



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

**NATIONAL OFFICE**  
460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
Telephone (615) 244-2355  
W. C. Fields, Director  
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

**BUREAUS**

**ATLANTA** Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
**DALLAS** Billy Keith, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996  
**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-1631  
**RICHMOND** Jesse C. Fletcher, Acting Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151  
**WASHINGTON** W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

October 12, 1970

River Kwai Missionary  
Sent By Thai Baptists

by Ronald C. Hill

BANGKOK, Thailand (BP)-- Baptists in Thailand have a new outpost almost 50 miles north of the famous Bridge on the River Kwai.

Through their sponsorship, a Thai Baptist, Khun (Mr.) Wirapol Intarasangkha, is serving as a missionary in Kanchanaburi Province.

Wirapol says the first few months of work have been spent making friends and building confidence, and five believers show promise of becoming strong Christians.

"Each one believes because God has done something definite in his life," he states, "and I'm trying to teach them the Bible so they will grow." The Thai missionary hopes to build a large, open sala (room or pavilion) to serve as a meeting place.

Nong Prue is a village in Kanchanaburi Province. Wirapol commutes from the town of Kanchanaburi to Nong Prue on weekends on a motorcycle given to him by Southern Baptist Missionary Dennis E. Elliott.

"I believe it's the responsibility of Thai to reach Thai, and though it may be harder at first, I believe the work will be stronger without the backing of foreign money," Wirapol says.

The River Kwai mission project, which is probably the first corporate outreach by Thai Baptists, was motivated by spontaneous weekly prayer fellowships begun by Thai church members to precede the evangelistic campaigns in Asian countries last July.

Although he has received encouragement from several missionaries, Wirapol's financial support has come from Thai sources: \$25 monthly from the Baptist prayer meeting group and a like amount from the rental of his small Bangkok residence.

"We just make it to the end of each month, and sometimes they money runs out," Wirapol says, "but each time we learn a new lesson about trusting God."

Wirapol began to make trips to the river town of Kanchanaburi while still a student at Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary in Bangkok. He had attended high school in Kanchanaburi and felt that he was being led to the unreached area.

Passing through Kanchanaburi is the "railway of Death," where thousands of allied prisoners died while building a rail link with Burma for the Japanese during World War II.

All that remains of the prisoner of war camps are two cemeteries. One is at the edge of Kanchanaburi, which was only a village in October 1942, when the construction of the bridge began.

The story of the bridge on the River Kwai is familiar in the United States because of a movie based on the novel by Pierre Boulle and the movie's theme "The Colonel Bogey March."

Kanchanaburi is West of Nakhon Pathom, where Buddhism is supposed to have entered Thailand before the time of Christ, according to some historians. Thailand is one of the world's strongest Buddhist countries.

When Wirapol finished seminary study in March 1970 and began planning to move, he found a group of fellow Baptists ready to help him. By this time, the Monday night prayer meetings among leaders of Bangkok area churches had grown out of the Thai Baptist Congress on Evangelism in January, and somebody proposed a weekly offering.

Part of the offering was designated for Wirapol's pioneer mission. Before he moved from Bangkok to Kanchanaburi, a service was held commissioning him to this work.

The present need for strengthening the support to the Kanchanaburi mission could serve as a catalyst for closer cooperation among Thai Baptists. Talks have begun about organizing a Baptist association for the 14 churches related to Southern Baptist work in Thailand.

-30-

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ronald C. Hill is a Southern Baptist missionary serving in Bangkok, Thailand, and is a native of Spindale, N.C. Prior to his appointment by the SBC Foreign Mission Board in 1952, he was pastor of Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, Mt. Hermon, La.; Palmetto (la.) Baptist Church; Worthville (N.C.) Baptist Church; and Lawler Baptist Church, Florence, Tex.

#####

Spanish Baptists Adopt New  
Constitution, Resolve Crisis

10/12/70

CASTELLON, Spain (BP)--The Spanish Baptist Union has adopted a new constitution, thereby resolving a crisis that has confronted the 5,500 member union for about a year.

Framers of the new constitution said it would strike a balance between the rights of the union's 53 member churches, on one hand, and their responsibilities, on the other hand.

Opponents earlier had attacked the constitution, charging that it was "too Presbyterian, too unbaptistic" because it would require member churches to obey decisions of the union or face expulsion.

A compromise, however, was reached during a special called meeting of the union here. Without the compromise, the constitution would probably have failed, several observers told European Baptist Press Service based in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

The compromise was presented as an amendment to the constitution by Juan Luis Rodrigo, pastor of First Baptist Church, Madrid, the largest church in the union.

The amendment softened the language of the constitution at the point opponents said it virtually required member churches to obey the union, and followed the suggestions of a letter sent to the churches jointly by the executive committee of the union and the missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board assigned to Spain.

It substituted the word "consider" for the terms "will respect" or "will carry out" when applying to the churches' response to union decisions. With this change, the new document won the necessary two-thirds vote to pass.

Earlier, the convention had rejected an effort by three churches to have the new constitution thrown out entirely in favor of the current constitution.

Under the new constitution adopted by the convention, churches have a right for the union to help with (1) financial aid for small congregations, (2) educational scholarships for young people, (3) loans and grants for new buildings, (4) seminary training for ministerial candidates, and (5) participation in union leadership.

In return, the union has a right to expect from the churches their responsibility to: (1) contribute regularly stated amounts to the union's budget, and (2) "consider" abiding by the agreements and decisions made in the union meetings.

Though the issues of registering churches with the Spanish government has been a key point in previous conventions of the union, the matter has largely ceased to be a divisive issue in the union, even though it was the registration issued that led ultimately to the constitutional crisis, European Baptist Press Service reported.

Registration or non-registration was not mentioned at the convention here. Nearly one-fourth of the churches have registered, but some churches say they plan never to register.

A former Roman Catholic priest, Jose Borrás, who now is professor of church history and theology at the Baptist seminary in Barcelona, Spain, was elected president of the union. The pastor of a registered church was chosen as union-vice president. His name is Joaquin Pastor, minister (pastor) of the Baptist church at Denia, Spain.

Outgoing president of the union was Pedro Bonet, a pastor of Barcelona, who has played a leading role in drafting four the five constitutions the Spanish Baptist Union has used during its existence.

October 12, 1970

3

Baptist Press

FOR RELEASE 10-14-70

W. Eugene Grubbs Elected  
Consultant on Laymen Overseas

RICHMOND (BP)--A Baptist State Convention executive and former missionary has been named by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board as its consultant on laymen overseas effective Jan. 1.

W. Eugene Grubbs of Portland, Oreg., was elected to the newly created consultant's post by the board during its annual meeting here Oct. 12-14.

Grubbs has been executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oregon-Washington since December 1968. He previously was secretary of evangelism for the Southern Baptist General Convention of California for 3½ years, following pastorates in Fullerton and Downey, Calif., and missionary service in the Philippines.

As consultant on laymen overseas, his major responsibilities will include assisting Southern Baptists who travel or live abroad to become involved in missions, coordinating the participation of laymen in special projects overseas, and furnishing information about overseas vocational openings on a non-missionary basis.

Grubbs will serve on the staff of the Foreign Mission Board's Overseas Division, under the supervision of its director, Winston Crawley.

Crawley announced last April plans to add a third consultant's position to the Overseas Division staff. The staff already includes a medical consultant and a consultant in evangelism and church development.

Crawley said that probably as many as 100,000 Southern Baptists are overseas every year for varying lengths of time. "If ways can be developed for taking full advantage of the missionary potential of laymen overseas, we can see a remarkable added missionary impact," he said.

As evangelism secretary for California Baptists, Grubbs directed a statewide "Encounter Crusade," described by Baptist leaders as the most intensive evangelistic effort made by a single denomination in the history of California.

Grubbs and his wife went as missionaries to the Philippines in 1960, but due to the illness of their daughter they returned to the states the following year and resigned. Reappointed in 1962, they served for another year in the Philippines, until illness in the family again forced them to return home and resign as missionaries.

Prior to his missionary service, Grubbs was pastor of Baptist churches in Charleston, Miss., Springfield, Mo., Mobile, Ala., and Hastings, Fla. He was in the U.S. Navy for nearly three years during and after World War II.

A native of Alabama, he graduated from Stetson University, DeLand, Fla., and from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary with the bachelor of divinity and doctor of theology degrees.

-30-

BP Photo to be mailed to State Baptist editors.

###

Missionary To Nigeria,  
Homer A. Brown Jr., Dies

10/12/70

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)--Homer A. Brown, Jr., 52, Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria for 22 years, died Oct. 8 at North Carolina Baptist Hospital here following an extended illness.

A memorial service was held Oct. 10 at Ardmore Baptist Church here. The body was donated to the hospital's medical school for research.

The Browns, who were stationed in Kaduna, Nigeria, returned to the United States early this year because of his illness. He had been regional secretary for Northern Nigeria, Nigerian Baptist Convention, since 1966.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown were appointed by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1948. His work had taken them to several missionstations in Nigeria.

-more-

October 12, 1970

4

Baptist Press

From 1961 to 1964 he was principal of the Baptist Teacher Training College in Minna. He previously had been principal of Baptist boys' high schools in Oyo, Lagos and Abeokuta, and he managed the first Nigerian Baptist Book Store in Ibadan. He also worked with churches in those areas as missionary adviser.

A native of Quincy, Ill., Brown graduated from Hannibal-La Grange College (now Missouri Baptist College), Hannibal, Mo.; William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo.; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

-30-

SBC Home Mission Board  
Names Eight Missionaries

10/12/70

ATLANTA (BP)--Four couples, including one couple assigned to work in the nation's largest city, were appointed as missionaries of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here recently.

Named to serve in New York City were Mr. and Mrs. Jack Merritt, who will begin a program of weekday ministries for a large apartment complex in Lefrak City, a suburb of Manhattan.

Other new missionaries appointed by the board were Mr. and Mrs. James Kinney, appointed to Enid, Okla.; Mr. and Mrs. Donald Otwell, to Jacksonville, Fla.; and Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Willcoxon, to Chico, Calif.

Mr. and Mrs. Merritt, appointed to New York City, are natives of Texas, and both are recent graduates of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth where they each earned the master of divinity degree. He is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and she is a graduate of University of New Mexico. The former Phyllis Gregory, Mrs. Merritt was on the editorial staff of the Baptist New Mexican, state Baptist paper, for one summer.

Mr. and Mrs. Kinney will continue to serve in Enid, Okla., where he is now pastor of First Indian Baptist Church, Enid, an area heavily populated by Cherokee Indians.

A native of Scranton, Ark., Kinney is a graduate of College of the Ozarks, Clarksville, Ark., and Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth. He has been pastor of several Oklahoma churches and was a public school teacher for six years.

Otwell is now missionary to the deaf in Florida, with offices in Jacksonville, and will travel throughout the state. A native of Mobile, Ala., he is a graduate of Truett McConnell College, Cleveland, Ga.; Oglethorpe College, Atlanta; and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

For five years he was director of deaf work for the Kansas City Baptist Association. Mrs. Otwell has also been an interpreter for the deaf at Baptist churches.

Willcoxon was appointed to serve as superintendent of Baptist mission efforts for the Shasta and Sierra Butte Baptist Associations, working in Chico, Calif. Both Mr. and Mrs. Willcoxon are natives of Missouri, graduates of Wayland Baptist College, Plainview, Tex., and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

-30-



**BAPTIST PRESS**

*460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219*

DAVIS C. WOOLLEY HO  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
127 NINTH AVE. N.  
NASHVILLE, TENN. 37203

RECEIVED  
OCT 18 1970  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SBC