

January 4, 1974

Works Without Pay

Baptist Layman Gives Time  
To Recruit Lay Volunteers

By Toby Druin

A day seldom passes at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board offices in Atlanta without a request--usually from one of the denomination's "pioneer" states--for help in facing a new mission challenge.

The pleas for help are almost infinite--for someone, anyone, to do anything from teaching a Sunday school class, working in resort ministries, directing day camp activities, to helping build a church building.

You name it and the chances are good that the Home Mission Board has had a request for a volunteer to do it. Since 1961, such requests have been channeled through the board's Christian Service Corps. Through the years the number of persons serving short term assignments--from two to ten weeks--and those volunteering for longer terms, even a lifetime, has totaled into the hundreds.

No exact figures are available on those who have served as CSC volunteers or who are now serving because, admittedly, the CSC has had somewhat of a "stepchild" status.

But William L. "Bill" Wilson, a Southern Baptist layman and deacon, has adopted the "stepchild" and its future is looking up.

Wilson, a mustachioed 55-year-old native Atlantan and graduate of the University of Georgia, last fall volunteered to take over the reins of the CSC without pay, explaining, "I've been giving my money so long that it's no longer exciting. I want to give more of myself."

In reality, he has been giving more than just his money for some 25 years in promoting missions through First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga., and its one-time mission, Columbia Drive Baptist Church in Decatur. He has served both churches as chairman of the deacons, in addition to many other leadership positions.

At First Church, Decatur, he helped begin eight churches that are among the strongest in the Atlanta area. A few years ago, he was instrumental in getting the church to turn its attention to social ministries.

"We had worked our way out of immediate prospects for starting new churches in the suburbs, which had been the major thrust of our church in cooperation with the Atlanta Association," Wilson said.

"We began to see the needs of the inner city and shifted our emphases and resources into ministries in a number of local areas, not always with success; but it gave me a new insight into missions." Those ministries have made a lasting impression on Wilson.

"I've seen social ministries that I felt changed lives on both ends of the spectrum--both the person being ministered to and the person doing the ministering," he said.

Experiences with missions in Decatur and memories of two mission trips--the first some 10 years ago to California to work in a language missions setting and the second a few years ago to Wyoming with other laymen to assist some struggling churches--led him to a deeper involvement.

Wilson also got some prodding from Don Hammonds, the board's director of special mission ministries.

Hammonds knew that Wilson was in the process of disposing of his retail nursery business and faced him with the challenge of taking charge of the Christian Service Corps.

Wilson said he had been wanting to do something in the way of an outreach ministry and knew the CSC's direction had been largely unattended.

"I finally just ran out of reasons for saying no," he said.

Wilson assumed direction of the CSC in mid-October, 1973, with the idea of giving it some 15-20 hours each week, working it into the middle of his usual work day. Since then, however, he has usually given the CSC about 35 hours per week.

Wilson is eager to get out the CSC story believing that many people would be led to give their time and effort if they were aware of the needs.

He has plenty of such "needs." Many of the 750 or so associational superintendents of missions across the United States regularly send him requests for volunteers. Wilson also hears of needs from other home missionaries and churches and individuals.

The needs vary. On a typical day recently he got three letters from three widely separated points in the country. One was seeking help in resort ministries for both summer and winter.

Another sought help in conducting day camps and the third asked for workers in constructing a mission church in a pioneer state.

Volunteers can go for a short term of from two to ten weeks, or if they want to relocate to help on a relatively permanent basis, they can find new work in the area of need and change their place of residence. Wilson will help them make connections with prospective employers.

One of Wilson's first contacts after assuming direction of the CSC was with a young couple in Georgia who indicated they felt God was leading them to relocate to assist some struggling church.

Almost simultaneously, he got a request from a West Coast pastor asking if someone might be interested in coming to assist the church in getting on its feet.

The problem in many pioneer areas is a lack of persons skilled in doing the things most Southern Baptists take for granted, such as teaching a Sunday school class or working in outreach.

Wilson communicates with selected groups of churches to present the need for more volunteers and for persons who possibly cannot go themselves but will agree to sponsor a volunteer.

He has offered to provide free bulletin inserts on the ministry to any church if the pastor will direct a morning sermon on the "Stewardship of Service." Wilson will go to any church to speak about the program if the church will guarantee him an audience of at least 15 persons who have indicated an interest.

"As I view it, the people are ready for us to acquaint them with our program and let them know what is available," Wilson said. "We don't expect fantastic results overnight. Many people will have to grapple with it for awhile. Some will volunteer; some won't. But they need to know they have an option."

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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January 4, 1974

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**WASHINGTON** W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226By W.C. Fields  
Director, Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)--A major study to be considered by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention in February calls for revision in agency work to increase the denomination's missionary effectiveness in the USA and overseas.

The Committee of Fifteen, which has been at work since February, 1970, evaluating the denomination's national agencies, says in its report just released, "We believe that the time has come for bold new strategies in home and foreign missions."

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board currently has work in 77 countries and the Home Mission Board in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Panama. Budgets for the two boards total \$55 million, and they have 4,700 missionaries.

The report will recommend to the SBC Executive Committee here February 18-20 that a comprehensive two-year depth study be made of Southern Baptist home and foreign mission strategy.

Members of the Committee of Fifteen, an Executive Committee subcommittee, indicate that this is one of the most important of the 22 recommendations included in their report. E.W. Price Jr., High Point, N.C., is the committee chairman.

Twenty-eight of the 97 "areas of concern" cited in the report deal with the two mission boards, the Brotherhood Commission, which develops missionary study and participation among Baptist men and boys, and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), which fosters missionary study and work among Baptist women and girls.

The "areas of concern" specified in the report will be referred to the trustees of the appropriate agencies for their consideration. The agencies are asked to report back to the SBC Executive Committee by February, 1975, on their disposition of these matters.

The study committee expressed disappointment over the decline in circulation of missionary magazines published by the four missionary agencies. Agency personnel are asked to review their missionary information services and try to reverse this trend.

The four missionary agencies are also requested to consider, with the Baptist Sunday School Board, the possibility of restoring missionary materials to Sunday School and Church Training curriculum periodicals.

The report calls attention to the need for enrollment upturns in the missionary organizations sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union and the Brotherhood Commission.

WMU enrollment reached a peak of 1.5 million in 1962 and has dropped almost a third in 10 years. Between 1958 and 1972, Brotherhood men's enrollment declined 41 per cent at a time when church membership increased 28 per cent.

Regarding future prospects for these groups, the report says, "We see many hopeful signs," and the committee urges the respective organizations to redouble their efforts.

The Committee of Fifteen report to the SBC Executive Committee calls on the two mission boards, both founded in 1845, to give greater promotion to the Cooperative Program, the SBC unified budget. In the 1973-74 SEC operating budget of \$34 million, 51.14 per cent of the Cooperative Program funds will go for foreign missions and 18.31 for home missions.

The committee expressed gratitude for the money raised each year for missions by Woman's Missionary Union. Since its establishment in 1888, WMU has been a major source of financial support for both boards.

The annual WMU Annie Armstrong Easter Offerings for home missions have totaled \$71,064,000. The annual WMU Lottie Moon Christmas Offerings for foreign missions have totaled \$237,464,000.

The report cautions the two mission boards about unessential growth of home office staff. The Foreign Mission Board staff has increased from 107 in 1960 to 252 in 1972, a gain of 136 per cent. This compares to a 95 per cent increase in missionaries to a total of about 2500.

The committee suggests to the board, "Conduct a careful study of the home staff with the view to streamlining whenever possible."

The Home Mission Board home office force has increased from 76 in 1959 to 207 in 1972. The committee cautions against overlapping functions and duplicating offices and reminds the board's trustees and administration that administrative costs should require a small fraction of mission resources.

Evangelism is cited as one of the areas of concern by the Committee of Fifteen. The committee's report calls on the Home Mission Board, which has the denomination's primary evangelism assignment in the USA, to strive to correlate this work more effectively with other agencies in literature, student and lay evangelism and in the use of television.

The report adds, "The Study Committee does not believe the creation of a separate commission on evangelism at this time is the answer." Five reasons for this position are given.

1. The entire Home Mission Board is basically a board of evangelism;
2. During the past few years evangelism has done well under the board's leadership, reaching an all-time high of 452,000 baptisms in 1972;
3. "There seems to be excellent cooperation between the Home Mission Board and the state departments of evangelism;
4. "While a few people have advocated a separate organization, the idea does not seem to have gathered widespread support;
5. "The expectation of saving money by creating a separate organization does not seem to be well founded."

Special heed is asked of the fact that Southern Baptists are not organizing churches as rapidly as in years past. The committee pointed to a new gain of 986 churches in the four-year period, 1959-62, but only a net gain of 199 churches for 1969-72. Total churches now number 34,500.

The committee report asks the Home Mission Board's trustees and administration to consider a higher priority for church extension, with a special emphasis in 1976-79, concentrating on heavily populated unchurched areas, and giving full consideration to the needs of inner cities.

The Home Mission Board is asked to give new attention to strengthening the work of the district Baptist associations.

Lay renewal efforts by the Home Mission Board are encouraged by the committee, with cautions expressed against dislocating local church activities, diverting tithes and offerings from the churches and against unwise emotional extremism.

The study committee report proposes that the Foreign Mission Board take appropriate steps to reverse a decline in available candidates for foreign missionary service.

The report notes with gratitude the increase from 1,283 missionaries in 38 countries in 1958 to 2,507 missionaries in 76 countries (now 77) in 1972. "Yet it may be possible," the report notes, "for our missionary force to become too thinly scattered. It may be also possible that proportionately we can have more missionaries than we can provide program support."

The committee report asks the Foreign Mission Board likewise to strive to reduce the number of resignations among career missionaries. It cites 198 resignations (8.63 per cent) in 1962-66 compared to 398 (14.78 per cent) in 1967-72.

Communications skills for missionaries are underscored by the committee, including the proper utilization of radio and television in close coordination with the witnessing efforts of local congregations.

The Brotherhood Commission is requested by the committee to clarify the purposes of Brotherhood work in the churches and re-evaluate tasks it asks men in the churches to assume.

The commitment of Baptist church members to missions is a stated matter of concern for the Committee of Fifteen. The two mission boards are requested to lead in an emphasis, especially in 1976-79, on the church member's "obligations to all mankind."

The SBC Executive Committee will act on the 129-page committee report in its February meeting, referring appropriate matters to the various agencies, with some recommendations likely to be presented to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Dallas, June 11-13.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second in a series of four articles on the report of the Committee of Fifteen.

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Missionary Personnel Exchange  
Initiated By World Alliance

1/4/74

WASHINGTON (BP)--A missionary "clearing house" or exchange aimed at sharing information regarding medical and other trained personnel with mission groups needing their special capabilities has been initiated by the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) at the request of missionary-sending agencies.

Robert S. Denny, general secretary of BWA, views the mission personnel exchange as a channel whereby the Alliance's 95 member bodies can exchange specialized personnel in order to better meet overall need.

The initial proposal for the exchange came through the BWA Commission on Cooperative Christianity, meeting at Kingston, Jamaica, in 1972.

The Commission noted that overseas medical programs of some conventions are in need of additional personnel, while young doctors and nurses may be available in other groups which cannot financially afford an overseas medical program. Also a surplus of skilled persons may exist in one group which could be shared with another group.

Denny said that the proposal was discussed with leaders of mission boards and agencies and approved on a two-year trial basis by the BWA meeting in Einsiedeln, Switzerland, last July.

The plan is broad enough to include trained personnel in education, agriculture and other specialized fields as well as medicine, a BWA spokesman said.

Carl W. Tiller, BWA associate secretary who will administer the program, said it is designed as an information exchange between member bodies of the Alliance.

Individuals desiring to be considered as candidates must obtain the endorsement of their own church structures. Southern Baptists interested in mission service will still go through normal appointment channels of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, a board spokesman said.

Baptist mission boards and societies are invited to file either of two information sheets with the Washington office of BWA. One form lists mission positions which are available; the other lists missionary candidates with special capabilities.

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Baptists Join in Forming  
National PEARL Coalition

Hold for Release on January 7

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--Twenty-eight religious, educational and civil liberties groups formally organized a new National Coalition for Public Education and Religious Liberty (PEARL).

President of National PEARL is Suffragan Bishop John Walker of the Washington Cathedral (Episcopal). Leo Pfeffer, a nationally-recognized constitutional expert in the field of church-state litigation, is counsel for the group.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Christian Life Commission of the Missouri Baptist Convention are charter members of the coalition. James E. Wood Jr., the joint committee's executive director, served on the planning committee that brought the organization into existence. He will continue to serve on the executive committee.

The purpose of the coalition is to support public education and religious liberty and to oppose government aid to nonpublic schools.

National PEARL will maintain an office in the building of the National Education Association in the nation's capital. An executive director will be employed in the near future.

For the past several years, local and state PEARL organizations have operated, but there has been no national unit to coordinate the efforts of the various independent groups. The local and state PEARL organizations will remain independent but cooperate with National PEARL.

Consultations for more than a year produced a consensus that a national organization is needed to coordinate state and federal efforts on items of mutual interest for the protection of public education and religious liberty. A preliminary conference was held in Washington on March 12, 1973, attended by 75 persons from 50 organizations. The formal organization of National PEARL is a direct outgrowth of that conference.

When the new office is opened and the executive director begins work, National PEARL will perform three major functions: (1) Collect and disseminate information on proposals for supplying federal, state or local aid to nonpublic schools; (2) Collect and disseminate information concerning the adoption of such proposals and their administration; and (3) Facilitate and assist in coordinating activities in opposition to such governmental action.

Among the activities contemplated will be publishing a newsletter, preparing research materials, analyzing federal and state legislation and court decisions, holding an annual conference, establishing a speaker's bureau and serving as a general clearing house of information on which national, state and local groups can rely.

Besides Bishop Walker, other officers include the following: vice presidents, Willard Heckel, former dean, Rutgers University Law School and former moderator of the United Presbyterian Church; Jefferson Fordham, former dean, University of Pennsylvania Law School and now professor of law, University of Utah Law School; Rabbi Robert Gordis, professor of Bible, Jewish Theological Seminary and former president of the Synagogue Council of America; Helen Wise, president of the National Education Association; and Florence Flast, vice chairman of New York PEARL.

Stanley McFarland, director of the governmental relations division of the National Education Association, is the secretary-treasurer.

Although other organizations are expected to join National PEARL as soon as their controlling bodies act on it, the list of the charter members is as follows: American Civil Liberties Union, American Ethical Union, American Humanist Association, American Jewish Congress, Americans United for Separation of Church and State; Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Also, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Central Conference of American Rabbis, National Association of Laity (Catholic), National Council of Jewish Women, National Education Association, National Women's Conference of the American Ethical Union, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Universalist-Unitarian Association.

Also, United Methodist Church, National Capital Area Civil Liberties Union, Connecticut Civil Liberties Union, Michigan Council Against Parochialism and the PEARL organizations of Illinois, Monroe County (N.Y.), Nassau-Suffolk Counties (N.Y.), New York and Missouri.

Also, Missouri Baptist Christian Life Commission, New Jersey Public Funds for Public Schools, New York State United Teachers Federation, Ohio Free Schools Association and Wisconsin Preserve Our Public Schools.

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Southeastern Seminary  
President Sets Retirement

1/4/74

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Olin T. Binkley, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary here since Feb. 1963, will retire Aug. 1, 1974.

Binkley, 65, is completing 41 years as a pastor, teacher and administrator. He first joined Southeastern in 1952 as a professor of Christian ethics and sociology and was named academic dean in 1958.

Before coming to Southeastern Seminary, Binkley was professor of sociology and ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Previously he headed the department of religion at Wake Forest College (now Wake Forest University), served as a lecturer in sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and was pastor of Chapel Hill Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, N.C., and associate pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, New Haven, Conn.

A native of Harmony, N.C., Binkley earned a bachelor of arts degree from Wake Forest College, a bachelor of theology degree from Southern Seminary and a bachelor of divinity degree from Yale Divinity School and a doctor of philosophy degree from Yale University.

Claude Bowen of Greensboro, N.C., president of Southeastern Seminary's board of trustees, will serve as chairman of the committee to nominate Binkley's successor.

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NCAA Award Announced for  
Southern Baptist Pastor

1/4/74

KANSAS CITY (BP)--The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has named R.J. Robinson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga., as one of five national recipients of its Silver Anniversary Award.

Robinson and four other leaders, who were All-Americans 25 years ago, were selected on the basis of community leadership as well as athletic accomplishment. They were to receive the award at the NCAA's convention in San Francisco.

He was an All-American basketball player at Baylor University, Waco, Tex., from which he graduated in 1949, and a member of the 1948 Olympic basketball team. He preached the Olympic sermon in London.

Robinson is scheduled to preach the annual sermon at this year's SBC meeting in Dallas in June. He is a past president of the Baptist State Convention of Georgia.

The four other recipients of the NCAA award are Secretary of the Army Howard H. Callaway, Washington; Robert B. McCurry Jr., vice president of Chrysler Corporation, Detroit; Robert S. Dorsey, jet engine expert, Cincinnati; and Eugene T. Rossides, senior partner in the New York-Washington law firm of Rogers and Wells.

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