



**BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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March 13, 1970

**Mission Board Observes 125th Anniversary At Founding Site**

AUGUSTA, Ga. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board celebrated its 125th anniversary in this old south city of its birth by blending past, present and future.

The agency moved its spring board meeting to Augusta and the First Baptist Church here where the Southern Baptist Convention and its two mission boards were organized in 1845.

At the same time, the missionary personnel department conducted the orientation of 45 new missionaries. Then more than 3,000 Baptists from the area joined directors, staff and new missionaries for a climactic mission rally that filled Augusta's Bell Auditorium.

The rally featured a 500-voice youth choir directed by Jacques Kearns, a series of "illustrated dialogues" on home mission history and closed with a commissioning of the 45 missionaries.

Missions Director Hugo Culpepper, speaking to the new appointees, suggested they cherish their vocation as missionaries. "Most men today have lost the spiritual dimension of their lives."

"You must recognize the source of your strength, for you are called to do what can never be done in your own strength," he said.

Earlier at a luncheon the directors and missionaries had heard Baptist Historian Davis C. Woolley of Nashville tell "how it was in Augusta" in 1845 when cotton was king and James K. Polk of Tennessee was President of the United States.

Woolley, executive secretary of the SBC Historical Commission, presented background information on events which led to the break by the Southern Baptists from the Triennial Convention after friction developed over mission neglect in the South, the refusal to appoint slave-holders as missionaries, and the concept of denomination organization.

He said a new kind of national Baptist body was created basing representation on financial contributions, expressing primary interest in missions, and respecting the independence of churches.

All cooperative effort was placed under one organization with boards for special interests, in contrast to earlier mission society organizations.

"Obviously the convention was not the comprehensive organization it has become," Woolley concluded. "But Baptists created an organization incorporating basic principles upon which their successors have developed the complex structure and comprehensive program known today as the Southern Baptist Convention."

The directors dealt extensively with the present as they made final adjustments to the \$14.9 million budget for 1970 which supports the work of 2,235 missionaries.

They added Georgia Banker Olin Cox to the Division of Church Loans as finance officer and they authorized the establishment of a new \$1 million loan fund for Negro and other ethnic Baptist churches.

Staffing and funding of the loan project which came in response to national crises, will delay availability of the loans until next year.

Missionary salaries in 1971 will be slightly higher after board action that authorized the spending of more than \$200,000 for the increase.

Directors also re-elected Atlanta Layman Harmon Born as president, Florida Pastor, I. B. Hall of Coral Gables as first vice president and Mrs. Robert Hallman of Atlanta, as second vice president.

Mrs. Wright Gellerstedt of Atlanta was named recording secretary and Mrs. Furman Hardenburg of Boulder, Colo., was elected assistant secretary.

Following a similar action by the SBC Executive Committee, the Board voted to invite five students to participate in its fall sessions in Atlanta.

Executive Secretary Arthur B. Rutledge said in reviewing the past year:

"The national crisis continues to receive attention by the board, both by a special committee and by related programs."

Primary implementation has been through program leadership, principally by the assignment of missionaries to fields with critical needs and by encouraging the involvement of Southern Baptists in local efforts to meet such needs."

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#### SBC Foreign Board Makes Laos 72nd Mission Field

LAKELAND, Fla. (BP)--Laos was approved as a new mission field by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board meeting here. Laos will be the 72nd country to which the board's personnel are assigned.

A recommendation to enter Laos came from the board's committee for Southeast Asia, following a report from R. Keith Parks, administrative secretary for that area.

He described Laos as a landlocked section of Indochina bordering North Vietnam, China and Burma to the north. The Western boundary shares the Mekong River with Thailand. The south, a flat delta region, is cut off by Cambodia and the entire eastern boundary is adjacent to Vietnam.

The country's coalition government, representing neutralist, Communist and anti-Communist factions, was guaranteed neutrality and independence by the 1962 Geneva accords.

However, in many areas the country is disturbed by war and is controlled by Communist forces. The Ho Chi Minh Trail, which cuts through southern Laos, and the Plain of Jars in northern Laos are locales of conflict.

Laos, Parks said, "opens the possibility of a Christian experience to a new language group, a new cultural group, a new community of people which would not be opened by simply multiplying churches and/or mission strength in neighboring nations."

The first missionaries to enter Laos were Swiss Brethren in 1902. In 1927 they invited the Christian and missionary Alliance (CMA) to join them. By an agreement between the two groups, the five southern provinces were served by the Brethren and the seven northern provinces by the CMA.

Currently the CMA has 21 missionaries in Laos and the Brethren and the overseas missionary fellowship about 30 each.

There are about 30,000 Christians in Laos, according to liberal estimates, said Parks.

The number of people responding to the gospel was relatively small until the 1950s, Parks added. During this time some Meo Tribesmen began to respond to a Meo Christian's testimony, which resulted in an upsurge of Christianity among that group. Many members of the Lao Evangelical Church, an outgrowth of CMA work, are Meos.

Most response in the Southern part of the country has come from scattered ethnic groups rather than the predominant Lao people.

The CMA has accomplished much in biblical translation, in putting the Meo writing into Lao characters, and in publication and Bible school work, Parks said.

The Swiss Brethren also have a Bible school, and they minister to lepers through government hospitals.

Up to now, Parks said, mission work in Laos has been done in rural areas. Because of current war conditions, little can now be done in these areas. However, no concentrated effort has been made on the cities, he added.

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In Vientiane, the administrative capital, there is one Lao-speaking Christian church composed primarily of Meos. There are also one small Chinese-speaking congregation and a Vietnamese-speaking church in the city, Parks said.

Population estimates for Vientiane run as high as 300,000.

A new university has gone virtually untapped by the mission groups already in Vientiane. Parks suggested this as a possible starting point for Southern Baptist work.

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Seven SBC Foreign Missionaries  
Named, Laos Picked As New Field

3/13/70

LAKELAND, Fla. (BP)--Seven new missionaries were appointed, and Laos was designated as a new field of mission work by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board meeting here.

Members of the board, meeting at the Southside Baptist Church here, voted to "seek missionaries to enter Laos as soon as possible."

Though no missionaries to Laos were appointed at this session, the board appointed seven missionaries to Brazil, Korea, Africa and Argentina.

They are: Miss Linda Crawford of Bagdad, Fla., appointed for Brazil; Mr. and Mrs. Charles D. Sands III of St. Petersburg, Fla., Korea; Mr. and Mrs. Sam G. Turner of Orrick, Mo., Africa (specific country yet undecided); and Mr. and Mrs. Leon S. White of Boonville, N.C., Argentina.

It was the first time in the 125 year history of the board that foreign missionaries had been appointed in a Baptist church outside the board's Richmond headquarters. Ordinarily the board has commissioned missionaries in Richmond and at the two Southern Baptist assemblies in Glorietta, N.H., and Ridgecrest, N.C.

The board departed from this procedure in May of 1969 when it met at the First Baptist Church of Dallas and appointed missionaries in a Dallas coliseum.

The appointment of the seven missionaries pushed the number of the convention's overseas force to 2,495 personnel, and the selection of Laos as a new field boosted the number of countries where they serve to 72.

Missions prospects in Laos had been surveyed in recent months by Foreign Mission Board representatives, including R. Keith Parks, the board's secretary for Southeast Asia.

In a report to the board, Parks suggested that Southern Baptists concentrate their initial efforts in the administrative capital of Laos, Vientiane. He particularly suggested ministries to a new university in that city as a possible beginning point for mission service.

"It doesn't seem rational or spiritual to allow the uncertain political future of Laos to prevent our witnessing to the current generation," Parks said.

In talks with representatives of other Protestant missionary groups in Laos, Southern Baptists have stressed that they would strengthen and complement rather than compete.

Parks said that "relatively little is being done concerning the spiritual conditions in Laos."

Liberal estimates identify a maximum of 30,000 Christians in Laos, about 1 per cent of the population. Buddhism is the national religion.

Baker J. Cauthen, executive secretary of the board said: "Entry into Laos is a continuation of many advances expressing our desire to share the gospel of Christ with people of all lands through word and living deed."

"We believe conditions in Southeast Asia call for widespread communication of the message of Christ and we are eager to do everything possible towards this end," Cauthen said.

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Hardin-Simmons Band  
In Macy's Parade

3/13/70

ABILENE, Tex. (BP)--The Cowboy Band and six white horses unit of Hardin-Simmons University here has accepted an invitation to perform in Macy's annual Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City.

The department store's parade will be staged on Nov. 26 and will be telecast by the National Broadcasting Co.

The Band and horse unit from the Texas Baptist school took part in the inaugural parade of President Nixon last January.

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Arthur Davenport, PR  
Pioneer, Dies at 66

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Arthur S. Davenport, 66, veteran Oklahoma newspaperman and pioneer in the field of Baptist public relations, died here March 13 after a long illness.

Davenport, semi-retired for the last two years, headed a public relations firm, Arthur Davenport Associates, here and was for five years public relations director for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. His syndicated public relations materials have been used by churches throughout the nation.

A native of Oklahoma, Davenport worked as a reporter for daily newspapers in Ardmore, Muskogee and Oklahoma City, and was city editor of the Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City at one time. He had also been president and general manager of Lion Heart Oil News Co., and was a major in the U.S. Air Force.

A graduate of Tulsa University Law School, he also attended Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Okla., and was a member of Highland Hills Baptist Church here. Survivors include his wife and three daughters.

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NOTE: Funeral arrangements were incomplete as of 3/13/70, but services will probably be in Tulsa on Monday, 3/16/70.

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