

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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January 18, 1977

77-10

Southern Baptist In Sri Lanka
To Help Local Baptist Union

RICHMOND (BP)--Southern Baptist Missionary Robert L. Cullen, under temporary assignment in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), is the first Southern Baptist missionary to have an assignment there, although Baptist work has been on the small island south of India since 1812.

After the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board had consultation with the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) of London (which originated Baptist work there) and the Sri Lanka Baptist Sangamaya (local Baptist union), Cullen has been asked to be a fraternal missionary there.

Still living in Thailand, he is spending a major portion of his time in Sri Lanka until his furlough this summer, working toward the development of programs and training leaders for those programs which will lead to the development of strong Baptist churches.

After an evaluation of this period of service, the Foreign Mission Board, in consultation with the Sri Lanka Baptist Sangamaya and the BMS, will consider permanent transfer of Cullen and his family.

The Sri Lanka Baptist Sangamaya is the union of local Baptists that has evolved from work started by the BMS of London. Establishing work in Sri Lanka in 1812, the BMS gradually handed over the administration of the Baptist community affairs to local Baptists and ceased financial support in 1973.

The BMS also executed a "deed of declaration" in 1973 whereby they declared that all immovable property held by them in trust for the local Baptists belonged to the Baptist community there. With the registration of this deed, the BMS brought their direct responsibilities toward the Baptist work in Sri Lanka to a close.

Even though all direct responsibilities have been completed, BMS missionaries are still being sent to Sri Lanka when available. Southern Baptists were asked to help because there are vacancies among the five missionary couples the government allows the Baptist union. If these are not filled within one year, the Sangamaya loses its right to have them.

"At the present time, the Baptist union has 23 churches and preaching stations with a total membership of around 2,000 in a population of over 13 million," Wakefield said. In all the discussions about the assignment of a Southern Baptist missionary there, he said Baptist leaders in Sri Lanka reflected a deep concern for the need to share the gospel with this population. "There emphasis was upon reaching out into the population in vigorous ways."

-30-

Center of Urban Studies
Begins in Nation's CapitalBaptist Press
1/18/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--Twenty-five students from three Southern Baptist seminaries, state convention offices and pastorates kicked-off the Urban Studies Center here, according to James O. Duncan, resident coordinator.

The Urban Studies Center, an off-campus pilot project sponsored by Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C., is being planned for one year to gather facts as to whether this type of program is needed in the future.

Utilizing the facilities of the Capitol Hill Metropolitan Baptist Church, classes in the first phase of the project will meet on Mondays for 15 weeks from January to May 1977.

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The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is funding five interns who are working on their master of divinity degrees. One intern has been assigned for each of the following programs: Christian social ministries of the D. C. Baptist Convention, work with a downtown church in Alexandria, Va., evangelism in a transitional community in a church on Capitol Hill, structures and outreach ministry of a Baptist association with both rural and urban settings, and developing a mission church in a suburban community.

Eleven of the 25 students are working on their doctor of ministries degrees and nine are pursuing continuing education studies.

Faculty members for the pilot project include: Thomas A. Bland, professor of Christian ethics and sociology, Southeastern Seminary; Allan P. Neely, professor of missions, Southeastern Seminary; Roy E. Godwin, outreach director for the Montgomery Baptist Association in Maryland; and Stan L. Haste, associate director for denominational services, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D. C.

Denominational workers from three major metropolitan areas of the northeastern part of the United States--Washington, Baltimore, and New York City--are enrolled in the pilot project. The students include rural and urban pastors, state convention staffs, and seminary students from Southeastern Seminary; Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville; and Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth.

Geographically, the students come from a variety of backgrounds ranging from urban New York City to rural Remington, Va.

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CORRECTION

In the BP mailing of Jan. 7, 1977, headlined, "Minister's Goal--Start A New Church Every Year," 9th graph, first line, R. E. Milam is very much alive-- delete the word "late." He is the former (first) executive secretary of the Northwest Baptist Convention.

Thanks

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