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**Barriers Missionaries Face
Wider than Rivers or Oceans**

By James D. Watson

VERACRUZ, Mexico (BP)--I have been a little self-conscious because I have not crossed a vast amount of water to be a foreign missionary.

The water we crossed was the muddy Rio Grande River and, as best as I remember, the river was almost dry.

I thought about many of my missionary friends in various parts of the world who spent hours in airplanes and some even weeks on a boat. Also, I remembered their chiding that we had only second-class dedication because we were so close to home.

It was all in fun, of course, and we soon realized that even though the body of water was narrow and muddy, instead of wide and salty, Mexico is as foreign as any country I have ever visited.

The distance in today's world is the easiest part of foreign missions. Technology has diminished the distance of all of our missionaries to a matter of hours from home. The danger is nil compared to our forerunners who traveled dangerous weeks and months when arriving on the field was a feat in itself.

Since arriving here and spending our first year on our field of Veracruz, we have found that 1,800 miles of salt water does not make a missionary; it is the last 18 inches that count.

There has been no technology to help the missionary span the last 18 inches between himself and the man he came to win to Jesus. The barriers are just as wide and dangerous as ever and are as evident in those countries close to home as those far away and sometimes even more so.

Aside from barriers of culture, customs and communication that are evident to all missionaries, we have one other in Mexico that affects our work here as much as all others.

That barrier is history. Mexico does not have a tomb to the unknown soldier that stirs the patriotic hearts of its citizens, but it does have an impressive monument to its boy heroes. There are five tall marble columns, a memorial to each of the young cadets who alone were left to defend the country against the invading American forces in 1847.

Rather than surrender to the "gringos," they wrapped themselves in Mexican flags and plunged to their deaths from the tower of Chapultepec Palace in Mexico City.

One of the preaching points we attend here in Veracruz is named "Colonia 21 de Abril." What happened on April 21? The United States Marines in 1914 invaded Veracruz and again the city's defense was in the hands of the naval academy that was here then.

Some of the cadets gave their lives, including the nephew of the then president of the Republic. All school children have a holiday every year on this day, honoring the boy heroes of Veracruz.

Then, too, we have to try to answer questions like, "Who are the poor in the United States?" and "Why does the Negro and the Mexican-American have such a hard time there?"

Many Mexicans still look longingly at Texas and realize that it once was a part of Mexico. They know nothing of the Alamo, just that the North Americans defeated them at San Jacinto and Santa Anna gave Texas away.

These are real barriers. One cannot cross them with technology nor in a matter of hours, weeks or months and sometimes not even in a matter of years or a lifetime.

There is only one bridge across the last 18 inches. That is the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and the message of love in Jesus Christ.

We may walk the 1,800 miles, but it is the Lord that took the step that bridged the last 18 inches on the Cross of Calvary and through the Resurrection Tomb.

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NOTE: James D. Watson is a Southern Baptist Representative to Mexico under the sponsorship of the Foreign Mission Board. He is stationed in Veracruz.

World Men's Conference Urges
New Partnership Concept

12/5/74

By Jim Newton

HONG KONG (BP)--After four days of messages emphasizing that all Christians are called to be "ministers," the First World Conference of Baptist Men ended here with a plea for a new partnership between the pulpit and the pew.

From beginning to end, the conference, which attracted 482 registered participants from 25 countries, was filled with addresses stressing that "laymen" are called to be ministers just as much as pastors.

Southern Baptist missionary, Leslie Hill, of the Philippines, called for the conference to "join me in stamping out laymen, or at least the concept of laymen."

Hill said there were three good reasons for eliminating the "crippling adjective, 'laymen', from Baptist vocabulary."

First, he said, it implies laymen are not "competent" in an age of professionalism.

"Certainly if you were sick, you would not want a layman, you'd want a physician, a professional," he pointed out. "A sick world . . . has no place for Christian laymen--only competent Christians, belonging and skilled, can help."

Secondly, the concept of "laymen" is unbiblical, Hill claimed.

"The New Testament does not classify the people of God into classes of laity and clergy. The word, laos (laity) means 'the people of God,' and these people are the ones charged with the task of ministry."

Third, said Hill, the concept of "laymen Christians" leaves us with too few ministers to reach the three billion people in the world, 800 million who live just across the Hong Kong border in China, who do not know Jesus Christ.

Hill urged Baptists to accept the concept that it is the work of the "people of God" (the laity) to perform the ministry of the church, and the work of the "minister of ministers" (the pastors) to train and equip the ministers of the church.

"Once you realize that your personal gifts alone determine your area of ministry, many things you said were the pastor's job obviously become yours," he told the conference.

"My message to the preachers here is simply, 'Loose your Baptist men from the lifeless graveclothes of misunderstood responsibility and let them go to the task of ministry in the world.'"

Glendon McCullough, executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's Brotherhood Commission, said, "There is no person in this room whom God cannot use as his minister," McCullough spoke to a large audience at Kowloon City Baptist Church.

"Unfortunately, many of the cultures from which some of us come and the hierarchies of the churches from which others of us come do not agree with the theories proposed here," McCullough warned.

"They, like the leaders of the synagogues of Jesus' time, are sometimes threatened," he said. "Many organizational and church leaders are afraid of that which they cannot control. Many of our clergy are no more ready for all Christians to be ministers than the Roman church was ready for Martin Luther to proclaim 95 theses on the door of the church in Whittenburg, Germany."

McCullough called for the kind of relationship between the ministers of the pulpit and the ministers of the pew demonstrated by Jesus in his examples of the relationship between sheep and shepherd.

"The good shepherd, recognizing the value of the sheep, will protect them from the enemy, guide them to watering places and green pastures; but will rightly leave the lamb-bearing to the sheep," he said.

It is the role of the pastor, as shepherd, to motivate, protect, enable, equip and lead the sheep. "These and their ministry are of utmost importance," said McCullough. "What we have neglected is the importance of the sheep and the realization that all are ministers."

Most of the six-day conference, sponsored by the men's department of the Baptist World Alliance, was devoted to an emphasis on training Baptist men in personal witnessing and evangelism, and to workshops on more effective involvement of men in the total life of the church.

C. B. Hogue, director of the evangelism division for the SBC Home Mission Board in Atlanta, said evangelism is the axis around which the total life of the church revolves. Hogue stated that evangelism is not a "take it or leave it affair," but a "must in the life of the Christian's day-to-day experience."

A black Baptist executive with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Kansas City, Kan., Walter Cade, urged the conference participants to return to their homes and go out into the subways, factories, offices and shopping centers and "testify in a triumphant chorus that we serve a risen Savior."

McCullough said that "the scandal of this century is that Christians have allowed so much of our world to go hungry."

"It is difficult to tell a person dying from starvation that "I love you and God loves you and I want to witness to you about Christ," he said.

He said the funds Baptists have given to the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) World Relief program have been pathetically small. He said he had heard a lot of discussion during the week about need for witnessing, but that Christ did not ignore man's physical condition.

"Jesus developed a perfect balance between witness and action," McCullough said. "We have not done so well. Some of us emphasize one to the neglect of the other, and some aren't concerned about either."

McCullough said the minister in the pew has the resources and talents to deal with the great social, physical and spiritual problems of the world, and can financially undergird the effort to show mankind that we really care about the whole man.

Former Southern Baptist Convention President Owen Cooper, a retired fertilizer manufacturer from Yazoo City, Miss., led the meeting in taking up an offering on the final night to be used to fight hunger and malnutrition through the BWA relief program.

McCullough charged the conference participants to return to their homes, their churches, and their work to lead the ministers in the pulpit and the pew in writing a new book--the book of Acts of the 20th Century Apostles.

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Hollis Urges Government
Opposition to Lotteries

12/5/74

WASHINGTON (BP)--A leading Southern Baptist authority in the field of gambling study and research said here that the federal government should actively oppose state-run lotteries.

Harry N. Hollis Jr., director of family and special moral concerns of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Christian Life Commission, testified here before the presidential Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling. The panel conducted two days of hearings focusing on state lotteries.

In answer to a question from one of the commission members, Hollis declared that the federal government should assume the posture of actively opposing state lotteries and other forms of legalized gambling rather than remaining neutral.

In his formal testimony before the panel, the Southern Baptist leader said that "Americans cannot afford lotteries. They cost too much. The relatively small financial gains are insignificant compared to the damage done when government gets into the gambling business."

Hollis insisted that his opposition to lotteries does not mean he opposes "pleasure and fun." He elaborated, "Indeed, it is because I believe as a Christian in the joyful celebration of life that I oppose government's involvement in misleading people to pursue lotteries as a source of happiness."

"The best of Judeo-Christian thought," he continued, "points people toward a joyful life not through grasping for self but through helping other people."

Hollis then proceeded to list six arguments for rejecting lotteries. He said they: "place a heavy burden on the poor who are least able to pay for the tickets. . . may become legal devices to whet people's appetites for other illegal forms of gambling. . . are impossible to keep free from abuse. . . do not really produce the large amount of revenue often claimed by their supporters. . . contribute to the lack of respect for government. . . are based on a philosophy of life which is contrary to what is best for the American society."

Hollis was one of several authorities in the field the panel heard during its two days of lottery hearings. The group included one other representative of the religious community, Paul M. Minus Jr., a professor of church history at the Methodist Theological School in Delaware, Ohio.

The commission was organized in 1972 under a provision of the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970. That law provided for the establishment of a commission charged with conducting "a comprehensive legal and factual study of gambling in the United States" at all levels. The commission was also instructed "to formulate and propose such changes in those (gambling) policies and practices" as it deems appropriate.

Under the act of Congress setting up the panel, the President appointed 15 members, including four U. S. Senators, four members of the U. S. House of Representatives, and seven outside experts from the fields of law, law enforcement and the social sciences.

The panel has until 1976 to conduct its study and make a final report to the President.

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