



-- FEATURES

produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

January 25, 1977

77-13

Southern Baptist Starts Churches in Vermont

RANDOLPH, Vt. (BP)--Merwyn Borders is a church starter missionary in this state where white, tall-steepled church buildings are as much a symbol as covered bridges or the century-old mill by a stream. Yet, a half-dozen churches, chapels and Bible study groups have spawned under his influence.

"I guess you could say I used the hunt-and-peck system," said the missionary, who works officially under Bob Brindle, pastor of Vermont's first Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)--affiliated South Burlington Baptist Church.

The Burlington Church is the "mother" church to all those begun by Border's efforts and the life-force of SBC work in Vermont.

"I did a great deal of praying, read a lot about the area, and visited evangelical and unevangelical churches to find out what they were doing," Borders said.

Most of his work has been in rural and small-town areas that make up the state's vast majority. Tracking down couples, meeting with local clergymen and even supplying in pulpits of other denominations have been part of a flexible approach the home missionary uses to make his presence and mission known in New England.

"In Randolph, I joined the local ministerial association and the word got out I was available for preaching. I was asked to serve as interim pastor of the local Congregational church, and they even wanted to call me as their pastor."

Borders did not want to become a full-time Congregational pastor, but his service as interim made him well-known in the community. It was then, two years after he and his family moved to Randolph that they began their first Bible study in their own home.

The Bible study later floated from meeting place to meeting place. They expanded from the study to a regular Sunday night worship service, meeting in a Seventh-Day Adventist building that was formerly Baptist-owned, then moved to a Masonic Temple for Sunday morning worship.

The Masonic arrangement worked all right, until a Mason noticed they were in a room with "secret" inscriptions on the walls that uninitiated eyes were not supposed to see. The congregation had to move.

In Montpelier--the state's capital--Borders used a "backwards" method of starting a church. He bought the building first, then raised a congregation. He had "tracked down" a Southern Baptist couple, and they became the core of the Montpelier work.

"We started without any people--except the couple--and bought the building. We used Baptist Student Union (BSU) teams, choirs, a Christian Service Corps worker and a US-2 (two year home missionary) couple to help build the church. I preached some Sundays. We used all the resources we had."

The Montpelier Baptist Chapel, constituted as a church July 4, 1976, has helped start work in two other locations. While its own membership is a little over 30, its fellowship is larger.

"Some of our most faithful people aren't members," said Terry Crocker, the Montpelier pastor who came to the city from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. "My first six weeks here our attendance went from 35 to 55..."

In Washington, Vt., Borders helped a small, independent Baptist congregation, which affiliated with Southern Baptists three years later. "I would have been happy to have helped them and they remain independent," he said, "We're not here to compete with anybody. If all the established churches got fully rejuvenated, we would still have a valid ministry."

Borders said he hopes to have Sunday night services in Rutland, Vt. by summer 1977.

"We have had summer efforts in Rutland two years--working with children and Bible studies--but no nucleus. Now Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Lusk are moving there from Oklahoma, and we hope will be the nucleus. They're selling their home and are moving to Rutland to work and help with our work."

That's still another approach--to bring in someone to a city of 25,000 that is virtually unchurched.

Whether he has informally visited with people, built churches "backwards" with buildings first, or brought in help from outside, Borders has worked to start new churches. And many Vermonters have favorably responded to his efforts.

"When Merwyn spoke, I could see Christ in him," said Lorinda Farmer, a former Congregationalist and now a member of the Randolph Baptist Fellowship. "He didn't say things differently from other pastors, but I could tell he felt what he was saying..."

"I had always been active in church, even though I wasn't a Christian. I was saved in a Christian fellowship when I was in nursing school...But I had been reared in the Congregational church...I had heard of Jesus--the stories, the good works--but not of salvation."

What attracts both church members and nonchurch-goers is the caring fellowship cultivated by Borders.

"The initial contact was really caring. That's what people respond to...Everyone in the fellowship can tell you it was the one-to-one relationship that opened their eyes."

Mrs. Farmer, whose husband, Ed, and children were all converted under Border's ministry, said many New Englanders have negative feelings about any church organizations and about evangelism.

"Most have had bad experiences with organization, because their churches have been governed from the outside and badgered them for money. Many have also had negative concepts of evangelism, so were afraid of the word.

"But the caring, open fellowship of the Randolph group opened their eyes," she noted.

"We have not proselytized," Borders emphasized. "We cared. That's a big word. The members share that with others--They tell them to come, that we're warm, honest, and they respond. They find freedom--unstructured worship, guitar music. There's a lot of variety in our group, tied together with love and acceptance."

-30-

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

Adapted from the February 1977 issue of **World Mission Journal**

Virginian Pledges \$500,000
To Endow Preaching Chair

Baptist Press
1/25/77

LOUISVILLE (BP)--Victor A. Lester, a Baptist layman from Martinsville, Va., has pledged \$500,000 to establish and endow a chair of Christian preaching at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

The new professorship, to be named for Lester and his wife, Louise R. Lester, brings to a full dozen the number of named faculty chairs at Southern Seminary. The half-million dollar deferred gift is the second endowed professorship to be established this academic year. The other is the Gaines S. Dobbins Chair of Church Administration.

Lester, a native of Henry County, Va., went into business constructing pre-fabricated housing following World War II. The business was sold several years ago, and Lester now has extensive real estate holdings in the Martinsville area.

The Baptist layman is a member of First Baptist Church, Martinsville, where Southern Seminary alumnus Chevis Horne is pastor.

-30-

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICESBC Executive Committee
480 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor**BUREAUS****ATLANTA** Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041**DALLAS** Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996**MEMPHIS** Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461**RICHMOND** Richard M. Styles, Acting Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151**WASHINGTON** W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4228

January 25, 1977

77-13

Baptist Home Missions 'Cut
Mustard' Missions Expert Says

By Catherine Allen

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board is the only United States missions agency that is "cutting the mustard," a leading mission strategist told a meeting of state Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) leaders and the Southern Baptist WMU Executive Board here.

"There is no team of missionaries in the world doing a better job reaching non-Christians," said Ralph D. Winter, a former Presbyterian missionary who just resigned from the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary.

He praised the missions division of the Home Mission Board for reaching persons with no Christian background and for starting churches in the language and cultural context of racial and ethnic groups.

"While everybody else was quibbling, your Home Mission Board has been doing the job," said Winter, now acting director of the World Mission Center, Pasadena, Calif. "Acceptance of diversity is the hallmark of their strategy."

Winter said that other denominations' home boards of missions have made the "fatal mistake" of trying to make all their churches English speaking, true-blue American. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) now has approximately 2,200 congregations that speak a language other than English, thanks to the efforts of home missions, he said.

"Here you have churches who worship apart on Sunday but who have fellowship through your conventions and associations," Winter said. "All the tribes and tongues of Heaven will not be English," he warned.

Winter criticized mission strategy that depends on one language and that lingers too long on nurture of Christians. "Ninety-five percent of missionaries in the world are working with national Christians," he said.

He noted that this is due to the fantastic success of missions, but said that more missionaries need to move on to give primary attention to the masses of non-Christians not yet reached.

Although Southern Baptists are the nation's largest Protestant body and already have the largest evangelical troupe of missionaries and have suffered no cutbacks in mission support, Winter urged them to do better. He suggested that the SBC field more short-term mission workers, train members to be missionaries while they are tourists, and enlist Baptist business people abroad as aides in mission efforts.

Citing missions education as a key to reaching the masses with Christianity, Winter urged that missions be taught to new converts on mission fields.

"There may soon come a time when it will not be legal for money to go overseas for missions," Winter pointed out. "All foreign exchange will have to go for oil. We must begin now to operate self-sustaining programs overseas. We need to double what we are doing."

Pointing out 1,000 subcultures untouched by Christianity in India alone, Winter said, "Some barriers will never be crossed by backfence evangelism."

Winter urged WMU to continue its exclusive identity as a women's organization and as a missions education organization. "WMU should be the key agency in helping people gain a perspective of the world as God sees it," he said.

"Women are the key to more missions money," he said, pointing out that women can set a simple family lifestyle that will free money for missions.

"The worst thing that could happen would be for you to be renamed the Southern Baptist Women's Union, leaving missions out," he said. "You must not rest until every country has its own WMU to keep missions at the heart and soul of its work.

"The most crucial differences in missions took place between 1865 and 1920 because of the increased role of women," Winter said. "Today women are leaving missions-- except you. How I pray that you will continue to set an example," he told WMU leaders.

William O'Brien, secretary of the department of denominational coordination for the SBC Foreign Mission Board, responded to Winter. "We're not getting the job done domestically or overseas," O'Brien said. He predicted that Southern Baptists would rise to the challenge in its upcoming Bold Mission emphasis to proclaim Christ to the "fourth world"--lost people wherever they are found. "Missions education must be intensified to levels we have not dreamed of," O'Brien said.

O'Brien pointed out that the impetus for missions is now coming from former mission fields as a result of foreign missions attempts to develop indigenous churches. He noted however, that "an indigenous church per se can become a stumbling block if it turns in upon itself.

"We honor national conventions and try to work with them in a catalytic way," he said, and lodged a plea for more people to volunteer as "preacher-type" missionaries.

Wendell Belew, director of the Home Mission Board division Winter praised, predicted that in 50 years vast mission fields may appear in the southern US because of huge migration to the Sunbelt. Belew acknowledged that the SBC is probably the most pluralistic denomination. "I'm not sure we are ready to realize that."

Belew told WMU leaders that they are mission strategists and that their churches are keys to mission strategy. "You don't demand enough of your churches and your mission boards. You should be testing new mission strategies in your mission action work," he said.

He insisted that the SBC is at a crucial point in its missions philosophy. "Can we survive being the largest evangelical denomination in the US?" he asked. "We are nearly a state church. How will we use our power as the majority? People will never hear our gospel unless we live with them and hurt with them."

Belew said that churches must become indigenous to their own changing communities. "Every church is a transitional church," he said, but we have sought only people like ourselves.

-30-

WMU 'TransCom' Materials Aim
At Kids Who Don't Know Jesus

Baptist Press
1/25/77

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--What happens when a street kid who has never heard of Jesus drops in on a church activity?

Baptists helping in weekday ministries and mission action in crisis communities have been asking that question. Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) is answering with a new series of publications for teaching children with no Christian background.

The first "TransCom" (transitional community) publications were unveiled to state and national WMU leaders at the national WMU Executive Board meeting in Birmingham.

Publications to be released beginning April 1 include a teacher's book, a set of take-home leaflets for children, and a teacher's resource kit. They will be published quarterly and sold through Baptist Book Stores.

-more-

The first four quarters will teach children who Jesus is, what he did, and why he lived on earth.

The teaching materials are primarily for Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women organizations in mission action work, but they may be used by other groups as well.

Publications are written for teachers who don't know how to teach and for troubled children who don't know Jesus, according to the editors.

WMU decided to begin TransCom after staff members participated in a research project, "Metro Churches in Crisis," conducted by the Southern Baptist Inter-Agency Council.

"We found churches trying to minister and teach in racially, economically, and culturally troubled settings. Some were making up their lessons. Some were adapting publications that were too hard. Some used non-Southern Baptist publications," explained June Whitlow, who directs research and planning for WMU.

"WMU felt an obligation to make available materials that can help in a mission situation," she said. "We estimate that there are more than 2,000 Southern Baptist churches located in crisis communities. Many other churches have mission action work with people who have no other contact with church. TransCom materials will help them."

Although the first two years of publications will be for use with children in grades 1-6, WMU plans to branch into other age groups later.

Children's teaching plans are based on a weekly meeting called Big A Club. Emblem, handshake, motto, meeting agenda, Scripture memorization, and other routines are planned to appeal to children with special needs.

The Bible club can be operated by one teacher or by a team. The teacher's book outlines the weekly agenda and activities. The resource kit will expand this and short-cut activity preparations. The pupil take-home pieces will relate to the day's Bible study.

Wrapup

-30-

WMU Upgrades Missions
Education Efforts

Baptist Press
1/25/77

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--The Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) will publish "TransCom" teaching materials for churches in transitional communities for the next two years, have full-scale Baptist Young Women organizations on college campuses in 1979, and will continue upgrading missions education through 1978-79.

These and other plans affecting local WMU operations highlighted the annual meeting for promotion of the national WMU Executive Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) here.

The board also voted to build a five-story extension to the national WMU office building in Birmingham. The expansion will enclose a triangle of WMU property that will soon be walled off by a proposed high-rise office building. Cost of the new WMU construction is not to exceed \$500,000.

State and national WMU leaders took the wraps off the first wave of TransCom publications which will be sold through Baptist Book Stores beginning April 1. TransCom materials are designed to help mission action groups teach children who have had no Christian background. The materials are geared for weekday ministries, especially in churches in transitional communities.

Publications will include a teacher's book, a set of pupils' take-home leaflets, and a teacher's resource kit. They will be issued quarterly. Approaches are simplified for use by untrained teachers. The first year's lessons identify Jesus and explain his life and work. The WMU board voted to proceed with a second year's installment of the publications for 1978-79.

WMU also approved its "Dated Plan" for 1978-79. The 600-page document includes lesson and activity plans for all facets of WMU. The plans include a major emphasis on Baptist Women, the adult division of WMU. All activities continue upgrading of WMU's efforts in teaching missions. Plans call for a regular take-home publication for Mission Friends (preschool boys and girls) to be issued in 1978-79.

-more-

Basic program design for campus Baptist Young Women operations was approved. Plans will be field tested on selected college campuses beginning immediately. Manuals and other publications will be in circulation by the spring of 1979.

The board adopted objectives for national WMU operations. These will be the basis of long-range planning to be begun this spring.

Aside from decision making, WMU leaders heard reports from missions leaders and an address by SBC President James L. Sullivan.

Baker J. Cauthen, executive director of the SBC Foreign Mission Board, outlined recent allocations from the 1976 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and presented lengthy allocations for operating expenses that will be met by the 1977 offering.

William L. Tanner, new executive director-treasurer of the SBC Home Mission Board, presented WMU with 10 art treasures representing home missions work among Indians. The gifts will be displayed in the WMU building in Birmingham.

The women heard a discussion of mission strategy by Ralph Winter, former Fuller Theological Seminary professor; Wendell Belew, director of the missions division of the Home Mission Board; and William O'Brien, secretary of the department of denominational coordination of the Foreign Mission Board.

-30-

IRS Withdraws Proposed
Rule Taxing Scholarships

Baptist Press
1/25/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has withdrawn a proposal to tax scholarships (or remissions of tuition charges) given by an educational institution to children of faculty members of that institution.

Many colleges provide scholarships of tuition remissions and other charges for children of faculty members. Under the previously proposed rule, which IRS has now withdrawn, such scholarship or tuition remission would have been considered taxable income for the faculty member.

The notice of the proposed rule was published in the November 2, 1976 issue of the Federal Register. On January 7, 1977, a public hearing was held at which time problems and objections to the proposal were aired.

In the January 17, 1977 issue of the Federal Register it was reported. "In view of these problems and the joint study of the tax treatment of scholarships and fellowships . . . , it has been concluded that the notice of proposed rule-making should be withdrawn." Accordingly, the proposed rule was withdrawn.

Ben C. Fisher of Nashville, executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, said the commission and the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools (ASBCS) played a major role in urging the IRS to reverse its decision. Bruce Heilman, president of the University of Richmond and ASBCS president, testified at the hearing.

Fisher called the IRS decision a major victory for educational institutions and said the earlier decision would have amounted to taxation of fringe benefits for underpaid faculty members.

-30-