

(BP)---FEATURES

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention 460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Telephone (615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

May 17, 1972

Laymen Find Opportunities For Missions Involvement

By Susan S. Cahen

RICHMOND (BP)--There's a new dimension in lay involvement in missions, and Southern Baptists from coast to coast--literally--are getting involved.

For example, when a couple from Newport News, Va., return home in July after a year of volunteer mission work in the Philippines, another couple from Portland, Ore., will go to take up where they left off.

Harry A. Elver, formerly a supervisor for the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, has been business manager for the Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary in Baguio for the past year. Mrs. Elver, a former teacher, has been dean of women at the seminary there.

Going to take their places will be Mr. and Mrs. J. Carey Moore of Portland, Ore. Moore's background is in banking, and he is a trustee of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif. He is a former member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

They were instrumental in starting the Northwest Baptist Convention, and she was one of the first directors of its Woman's Missionary Union.

The Elvers and the Moores are among a growing number of Southern Baptist laymen becoming involved temporarily in overseas ministries through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board here.

Gene Grubbs, the board's consultant on laymen overseas, helps "to channel this surging concern of laymen for missions," as he puts it. He encourages lay involvement and helps to match up volunteers with jobs overseas.

Grubbs took up his newly created post in January 1971, having resigned as secretary-treasurer of the Northwest Baptist Convention. Since then he has been collecting data, making contacts and lining up available resources to meet needs on the mission field.

All Southern Baptists are potential missionaries, Grubbs says, and there are opportunities for all to serve the cause of missions.

"For a long time," he observes, "lay involvement was primarily through prayer and financial support. The importance and effect of such participation in foreign missions cannot be overemphasized. It is both direct and personal."

But, says Grubbs, some laymen are looking for opportunities for involvement by being on the mission field themselves. Jobs filled by these persons are strictly on a volunteer basis.

There are several approaches to this kind of involvement, Grubbs adds, depending upon the job to be done and the resources the volunteer has to offer.

To contribute, he does not have to be a professional man nor possess a particular skill. For example, nine men from Ferris Hills Baptist Church, Milton, Fla., recently went to Costa Rica to erect a new church building. Thus, Grubbs observes, a person can contribute his own physical labor.

Clyde Townsend of Dothan, Ala., rode his motorcycle through Mexico and Central America, visiting missionaries and helping nationals along the way. Townsend, who is the Honda dealer in Dothan, spent the months of February and March, 1972, traveling as far as Panama and back--nearly 9,000 miles.

In a diary he kept on his trip, Townsend said he wanted "to see what foreign missions is all about and how the missionaries really live." He got plenty of firsthand knowledge and practical experience.

-more-

In Honduras, for example, he and a missionary did most of the work to put a roof on a village church. In Costa Rica he helped wire a church for electricity.

A layman may volunteer to go overseas for an evangelistic crusade or to participate in a personal evangelism project working with a national counterpart, Grubbs adds. He may go individually or with a group.

Last year 27 persons from the First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Tex., went to Korea for a week of evangelistic meetings and saw 105 persons baptized while they were there.

Many jobs are open for longer terms, Grubbs says. For some of these the Foreign Mission Board will assume transportation costs, but does not pay for the volunteer's support. This category includes interim pastorates of English-language congregations, teaching positions filled by professors on sabbatical, business administrators and houseparents to serve at dormitories for missionary children.

Some persons with specific interests have related themselves to specific needs overseas. For instance, pastors, agricultural workers and farmers have formed an agricultural missions foundation which has supported a variety of projects overseas.

They secured beef and dairy animals for Baptist work in Ecuador, supported a rabbit project in Rhodesia, supplied money to buy cows for a Baptist school in the Philippines, and sent a tractor to a school in Liberia and sewing machines to Ghana.

There are many jobs in a number of areas of mission work where volunteers would be helpful, Grubbs says. Currently, he is seeking to place two business administrators; he also needs a volunteer acoustical engineer to spend a month in Cali, Colombia.

Construction supervisors are needed at any time in northern South America--especially those who can speak a little Spanish, Grubbs adds.

-30-

Baptist, Presbyterian Women
Sponsor Joint Tutoring Effort

5/17/72

By James Lee Young

RODEO, Calif. (BP)--Southern Baptist and Presbyterian women here have combined efforts in a unique tutorial program that has in a few weeks resulted in both community good will and increases in Sunday School attendance.

Sponsored jointly by the First Baptist and First Presbyterian Churches here, the tutoring program is led by two Rodeo schoolteachers, one a Southern Baptist and the other a Presbyterian.

Baptist Women, the Woman's Missionary Union organization of First Baptist Church, and the women of First Presbyterian are deeply involved in the project. Tutoring sessions are held in the educational wing of the Baptist church.

Twenty-one volunteer tutors have been enlisted to work with about the same number of children.

It all started when women of the two churches came to the conclusion their churches weren't making a positive, visible contribution to the Rodeo community, a small town to the northeast and across the bay from San Francisco. Some of the women felt the churches were losing ground in reaching and communicating with the townspeople.

A schoolteacher proposed a positive, active witness through "a badly needed program" of helping school children with homework and studies.

"What we wanted was to establish good rapport with the community," said Mrs. Troy King, Baptist Women's program director and schoolteacher at Margaret Collins Elementary School. It was Mrs. King who proposed the tutoring program.

Mrs. King had suggested her idea to other women at the Baptist church, and had heard that Mrs. Marshall Mosher, a Presbyterian and schoolteacher at Hillcrest Elementary School here, was interested in participating.

-more-

At the first session to organize the program, "there was a great deal of enthusiasm," Mrs. King recalled.

Since the program started in mid-March, 21 volunteers--half of them teenagers and young adults--have been helping the children with reading, geography, history, spelling, math, or whatever they need.

In a typical session recently, there was a buzz of questions and answers in the educational wing where the tutors and their charges huddled for small person-to-person encounter and communication.

Doreene Crimson, 23, from First Baptist Church of Pinole, Calif., played games with a little girl who admitted she "hates to get beat." Through educational games, the student began to really try. And she began to learn, Miss Crimson said.

The children present represented a broad cross section of racial backgrounds and ages.

Though such tutoring programs are common among many Southern Baptist churches, few small communities such as Rodeo have a program involving both Baptists and Presbyterians. It is the first such project for Rodeo churches.

"Five years ago, our churches wouldn't have supported such a program," said Mrs. Mosher, the Presbyterian leader of the project.

But the results have been gratifying, they said. Their teenagers and young adults are interested and involved. Children involved in the program have begun attending Sunday School, including six such children who enrolled in the Baptist church's Sunday School within two weeks after the program started. Parents of the children are impressed that the churches care about their children and their daily problems.

It also has given other church members and the local community a somewhat different idea of the church's mission, the women said.

"We prefer to use other methods to reach the total man rather than hitting people over the head with the Bible," said Mrs. Leo English, director of Baptist Women in Rodeo. She added that the program is not only helping the community, but has improved the churches' images in Rodeo.

The pastor of the First Baptist Church, Gary F. Woolverton, praised the women from both churches for their initiative and success in putting together the program.

"It was their idea, and the Holy Spirit is really blessing their work," said Woolverton, a master of divinity student from Gideon, Mo., studying at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in nearby Mill Valley, Calif.

-30-

CORRECTION

On BP story mailed 5-15-72, headlined, American Baptists Change Name, Approve Restructure, Sessions; please change wording of graph 3, to read: In other actions, the delegates rejected a strongly-worded resolution criticizing President Nixon's decision to mine North Vietnamese harbors, and instead referred to its General Council a statement both . . . (substitute underlined words for the word "adopted."): Please end graph 10 with a period after the word Vietnam (deleting the phrase "adopting instead a resolution" described by one news report as a 'watered down' version.") Thanks.

--Baptist Press

###



BAPTIST PRESS

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

LYNN MAY HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE. NO.
NASHVILLE TN 37203

RECEIVED
MAY 18 1972

HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SBC