant, Burcham will be responsible for Weekday and Vacation Bible School program interpretation in field service engagements.

A graduate of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn., Burcham received the bachelor of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

He has served as pastor of two other Tennessee churches--Oakland Baptist Church, Rutledge; and First Baptist Church, Harrogate; and of Graham Baptist Church, Butlerville, Ind.

Burcham and his wife, Eleanor, are natives of Maryland. They have three children, Kathleen Marie, 16, Sherry Ann, 11, and Arthur Mark, 6.

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Southwestern Seminary
Changes Music Degree

3/4/68

FORT WORTH (BP)--Trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here have voted to change the name of the doctor of church music degree to become the doctor of musical arts degree.

Trustees also decided to add four new courses in social work at the Baptist Seminary. In approving the report of the faculty and curriculum committee, the trustees voted to begin courses on human growth and behavior, on social work theory, and two courses on clinical social work.

Scotty Wayne Gray, instructor of music theory, was named professor of music theory effective Aug. 1. Faculty tenure was granted to Jeroline Baker and Charles Tidwell.

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Houston Hotels Nearly
Full, Committee Says

3/4/68

HOUSTON (BP)--All downtown hotels have been filled for the period during the Southern Baptist Convention here, June 4-7, the SBC Housing Bureau has stated.

But there are still vacancies in the outlying Warwick, Shamrock and Plaza Hotels, and the following motels: Holiday Inn, Southwest; Helena Tidlands, Towers, Sheraton Oaks, Ramada Inn, White Horse, Grant and Vagabond, the committee said.

Southern Baptists planning to attend the convention who have not yet made hotel reservations were urged by the local committee to immediately write to the SBC Housing Bureau, Suite 1101, 1006 Main, Houston, Tex., 77002.

The committee asked that all such inquiries state the type of accomodation desired, three hotel or motel choices, arrival and departure dates, and return address for confirmation.

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Child Care Executives
Vote Cooperative Work

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Child Care Executives meeting here voted to enter a cooperative relationship with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in appointment of a consultant in Southern Baptist child care and youth ministry.

An outgrowth of a two-year study by a committee of child care executives for Southern Baptist children's homes, the cooperative venture would seek to better interpret Baptist child care work among Southern Baptists.

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board would later this year employ the consultant as part of its department of Christian social services, headed by Paul Adkins.

The proposed consultant would "provide counsel to Southern Baptist state convention child care agencies and other state and Southern Baptist agencies, and promote the child care ministry through effective communication."

During the meeting of the executives for Baptist children's homes and other child care workers, Adkins and Fred Moseley, assistant executive secretary of the SBC Home Mission Board, outlined responsibilities and qualifications of the new consultant.

Moseley pointed out that "the interpretation of child care to Southern Baptists has been largely neglected. Many of our public concepts of children's homes," he said, "were formed 10 and 20 years ago. The public has very little awareness of the work of our modern child care agencies."

Moseley pointed out a need to coordinate ministries of the Home Mission Board with the services now being rendered by children's homes in various states.

Later, the group adopted a resolution calling for appointment of a committee of five from the Child Care Executives organization to meet regularly with leaders of the SBC Home Mission Board to coordinate their efforts.

The committee was asked to define the limit and scope of the cooperative relationship, to consult with the Home Mission Board in the employment of the consultant, to take such other action of interest to child care agencies, and to promote understanding in the relationship with the Home Mission Board.

Elected new president of the Child Care Executives was James Browning, superintendent of the Baptist Children's Homes of Oklahoma City.

In a major address, reknown child-care authority Alan Keith-Lucas, professor at the University of North Carolina, praised the wide vision and courage in imaginative experiments in child care by Southern Baptists.

Saying no group has contributed as much as Baptists in new ideas in child care, Keith-Lucas said that nine-tenths of the new ideas he develops in his speeches are Baptist in origin. "I have enormous faith in you," he said.

"If I have one complaint to bring to this brotherhood, it is that it underestimates itself and does not know to what extent the fate of church-sponsored social services rests in its hands," he added.

The organization elected as first vice president, Hobson Shirey of Alabama; as second vice president, Paul Nunnery of Mississippi; and as secretary-treasurer, Erba A. Butler of Tennessee. The 1968 meeting will be at Jekyll Island, Ga., and the 1970 meeting in Jackson, Miss.

BP PHOTO

With story mailed 3-4-68

SWIMMING POOL BAPTISTRY IN VIETNAM: Finding a place where new converts can be baptized has been somewhat of a challenge to military chaplains and Baptist missionaries in Vietnam. Here, Chaplain (Major) Marvin C. Hughes of El Paso, Tex., baptizes a new believer in a swimming pool at the Dong Tam base camp in the Mekong Delta. (BP) Photo courtesy U. S. Army.

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