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'Baptists Ahead'

Language Missions Passing
Through Critical Period

PHOENIX (BP)--Southern Baptists are "five to 10 years ahead of any other denomination in your thinking about indigeneous missions and ethnicity of the church," a mission strategist from Fuller Seminary said here.

Peter Wagner, of the Pasadena, Calif.-based theological school, made the statement in an address to more than 90 state missions directors and/or language missions directors attending the 18th annual Language Missions Leadership Conference. This year's conference was the largest in its history, with 93 per cent of the 33 Baptist state conventions represented. This years theme for the event, sponsored by the language missions department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (HMB), was "The Native American."

Wagner's praise of Southern Baptist language missions was tempered with his decrying of the "destructive attitude of Christians who think everyone should be exactly as they are. That's cultural chauvinism."

In spite of Wagner's accolade to Southern Baptists, Oscar Romo, director of the HMB's department of language missions, believes that language missions, Southern Baptists oldest missions endeavor in the United States, is passing through one of its most critical periods.

"Language missions have achieved acceptability," Romo told the conferees, but "in the process we've been overwhelmed by our success."

"We've bought buildings, planted churches, appointed missionaries . . . in order to develop self-supporting, ethnic churches, and then we find they need another building, more financial aid--and that we are back into the same cycle."

Southern Baptist language missions have spread nationwide over the past 20 years, with more than 1,300 ethnic congregations having some 200,000 members.

In 1974, these language-culture groups reported 23,000 professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

But many of the techniques that created growth before are now beginning to bring about tensions and frustrations "that I only began to sense in the past two years," Romo said.

"We've reached the apex of what we were planning to do. The question we face now is, 'where do we go from here?'"

Romo hesitates to answer his own question at this point. But observers say his directions will most likely include even greater emphasis on missionaries serving catalytic roles--helping others do the job, rather than doing everything themselves. It will also include, they say, more efforts to bring indigenous churches to self-support, without paternalistic "handouts" from the HMB or other Southern Baptist agencies.

"We recognize that we can't expect every little congregation to develop beyond its potential," Romo said. "Not all can have all the programs of the Southern Baptist Convention. Not all can have a missionary with the salary of a W. A. Criswell. Not all can reach self support. (W.A. Criswell is pastor of First Baptist Church Dallas, the world's largest Baptist church.)

"Part of our job in language missions, " Romo said, "will be learning to classify ethnic churches' potential, and not forcing a church to be what it cannot be.

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NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

"But when a church has the potential to be self-supporting, the pressure will be on them to become self-supporting," he said.

Romo wants better representation for ethnics on Southern Baptist boards and agencies. "We must learn to involve ethnics in Southern Baptist life and Southern Baptists in ethnics' life. It's a two-way street that we have to travel from now on."

Catalytic missionaries, indigeneous churches moving toward self-support, and increased ethnic participation in Southern Baptist life were, in fact, cornerstones of a working paper on language missions proposed earlier this year by an "ad hoc" committee of language missions experts, from missionaries to ethnic pastors to seminary professors.

The committee's report, endorsed by conferees here, includes the following suggestions: that greater exposure be given to ethnic missions; that a representative group of ethnics be selected to meet with Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) agencies "to encourage their involvement in ministering to the language-culture segment of Southern Baptists and to the mission field."

The suggestions include proposals that: the US-2 program (the HMB's two-year program for college graduates) be reevaluated as to its effect in language missions, cost against accomplishments, and that an apprenticeship program be developed as an alternative; that the missionary selection and appointment procedures of the board be reexamined in light of the emphasis on indigenous missions.

At least two of the proposals could have far-reaching effects for the HMB itself.

One would establish a new criteria for appointment of missionaries and new categories of missionaries. "Some would like to do away with life-time appointments of missionaries," explained a member of the ad hoc committee. "This would encourage missionary pastors to move their churches toward self support more quickly, and not hang on to the HMB because of the fringe benefits or job security."

Romo admitted, "I am divided in myself, when to push to self support or when to provide a better salary and standard of living for a pastor."

But he made it clear independent (SBC-affiliated) churches were the ultimate goal of all language missions efforts. He has trimmed almost 200 language missionaries from the HMB rolls in the years he's been heading the language missions department.

The other proposal would develop an apprenticeship program to provide better trained workers with language-culture congregations. The US-2ers have too often just adjusted to the language culture group when their two-year term ends, a committee member explained, "and the disruption of their leaving hurts the work."

Other speakers at the conference included Stuart Tonemah, an American Indian and professor at Pennsylvania State University, who said his own struggles "to determine who I am reflect those of many Indians.

"Christianity has helped rob the Native American of his cultural heritage and identity by making sinful many of the Indians' traditional ways, beliefs and habits." Tonemah urged the missions leaders to "hear what Oscar (Romo) says and give ethnic people a chance to make their own mistakes."

Carolyn Weatherford, executive secretary of the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), an SBC auxiliary, urged the conferees to develop "the five C's of the missions mosaic,"—concern, commitment, courage, cooperation and continuous effort. Language missions in the mosaic, "she said, "won't be a clear-cut result until each of us recognizes that wherever we are, whatever our language, we have a responsibility for making Christ known where we are."

Gifts to 3 Baptist Schools,
Home over \$3 million

By Baptist Press

Land gifts valued at \$1.6 million to Dallas Baptist College and more than \$1.5 million to Mississippi College in Clinton were announced by officials for the two schools.

Dallas Baptist College was given more than 478 acres in two separate tracts, one over 300 acres and the other 178 acres, by an anonymous donor from Fort Worth. The 300 acres in North Texas were said to be worth \$1 million, while the smaller tract in Fort Worth was estimated at \$600,000, the Baptist Standard reported college spokesmen saying.

The Mississippi College gift is almost 7,400 acres deeded the school by retired dentist Daniel C. York from Bellefontaine, a spokesman for that school said.

The majority of the Mississippi land is currently under lease for timber purposes. Much of it has already been reforested, the spokesman noted.

"I want Mississippi College to take the income they receive from this property and set it up in a loan fund that can be distributed to needy and deserving students in gaining an education in a Christian environment," York said. The Yorks have no children, and he has never been on the Mississippi College campus.

The Dallas College received more good news when a spokesman for the Dallas Baptist Association announced that more than \$600,000 has been pledged by the churches, of which \$325,000 cash had already been received. The funds are to be used toward payment of an existing debt against the college, the Standard said.

There are no restrictions or dedications to land given to Dallas Baptist College, according to Charles Pitts, special consultant to the school's trustees. The school's administrators, according to the Standard, said the gifts will probably be used for the college's endowment.

Another Baptist school, Carson-Newman in Jefferson City, Tenn. announced a gift of more than \$60,000 in cash and securities as a scholarship bequest from the late Lela Sims Taylor in memory of her husband, Raymond, a 1916 graduate of the school.

A gift reported by the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, Inc., was from Duke Endowment, with the money allocated on the basis of the number of "full and half orphans served in any given year," a spokesman there said. (BP)

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Baptists' Role Helps Defeat
Parimutuel Bill in Georgia

Baptist Press
2/27/75

ATLANTA (BP)--Georgia Southern Baptists played a major role in the crushing defeat of a controversial parimutuel gambling proposal in the state's house of representatives, the associate editor of The Christian Index said here.

The Georgia house said no to House Bill (H.B.) 221, voting 133 to 37, which had it passed would have created a state racing commission.

The bill was the object of a concerted effort by many religious and civic groups across the state led by spokesmen of the Georgia Baptist Convention and by The Christian Index, weekly news publication of Georgia Baptists.

"Baptists should be given the lion's share of credit in defeating the bill. They have provided the bulk of leadership and they have received the brunt of ridicule by pro-parimutuel members of the news media," said Robert LaFavre, associate editor of The Index.

Among Georgia Baptist leaders leading the fight against opposing H.B. 221 before the state's house of representatives were: Georgia Convention President James W. Waters, the pastor of Mabel White Memorial Baptist Church in Macon; Louie D. Newton, a former Southern Baptist Convention president, a former editor of The Christian Index and pastor emeritus of Druid Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta; and Dudley T. Pomeroy, the pastor of First Baptist Church in College Park.

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The Index, under Editor Jack U. Harwell, gave heavy editorial support in opposition of the gambling bill. And strong public stands were taken against the proposal led by Searcy S. Garrison, executive secretary-treasurer of the Georgia Baptist Convention, Harwell, Waters, Pomeroy and Newton, LaFavre said.

Waters reacted to the parimutuel bill's defeat:

"This is a great victory for moral and civic righteousness, for economic welfare of the state--for Georgians, period.

"We face the future with confidence that we are building a great inheritance for our children. Let us never fear to stand with courage for those things which are right before God," The Index reported that Waters said.

Among the many legislators who took the well of the house to oppose the parimutuel proposal were E. B. Toles, a lay Baptist preacher and E.M. Childers of Rome, Ga., The Index said.

Toles' plea against the measure included quotes from Reader's Digest concerning doctors placing gambling in the category of a disease, the same as alcoholism.

Childers, along with other speakers, cited strong ties of gambling to organized criminal activities and corruption of public figures.

Another legislator, Dorsey Matthews of Moultrie, asked, "What would Christ do in this situation?"

The Index noted supporters of the bill said Georgia needed the money and that they were "only interested in getting that money. However, those legislators failed to say how much money would be derived from parimutuel gambling in Georgia or how much it would cost in administration."

Legislator Billy D. Evans of Macon told the House that legislators are responsible to the people who elect them, The Index said.

Evans summed up the feelings of many representatives when he said he was voting no. He cited a sermon by Waters the previous Sunday condemning gambling and added, "Brother Jimmy, I'm coming home."

Another parimutuel gambling bill that would apply to Fulton County was still in committee and its author stated publicly, The Index said, he intended to leave it in committee and not try to bring it out until next year.

Baptists in Oklahoma helped to defeat a parimutuel proposal in late summer, 1974 by a 63,000 vote margin, in what was said to be one of the largest voter turnouts in the state's history. Texas Baptists combined their efforts in May, 1974 to help defeat a parimutuel proposal in that state.

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Up \$200,000
\$447,645 in Gifts Record
For Baptist World Relief

Baptist Press
2/27/75

WASHINGTON (BP)--Receipts for Baptist World Relief reached a record \$447,645 in 1974, according to Carl W. Tiller, coordinator of the relief program of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

The 1974 total is an increase of about \$200,000 over the 1973 giving of \$233,340 and the 1972 sum of \$266,363, Tiller said.

He attributed the record sum to three factors. Baptists now have "a raised consciousness of the Christian ethic and responsibility toward those who are in great need," he noted. And Baptists are also giving more to countries not served by their own mission boards, he added.

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"There is a growing conviction," Tiller continued, "that the Baptist World Alliance is a suitable, efficient, and effective instrument for getting help to the people who need it virtually anywhere in the world."

Baptists of Canada were the largest contributors to Baptist World Relief, with more than \$142,000. Churches of seven national Baptist bodies in the United States gave \$92,000. Baptists of Australia gave \$60,000; West Germany, \$48,000.

Relief donations came from 26 member bodies of the Alliance and 3 non-members. There also were contributions from the three departments of the Alliance, men, women and youth; from local churches and individuals; and from the West German organization, Brot fuer die Welt ("Bread for the World").

Expenditures for disaster relief were made in about 14 countries, for "fellowship" assistance in eastern Europe, "developmental" work in eight nations, and aid to churches in several countries. Administration and general costs taken from relief contributions were less than two percent of the total.

Tiller reported to the BWA Relief Committee that 1975 relief goals project a further increase in giving to \$530,500, with more spending emphasis on "developmental programs." Such programs aim to help people reach self-sufficiency in food production and earning their living.

However, famine in many nations could require greater emphasis than planned on the "disaster" goal of direct efforts in feeding the hungry, he said.

Numerous churches have reported plans to encourage their people to fast one meal a week, or to observe two meatless days a week, or other variations of a simpler life style. The subsequent savings is contributed to Baptist World Relief, Tiller noted.

Relief designations to the Alliance, Tiller said, are honored in their entirety. All money given for hunger relief or for aid in disasters goes strictly to the purposes designated by the donor.

Examples of Baptist World Relief projects in 1974 are \$5,000 to remodeling of the Old Peoples' Home in Los Cardales, Buenos Aires, Argentina; \$2,000 to the Convencion Bautista de Nicaragua for rebuilding churches destroyed in the 1972 earthquake; \$6,000 to the Vietnam Baptist mission for the Cam Ranh Christian Orphanage and a resettlement project; and \$1,800 to the Baptist mission in Haiti for tractor attachments for the Agricultural School.

Baptist World Relief donations in 1974 also aided disasters in Honduras, India and the drought nations of Africa. Baptists in several nations donated about \$7,500 that allowed Bibles to be shipped into Romania.

Relief for Bangladesh, which has suffered flooding, is "number one on our list of priorities for humanitarian relief," Tiller said.

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Trustees Retain President
Of Troubled Baptist College

Baptist Press
2/27/75

GREENVILLE, S. C. (BP)--Stressing their intent to maintain a middle ground stance in a controversy at North Greenville College, trustees of the two-year Baptist school in Tigerville voted unanimously to retain Harold E. Lindsey as president. At the same time, they reaffirmed "our faculty to be one of the strongest assets of our Christian education program."

Lindsey's policies in administering the school's affairs have been the center of the controversy, including his 1974 purchase of 50 acres of college-owned land.

In recent weeks, 16 of 22 faculty members and one of four part-time instructors signed a petition demanding Lindsey's resignation as chief administrator of the 750-student college. The letter of petition accused Lindsey, president since 1970, of being "arrogant, dictatorial, self-serving, unChristian . . ." and asked him to resign, according to the South Carolina Baptist Courier. Copies of the letter went to all trustees of the school, the Courier said.

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