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76-65

**SBC & Ethnic--Dangers
And Advantages Cited**

By Charlotte Powell
For Baptist Press

Southern Baptists' development of an indigenous approach to language missions, beginning about 10 years ago, has come amid a period of numerical growth and change for the now 12.7 million-member denomination.

A shift is taking place from the predominantly southern Anglo makeup of the Southern Baptist Convention. Even now, its work, missions and ministry are conducted in all 50 states and among more than 33 different ethnic groups. And more such changes are sure to come.

While the indigenous approach has been a positive thrust for the nation's largest non-Catholic evangelical group, mission experts such as David Benham admit there are advantages and dangers in invoking such a concept.

"It has been proved," says Benham of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's (HMB) language missions department, "that the most effective means of presenting the gospel is through the language and culture in which a person lives."

But, says Benham, "Culture can be overemphasized to the point it becomes a language culture club, rather than a vehicle to communicate the gospel. When language groups can see other cultures too, then there's a more complete congregation."

Some observers say indigenous missions just forms segregated enclaves and keeps people apart. But the HMB's Ed Wheeler, department of cooperative ministries with National Baptists, believes the denomination can prevent "segregated clubs." This can be done, he says, by allowing ethnic Baptist groups to move into the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) life in large enough numbers so their concerns of ministry and ethics can be voiced before the Convention.

Language expert Donald Larson of Bethel College in St. Paul, Minn., urges Southern Baptists to bring ethnics into all phases of SBC life--association, state, national--or risk creating divisive units.

HMB language missions director Oscar Romo, a Mexican-American and a strong proponent of the indigenous missions approach, agrees and has helped to place at least eight ethnics on SBC agency boards. Blacks, Asians and Mexican-Americans have served as officers of several state conventions--including Herb Cross, a black who has been president of the Alaska Baptist Convention.

Romo, Benham and others acknowledge problems exist in indigenous missions but say their experience and that of other denominations indicates that if alternatives are provided, the result will be stronger missions work.

Elias Golonka, HMB European language missionary to New York's United Nations community, explains:

"American Baptists in 1952 voted to discontinue support to language churches. They wanted to consolidate and absorb everyone into Anglo churches.

"It didn't work. Ethnic peoples so desired to remain with the church of their cultural identity that they deserted the American Baptists. Many of these people are still drawn to nationality churches even when they speak English, because they retain the traits and thought patterns of their origin."

James Nelson, who pioneered in indigenous missions among the Navaho Indians and now director of the rural urban missions department, HMB, points to a danger of doctrinal instability. He has seen churches go independent because the indigenous leadership took that direction, Nelson said.

"But I'd rather start 10 churches and have one leave the SBC than start only one church," he says. A missionary who works through indigenous leaders can accomplish much more than one who tries to do all the work himself, he stresses.

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Nelson also feels the SBC' needs the diversity brought by ethnics:

"We have become so convinced that a church, to be an SBC church, has to do certain things, certain ways. We want to mold every church into the kind of five-star church we think it should be.

"But that's an unhealthy in-bred sort of attitude," he notes.

Nelson, Romo and others say it is important that Southern Baptists recognize the Convention's diversity and give ethnics a larger leadership role.

Like the United States, they argue, the denomination cannot become a homogeneous blob-- even if it wanted to; its people, backgrounds and viewpoints are too different.

But the differences are not so great, says M. Wendell Belew, director of the HMB's division of mission ministries, "that we cannot be united as brothers and sisters in Christ."

Alexa Popovici, a native Romanian who came to the U.S. about 10 years ago and is pastor of the Romanian Baptist Church of Chicago, is even more emphatic:

"To blend all together, to make them lose their backgrounds, this would be bad...To ask someone to deny his roots is a bad thing. Man cannot do that with his feelings...

"No one ever asks me, 'Why are you Romanian?' Or, 'why are you a Christian?'...That is why the United States is so great a country."

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This is the final in a three-part series on Ethnics and the U.S. Bicentennial written for Baptist Press by Charlotte Powell, research assistant for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Atlanta.

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Church Gets Permission
To Rebuild After 30 Years

Baptist Press
4/12/76

BERLIN (BP)--A church whose original building was destroyed by bombing over 30 years ago has finally received permission to erect a new structure in a different location.

The Bethel Baptist Church in the Eastern sector of Berlin had tried since 1945 to obtain permission to rebuild its house of worship left in ruins by bombing raids during World War II. However, due to government priorities for other construction, it had not been possible until now.

Meanwhile, the congregation has met on the upper floor of a former factory. The ruins of its own building were removed in 1972, and a kindergarten playground now stands on the site.

Another property has been secured and plans drawn up for a new structure, whose auditorium will seat 300 persons. Near a large residential section, it will have auxiliary rooms for church youth, children's and women's organizations, as well as conference rooms designed for church affairs and for Baptist groups.

Total cost is estimated at 500,000 Marks. Resources of the Baptist Union in the German Democratic Republic will provide one-half of this amount.

Although all over construction projects have been self-financed, the Union's General Secretary Rolf Dammann, has written European Baptist Federation Secretary-elect Gerhard Claas to request assistance from sister Baptist organizations outside the country toward realization of the remaining 250,000 Marks.

"We would mention that we ask such aid for the first time," the letter noted.

The Executive Committee of the European Baptist Federation (EBF) accepted the request during its recent meeting in Moscow, and will recommend to the EBF Council that it become an additional European aid project.

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Ohio Elects Sommerkamp,
 Editor, Allan, WMU Director

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP)--Theo E. Sommerkamp, associate director of public relations at the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, Dallas, for the past five years, was elected here as editor of the Ohio Baptist Messenger.

Sommerkamp, 47, who has spent 21 years in Southern Baptist journalism and public relations, will succeed L. H. Moore, retiring editor of the state Baptist news publication, June 1.

He will also have responsibility for the public relations for the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio and serve as the convention's historical secretary.

Besides electing Sommerkamp, the Ohio Convention's executive board also named Mrs. Helen M. Allan, 50, editor of Mission Friends material for the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), Birmingham, as state WMU director.

In other action, the board voted to establish, with Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., a branch of the seminary's Boyce Bible School in Columbus to offer non-degree diploma work. A building will be remodeled to house the Boyce School center, a Seminary Extension center and the Capital City Baptist Association.

Before joining the Annuity Board in 1971, where he also served as press representative, Sommerkamp spent six years as director of European Baptist Press Service (EBPS), Ruschlikon, Switzerland, under appointment as a missionary associate by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The Tampa, Fla., native previously had spent 10½ years as assistant director of Baptist Press (BP), the SBC's news service, SBC Executive Committee, Nashville.

Sommerkamp served as local news editor for WTNT Radio, Tallahassee, Fla., and as general assignment reporter for the Tallahassee Democrat before joining Baptist Press in 1955. Earlier he had worked two summers as a sports writer for the Tampa Daily Times, while completing a bachelor of science degree in religious journalism from Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU), Shawnee. He was editor of the Bison, OBU's campus paper, 1950-51.

He also earned a master of science in journalism from Florida State University and has earned accredited status from the Public Relations Society of America. He is current president of the Texas Baptist Public Relations Association.

Mrs. Allan, wife of the late H. Marvin Allan, a pastor who died in 1951, worked at the SBC Sunday School Board, 1958-1968, first as a budget analyst assistant and then as assistant editor of Home Life magazine. She joined the WMU in 1968.

A native of Michigan, she was reared in St. Louis. She is an alumna of Washington University, the University of Tennessee and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Sommerkamp is married to the former Jean Childers of Nowata, Okla. They have three children: Bradley, Karl, Julia.

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(BP) Photo of Sommerkamp will be mailed to Baptist state papers.

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**Baptists Increase in Iran,
Decrease in Israel**

WASHINGTON (BP)--Baptists in the Middle East, always a tiny minority, show a slight decline this year, compared to last year, according to Baptist World Alliance (BWA) statistics.

Baptists in Iran have grown from 137 to 202, but Baptist numbers in Israel and the Gaza Strip are down. For Israel, including occupied territories other than the Gaza Strip, the report now shows 240 church members. A year ago the figure was 345. For the one church in the Gaza Strip the decline is from 33 to 25.

Totals for the Middle East are 1,495 church members in 1976, compared to 1,542 in 1975. The number of churches is listed at 38 in both years. The "Middle East," under BWA definitions, excludes northern Africa and also excludes the Muslim country of Pakistan, counted by the BWA as a part of "Asia."

The small decline noted now is relatively insignificant in the longer view, according to Carl W. Tiller, BWA statistician. He notes that Baptists in the Middle East numbered less than 1,000 only five years ago, that their 60 percent increase since then is substantial, and that a momentary plateau is to be expected from time to time in growth statistics.

Church membership data recorded in previous BWA compilations for the Middle East have been: 1969, 1,068; 1970, 949; 1971, 955; 1972, 1,008; 1973, 1,369; 1974, 1,390; and 1975, 1,542.

| | Baptists in the Middle East | | 1975 | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | 1976 (a) | | | |
| | <u>Churches</u> | <u>Members</u> | <u>Churches</u> | <u>Members</u> |
| Iran | 2 | 202 | 2 | 137 |
| Israel | 9 | 240 | 9 | 345 |
| Jordan | 10 | 321 | 10 | 321 |
| Lebanon | 14 | 594 | 14 | 594 |
| Syria | 1 | 50 | 1 | 50 |
| Turkey | 1 | 63 | 1 | 62 |
| Yemen Arab Republic (b) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gaza Strip | 1 | 25 | 1 | 33 |
| TOTALS | 38 | 1,495 | 38 | 1,542 |

(a) Subject to revision

(b) Also, no Baptist work is reported in Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Cyprus, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, or the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

-30-

24 Appointed By SBC
Home Mission Board

Baptist Press
4/12/76

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's executive committee, meeting here, named three missionary couples, 12 missionary associates and six two-year term US-2 missionaries.

The three missionary couples were appointed to positions in Maryland, California and Kansas.

Burt and Sara Potter were appointed by the board's department of metropolitan missions and will serve in Baltimore, where he will be director of missions for Baltimore Baptist Association.

Since 1974, Potter has been an associate in the Sunday School department of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, Raleigh. He previously served as area director of missions in Nebraska, and director of Philadelphia City ministries, and pastor in Texas.

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A native of Corpus Christi, Tex., Potter is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C. Mrs. Potter is a native of Washington, D. C., and is a graduate of Meredith College, Raleigh, N. C.

Stanley Owen White and Kathie White also were appointed by the department of metropolitan missions and will serve in Los Angeles, Calif., where he will be director of missions for Los Angeles Baptist Association.

White, a native of Santa Monica, Calif., is a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex., where he earned a doctor of theology degree in 1965.

Since 1971, he has been pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, San Diego, Calif., and previously was pastor of churches in Oklahoma and Texas. Mrs. White is a native of Bauxite, Ark.

James Lester Williams and Carol Jean Williams of Great Bend, Kan., were appointed by the department of rural-urban missions. They will remain in Great Bend, where he has been pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church since 1971.

A native of Clarendon, Tex., and graduate of Wayland Baptist College, Plainview, Tex., and Southwestern Seminary, Williams previously served churches in Oklahoma, Texas and Nebraska.

Mrs. Williams is a native of Mangum, Okla., and has attended Baylor University, Amarillo (Tex.) College, Wayland Baptist College, and Fort Hays (Kan.) State College. She is a registered nurse.

Twelve missionary associates were appointed. They are Santos and Rosa Arredondo of San Saba, Tex., appointed by the department of language missions; Thomas and Dale Dobson of New Orleans, appointed by the department of Christian social ministries; David and Gretchen Claybrook of Springfield, Ill., and Dan and Janice Nelson of Tigard, Ore., appointed by the evangelism section; and Charles and Lottie Crim of Green River, Wyo., and Lolard and Dorothy Simmons of Casa Grande, Ariz., appointed by the department of rural-urban missions.

A native of Beeville, Tex., Arredondo is a student at Howard Payne College, Brownwood, Tex., and is pastor of Calvary Mexican Baptist Mission, San Saba.

Dobson will serve as a social worker at Sellers Baptist Home and Adoption Center, New Orleans.

A native of Fair Forest, S. C., he is a graduate of Furman University, Greenville, S. C.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and Tulane University, New Orleans, where he earned a master's degree in social work. He previously served as a missionary associate as director of the Baptist Rescue Mission in New Orleans.

Mrs. Dobson is a graduate of William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Miss., and New Orleans Seminary.

Claybrook will be an intern in the evangelism department of the Illinois Baptist State Association, Springfield. He has served as a public school teacher and on the staffs of churches in Kentucky and Illinois.

He is native of Jackson, Tenn., and is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., and Southern Baptist seminary, Louisville, where he's working on a doctor of ministries degree. Mrs. Claybrook is a native of Arkansas and has attended Ouachita Baptist University and Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, Ark.

Nelson will be intern in evangelism with the Northwest Baptist Convention, headquartered in Portland Ore. He is a native of Hattiesburg, Miss., and is a graduate of William Carey College and New Orleans Seminary. Mrs. Nelson is a native of Jefferson City, Tenn., and is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee. She has attended Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

Crim will be director of missions for Southern Wyoming Baptist Association. He has been pastor of Monroe Avenue Baptist Church, Green River, Wyo., since 1970 and previously served as pastor of several Texas churches. A native of Mineola, Tex., he is a graduate of East Texas Baptist College, Marshall.

Mrs. Crim, a native of Houston and is a graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Tex.

Simmons was appointed director of missions for River Valley Baptist Association in Arizona. Since 1974, he has been pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Casa Grande, Ariz., he is a graduate of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, and Luther Rice Seminary, Jacksonville, Fla.

Six US-2 missionaries were appointed--five by the department of language missions and one by the department of special missions ministries.

The language appointees are Kennon Clayton Below of Gainesville, Fla., to serve in Charleston, S. C.; James Harold Gamble of Pleasant Grove, Ala., to serve in Oklahoma City; Gregg Rankin Richards of Gould, Ark., to serve in Chicago; Aron Wayne Teel of Riverside, Calif., to serve in Rochester, N. Y.; and Virginia Tom of Tucson, Ariz., to serve in Phoenix, Ariz. Philip Heydt of Buddlake, N. J., was appointed by the special mission ministries department for resort work in South Carolina.

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Wrapup

HMB Adds Personnel, Disagrees
With Editorial, Endorses 'Jog'

Baptist Press
4/12/76

ATLANTA (BP)--The executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, meeting here, appointed 24 missionary personnel, expressed disagreement with an editorial on the board's recent report on mission challenges of the future, and endorsed a cross country jog for world relief.

The 18-person committee's appointments included three missionary couples, 12 missionary associates and six US-2 missionaries named for two year terms.

The jog--called a "run for health, love and life"--will be performed by Orvil W. Reid, emeritus foreign missionary to Mexico and physical fitness buff, who will run 550 miles from the Home Mission Board in Atlanta to the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., from Sept. 3-Oct. 11, 1976. Reid, 68, plans to conduct services along his route and take offerings for world relief.

The committee endorsed a letter by the board's executive director-treasurer, Arthur B. Rutledge, which disagreed with two paragraphs of an editorial in the May, 1976, issue of World Mission Journal, published by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, Memphis.

"The action on the editorial was, in my judgment, the least important of the committee's actions and should not be blown up out of proportion," Rutledge said in response to inquiries about the action. "It came up spontaneously, did not go through any committee and, represents no rancor on our part toward anyone."

The committee's action was precipitated when a committee member expressed approval of Rutledge's letter and another responded that the committee's opinion "should be stronger than that."

The editorial, entitled "No World Strategy," by Journal editor, Jim Newton, called the board's report in February, on mission challenges of the future, "disappointing."

In 1974, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) asked the denomination's two mission boards to "review thoroughly their present mission plans and consider the implementation of bold new plans where needed." It also asked a special 21-member Missions Challenge Committee, made up of persons named by the SBC officers and each of the mission boards, to develop "a challenge to Southern Baptists to help meet world need in the final quarter of this century."

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All three reports, presented at the February meeting of the SBC Executive Committee, will go to the SBC annual meeting, June 15-17, in Norfolk.

Paragraphs four and five of Newton's editorial, which devoted the remainder of its comment to the Missions Challenge Committee and Foreign Mission Board reports, said:

"Of the three reports, the one from the Home Mission Board was the most disappointing. It did not outline home mission strategies toward achieving the goal of proclaiming the gospel to every person in America by 2000 A.D. Other than projections of missionaries and financial resources needed by the year 2000, there was nothing really new in the report. The 35-page summary mostly was a compilation of long-range plans for the years 1974 to 1979, already approved by the Home Mission Board, plus 14 mission guidelines unchanged since 1966.

"Frankly we expected more from the Home Mission Board. Their report really does not accomplish what (Missions Challenge) Committee needed," the editorial said.

Rutledge's reply, printed in full in the June issue of World Mission Journal, which has already been distributed, deals at length with why the Home Mission Board executive disagrees with the editorial.

The letter thanks Newton, who sent copies of the editorial to Rutledge and his board members, for calling attention to the editorial and expresses "respect for your honesty in expressing these personal opinions."

Rutledge said the SBC did not ask the two mission boards to plan for the remainder of the century but asked the Missions Challenge Committee, on which both boards had input, to do so. (The Foreign Mission Board, in its report, did "look toward 2000 A.D.," and drew the editorial's general approval, although the editorial noted "a few disappointments" there, too.)

The letter said the editorial had overlooked important sections of the report because they were not "really new." It cited the 14 mission guidelines, developed 10 years ago, as "one of the most valuable statements developed in connection with HMB planning;" the board's "Plans for Progress, 1974-79" (passed in 1974); and the board's "Bold Mission Thrust" for 1976-79. The latter, Rutledge said, has as its first objective to let every person in the U. S. "have an opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ by 1980."

"I do not subscribe to the view that unless something is 'really new' it has no validity," Rutledge said.

He further noted: "To the Home Mission Board, planning is not an event; it is a continuing process. We develop plans year by year in consultation with cooperating state conventions." Annual goals, he said, are set in the framework of the 14 missions guidelines, the "Plans for Progress, 1974-79," and the "Bold Mission Thrust."

"Planning for the remainder of the 1970s is developing rapidly and encouragingly. I am confident that planning for the 1980s will be a high priority concern with the next executive director-treasurer when he takes office, Jan. 1, 1977," said Rutledge, who is in his last year at the board before retirement.

The letter also said the board "had failed to convey to the editor an accurate picture" of its plans and strategies; that he had misread the convention's assignment to the board and that he had failed to understand the complex nature of the board's planning in relation to autonomous state conventions.

Newton, in response to questions by Baptist Press, said, "I was simply expressing concerns I have as an editor of a Baptist publication and as a Southern Baptist. I have always respected the Home Mission Board as a vital, innovative force in the Southern Baptist Convention, but I think the report followed the letter of the convention's assignment, not the spirit of it. I don't think I failed to understand the board's planning or strategies or the content of its report.

"However, it would serve no purpose to escalate a difference of opinion over two paragraphs in a 13-paragraph editorial by commenting further. I deeply respect the integrity and creativity of the Home Mission Board and its leadership and commend them for the tremendous progress they have made in the past and will doubtless make in the future."