



--- FEATURES
produced by Baptist Press

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April 19, 1977

77-71

**Bold Mission in Ohio--Fervor
Of Youth, Maturity of Age**

By Theo Sommerkamp

CANTON, Ohio (BP)--Establishing a new church in Canton, Ohio, may be almost as difficult as getting one underway in Canton, China, but not for the same reasons. Baptist mission efforts in both Cantons have something in common, however--Baptist missionaries named Bill Wallace.

The dramatic and tragic story of Baptist missions efforts in Canton Province, China, was chronicled in the book and movie, "Bill Wallace of China," which told of the martyrdom of Southern Baptist medical missionary Bill Wallace after the communist takeover of mainland China.

With little previous publicity or recognition, however, another Bill Wallace is trying to establish a new Southern Baptist church halfway around the world in Canton, Ohio.

Last summer, Wallace moved from Reform, Ala., where he was pastor of First Baptist Church, to become pastor of the fledgling First Southern Baptist Chapel in Canton.

Instead of coping with non-Christian religious and traditions as in China, Wallace and other Southern Baptists in Canton, Ohio, have had to contend with a field visited and revisited by various church groups, scouting for prospects.

Canton, Ohio has 25 Baptist churches with a total membership of 12,000, but only one Southern Baptist chapel.

Most of these churches are unaffiliated with any national body such as the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) or the American Baptist Churches (ABC). Many claim to be "independent," and some are openly antagonistic to Southern Baptists.

The Northeastern Ohio city of 110,000, best known as the home of the National Professional Football Hall of Fame, has about 75,000 church members.

About one-third of these are Roman Catholic. United Methodists, with 13,000 members, and the independent Baptists with 12,000 members, comprise another third. The balance are Protestants of various denominations.

The hard core of unchurched people in Canton tend to resist efforts of evangelicals, and often they are suspicious of Southern Baptists.

Until Wallace and a group of seven Christian Service Corps (home mission volunteers) workers and three summer student missionaries arrived in Canton last summer to try to begin Southern Baptist work there, Canton was the largest city in Ohio without a Southern Baptist witness.

As a part of the North Central Mission Thrust effort, Southern Baptists are seeking to establish 150 new churches and church-type missions in Ohio during 1977-78, in places like Canton and other smaller cities where there is no Southern Baptist witness.

Southern Baptist efforts in Canton began in summer 1976 when the Christian Service Corps workers and summer student missionaries surveyed the area for prospective members, conducted Bible study fellowships and held activities for children.

The First Southern Baptist Chapel in Canton resulted, and Wallace was called as pastor. At present, Wallace and the 15 or 20 people who comprise the fledgling chapel group are continuing to contact prospects unearthed by last summer's surveys.

In the church area, on Canton's northwest side, the Christian mission workers found about 350 prospects out of 2,500 homes surveyed, according to Frank Miller, area director of missions.

None of the other Southern Baptist churches in the Akron-Canton-Wooster area served by Miller are in a position to provide much material help in Canton.

Summit Association, in which Canton falls, has 18 churches and three missions. Only three of the churches over 200 members, and none has more than 300. Many of the pastors supplement their church income with some other employment.

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First Southern Baptist Chapel, Canton, now meets in the William R. Day Public School for its two services on Sunday. Weekday meetings are held in homes.

Only two laymen in the young Canton congregation have accepted responsibilities in helping Wallace develop the new work.

An additional handicap is that there are no immediate opportunities for the congregation to buy land and build a first unit of their own church plant.

Meantime, many Canton residents have adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward the Southern Baptist mission. They don't know or are unimpressed that Southern Baptists are the largest Protestant, evangelical denomination in America--12.9 million members. They've generally had no contacts elsewhere with Southern Baptists. And there is very little transplanted Southern Baptist nucleus to count on.

Miller, Wallace and Southern Baptist leaders in Ohio view the obstacles with hope and patience and depend on God to lead them in reaching the non-Christians of Canton.

Meantime, Southern Baptists are girding for a new start in Marion, which displaced Canton as the largest city in Ohio remaining without a Southern Baptist witness.

Arthur L. Walker, missions director for the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, Columbus, has a list of nearly 150 places, small and large, divided by associations in Ohio. All of these are among Bold Mission goals for the state convention to start new work during the three years ending in 1979.

Ohio and six other states are expressing their part in the SBC-wide Bold Mission effort through the North Central Mission Thrust. The others, except for Iowa, all are Great Lakes states--Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

Ohio is reaching the status of a transitional state, in Southern Baptist life.

It is new enough to have the fervor that goes with youth and old enough to have learned some lessons about evangelizing and congregationalizing in a setting where Southern Baptists are few and still often regarded as an offbeat sect.

Today, the strength of Southern Baptist work in Ohio is anchored in Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus, and the area between them.

At one time, the Ohio convention sponsored work in Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania, and in Buffalo and other parts of western New York state. Separate state conventions exist there now and Ohio is confined to the borders of its own state. During 1977, the emphasis in Ohio is on extension through Bible study, involving the use of the Baptist Sunday School Board's action plan for Sunday School growth, in keeping with the areawide North Central aim.

Ohio convention leaders originally thought of a net increase of 8,000 in Sunday School enrollment as their goal for this year.

But when more than 100 of its pastors caucused at a Church Growth Seminar in Springfield, Ill., in January, they spontaneously almost doubled that to 15,000.

Greater Dayton Association alone adopted a goal of 4,000. Capital City Association (Columbus and surrounding counties) set a goal of 2,000, as did Northern Ohio (a true pioneer section of the state located along Lake Erie just west of metropolitan Cleveland). The other 15 associations are aiming at the other 7,000 of the new goal.

There are 115,000 Southern Baptists in 437 churches affiliated with the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. American Baptists have about an equal total membership. Baptists of all types in Ohio, including independents, probably account for less than 3/4 million of the state's 11 million residents.



BAPTIST PRESS

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April 19, 1977

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Plane Crash Aborts
Journalistic Mission

By Robert O'Brien

BLUEFIELD, Va. (BP)--When Gerald White and David Roberts--their small Cessna 150 barely above stall speed--saw the second rocky ridge looming ahead, they thought they would never make it.

And they were right.

White, dean of students at Bluefield College, a Baptist school here, and Roberts, the school's director of public relations, had just escaped a crackup when the small, single engine plane White piloted barely cleared a ridge by two feet. They hadn't expected to see the second one.

Now, their journey to film a mission of mercy by students of their college in flood ravaged West Virginia, ended abruptly.

"Hold on Roberts, we're going to hit the trees," exclaimed White, who had used every bit of his piloting skill to get them out of the small Kentucky airport where they had stopped to refuel after being blown off course.

The small Combs Airport, between Prestonsburg and Paintsville, Ky., nestles in a valley, along a river, between two mountains.

And the little Cessna didn't have the power to make it.

"Normal takeoff speed is 70 knots," Roberts said. "Stall speed is 40 knots. Gerald had the plane at 45 to 50 knots during the takeoff--trying to get the speed up.

"If Gerald had dropped the nose to gain airspeed, we'd have gone head-on into the mountain, and we'd never have made it," Roberts recalls painfully.

Instead of cracking up head-on, White managed to pilot the small plane to within five feet of clearing trees atop the second ridge. But the plane clipped the top of the trees, which cushioned the fall. The small plane nosed down through the foliage into the ground. The fuselage cracked open, and windshield shattered. One door jammed shut.

The full gasoline tank cooperated--no explosion.

White and Roberts walked away with minor injuries--a broken nose and black eyes for White and a sprained ankle and two cracked ribs for Roberts.

"We sat down and prayed, thanking God for our lives," recalls White, a former Southern Baptist missionary to Zambia.

Meanwhile, a larger Cessna, a 172, circled overhead, looking for survivors. A pilot for Industrial Fuels Corp. flying his company president back home to Pontiac, Mich., had seen the little plane clear the first ridge, but not the second one.

He ran to his plane turned on his radio and, sure enough, the little plane's emergency signal, triggered by impact, was transmitting. He sent the Cessna 172 to scout the accident and summoned a National Guard helicopter, there for refueling, to rush to the scene with a rescue team.

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White and Roberts walked about a mile to the helicopter, which flew them to a hospital for an examination.

They had no idea how they would get back to Bluefield.

But the Industrial Fuels Corp. pilot had the answer. "Do you want to be a humanitarian today?" he asked company president, William L. Mullen.

Mullen did. He flew them to Huntington, W. Va., pressed two \$50 bills in their hand, saying, "You're going to need this to get prescriptions filled and rent a car. Send me a check when you get home."

Now, it all seems unreal to Roberts, as he reflects on the near tragedy.

"I'm a student pilot, but that's enough of flying for me," he said. "Gerald says he'll fly again--but not in a plane that small."

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Cumberland College Students
Aid Ky., Tenn. Flood Victims

Baptist Press
4/19/77

WILLIAMSBURG, Ky. (BP)--Students and officials of Cumberland College, a Baptist school here, responded with other community members as Cumberland River flood waters rolled over homes and businesses in this area.

As news spread that the Cumberland River would flood homes and businesses in Whitley County, Ron Griffin, student activities director at the college, set up a relief center in the Boswell Campus Center.

He raised a volunteer army, which finally consisted of 60 Cumberland College students, three pickup trucks and two vans.

"It wasn't something we were asked to do," said Griffin: "We just felt that we could and should help."

Working in crews of six, student volunteers--many were members of Cumberland's Baptist Student Union--helped in evacuating homes in Williamsburg and as far away as Jellico, Tenn.

"When we offered to help the flood victims they were both thrilled and appreciative," said Pete Murphy, a sophomore from Louisville: "I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. I saw this as an opportunity to witness for Christ."

For Murphy and the more than 200 volunteers who worked in flood relief before the emergency passed, their efforts removed some barriers which often seem to exist between colleges and towns. "Because we reached out," Murphy said, "the townspeople have a closer tie with the campus community."

"I wouldn't call our experiences fun," he said, "but they were highly satisfying."

Volunteer Berry Alton, a freshman, worked 22 hours straight on his first shift. "When mention of helping the flood victims was first made, I became extremely excited," he said: "I think it was the idea of saving lives."

Alton contends that he personally didn't save any lives, but "many personal possessions were saved which made resettlement after the flood a great deal easier."

One of many problems faced by the student volunteers was that many residents refused to believe that their homes could actually go under water. "A great many people would wait until the last minute before they would leave their homes," Murphy said.

Cumberland College opened its facilities and resources to flood victims while students manned four telephone hot-lines. A CB radio base was set up in the campus center, and a communication relay system was maintained with the rescue squad and fire departments.

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Since flood waters did not reach the college campus--located on a hill above Williamsburg--the school was able to extend its services further than if its facilities had been endangered, Griffin noted.

"I think the flood disproved the idea that individuals don't want to become involved. At several points during the flood there were more people--and not just Cumberland College people--who wanted to help then there were problems," he said.

Seminary Student Premiers
Opera on Saul's Conversion

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Baptist Press
4/19/77

LOUISVILLE (BP)--An opera on the conversion of Saul (the Apostle Paul), written by a seminary student, premiered during April missions emphasis at Southern Baptist Theological here, with proceeds going to help support seminarians involved in Baptist summer missions projects in the United States and abroad.

Nathan Corbitt, a second year music student at the seminary, authored and composed the musical work, which begins with Saul's frustration because he could not abide perfectly in the (religious) law.

Following scenes show Saul's part in the trial and stoning of the martyr Stephen, Saul's disruption of a Christian worship service, his dramatic Damascus road conversion, and his commissioning by Ananias as recorded in the biblical book of Acts. Production involved some 125 seminary students, including orchestra members.

Corbitt, a native of Ridgecrest, N. C., said he became interested in musical dramas while a minister of music in Georgia.

What has he learned from his work?

"I learned about my own conversion, even though it wasn't as dramatic as Paul's," he said. "I've also learned to appreciate my Christian background."

Now, he's searching for a publisher.

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Vacation Became 'Run-for-
Your-Life' Situation

By Thomas B. Frazier

Baptist Press
4/19/77

WILLIAMSBURG, Ky. (BP)--An ordinary vacation doesn't often develop into a "run-for-your-life" situation.

But it happened to Carlyle Cross, associate professor of English and director of libraries at Cumberland College, a Baptist school here, and James Still, a writer from Hindman, Ky.

Still, a student of Mayan civilization and frequent visitor to Central America, convinced Cross the trip would be educational and memorable. Subsequent events proved him right.

In the recent El Salvador national elections, opponents of General Carlos Romero reportedly triggered demonstrations. They contended that the general--now president of the country--fraudulently won the election.

The protestors took to the streets of San Salvador, and the Kentuckians were caught in the melee, as numerous vehicles burned and, according to some sources, at least five persons were killed.

The military finally gained control, but before they did, demonstrators pressured the Kentuckians to join their ranks.

"At one point," said Cross, "while the fusilade raged, a woman opened a metal door in a downtown building, permitting us to find refuge from the gunfire. We later sought sanctuary in a church, only to find the gates chained.

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"We were finally able to secure shelter in an American guest house," he said, "where we were forced to remain 24 hours, until government control was achieved and relative safety restored."

However, not even danger can dissuade the two adventurers, who plan a return trip to Central America.

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Thomas B. Frazier is director of promotions for Cumberland College, a Baptist school in Williamsburg, Ky.

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\$3.3 Million TV Center
Dedicated Debt-free

Baptist Press
4/19/77

FORT WORTH (BP)--The Christian world is entering a new era of electronic communications, signaling the beginning of the greatest evangelistic effort in the world's history, Paul M. Stevens, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, said at a dedication of the agency's new \$3.3 million TV-studio and training center here.

The building--dedicated debt-free--is called the Paul M. Stevens International Communications Center and is part of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission complex. Stevens has led the agency 24 years.

Stevens brought the Radio--TV Commission to Fort Worth in 1955 with four employees. The agency has grown to become the world's largest producer of religious programs for radio and television, said James W. Waters of Macon, Ga., president of the commission's trustees.

The agency's trustees voted in their February 1977 meeting to name the building in honor of Stevens, said Waters.

Fort Worth industrialist Charles D. Tandy, national chairman of the Second Step Campaign for funds for the new building, told the crowd: "In 1972, Dr. Stevens, A. L. Scott, and several others asked me to be chairman of a national campaign to raise \$3 million to build a television production center for the Radio and Television Commission here in Fort Worth . . .

"I took the job and Scott's Fort Worth campaign kicked us off with a million dollars. In 1973-74, 23 campaigns were conducted in 12 states and 6,311 people pledged \$3,378,000.

"Today, most of these pledges have been paid and the building is being dedicated debt-free. Equipment will be purchased as remaining pledges are paid and additional gifts given."

The television production studio and broadcast training center extend the size of the agency's older building by 43,000 square feet. The studio is the largest of its kind between New York and California, an agency spokesman said.

The nationwide campaign for funds to build the studio was called "The Second Step campaign" because, "Our work in radio was considered our first step for God," Stevens said: "The work we'll be doing in television is the second step for God."

Total property value, when the building is completely furnished, will place the worth of the entire Radio and Television Commission facility in excess of \$5 million.

The traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony was replaced by a length of two-inch wide video tape. Cutting the tape were chairmen of the various fund-raising campaigns.

Others participating in the dedication were Porter Routh of Nashville, executive secretary of the denomination's Executive Committee, and Rex G. Baker Jr., president of Southwestern Group Financial Inc., and chairman of the Houston Second Step Campaign.

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Taped greetings were heard from Baptist leaders around the world including David Y. K. Wong of Hong Kong, president of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA); Josip Horak of Zagreb, Yugoslavia, president of the Baptist Union of Yugoslavia; and Nelson Do Amaral Fanini of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a BWA vice president who is active also in radio and television work.

In addition to Fort Worth, cities where campaigns have been held include Shreveport, La.; Knoxville, Morristown, Clinton, and Oak Ridge, Tenn.; Roanoke, Martinsville, and Henry County, Va.; Jackson, Miss.; Montgomery and Birmingham, Ala.; Greenville, S. C.; Miami, Fla.; Atlanta, Ga.; Houston, Pasadena, Humble, Conroe, Dallas, Lubbock, and Amarillo, Tex.; Tulsa, Okla.; Greensboro, and High Point, N. C., and Little Rock, Ark.

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Carson-Newman Dedicates
\$3.2 Humanities Center

Baptist Press
4/19/77

JEFFERSON CITY, Tenn. (BP)--A new \$3.2 million humanities building was dedicated at Carson-Newman College, a Baptist school here in late April.

The Henderson Humanities Building, named for Carson-Newman President John T. Henderson (1892-1903), the new structure also houses Gentry Auditorium, named for another past president of the school, W. L. Gentry (1917-1919).

The building is the third structure to occupy the spot, as the previous two buildings were destroyed by fire, the last in 1974.

The new facility houses the departments of religion, foreign language, English, philosophy, speech and drama, and includes closed circuit television capability.

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Extension Education Group
Approves Its Name Change

Baptist Press
4/19/77

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Extension Education Association changed its name to the Southern Baptist Adult Education Association and elected officers, during their annual meeting here.

Elected president was Walter Draughon Jr., dean of Baptist Bible Institute in Graceville, Fla.; Billy H. Adams of Atlanta, state secretary for the Georgia Baptist Education Extension Program, vice-president; and Bob I. Johnson of Nashville, associate director of extension center education, Seminary Extension Department, secretary-treasurer.

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'Bible Belongs to the
People,' Says Bratcher

Baptist Press
4/19/77

GREENVILLE, S. C. (BP)--A current "rage to translate" the Bible stems from a conviction that its words and message "must be received by all in a language they understand," the chief translator of the "Good News Bible" in Today's English Version, said here.

Robert G. Bratcher, a Southern Baptist, told a Furman University (a Baptist school) audience that no language is sacred, but rather, "All are proper vehicles for telling of man's experiences with God."

Speaking at a two-day Bible emphasis called a "Festival of the Word," Bratcher said the Bible or a portion of it is available in 1603 languages, or to 96 percent of the people in the world.

Yet, he said, the Bible is the "greatest unread--and misread--best seller in the world."

Bratcher, son of Baptist missionaries to Brazil, said translators "must make choices" since no original manuscripts of the scriptures are available. He pointed out that sometimes equally reliable texts differ at points. And the translator has the additional task of deciding not simply what was said, but what was meant.

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With all the difficulties, however, Bratcher said the translator must make the Bible understandable to someone reading it for the first time and "make it sound as though it was written in that language."

He noted Reformation leader Martin Luther's aim of "making Moses so German no one would suspect he is a Jew" when he translated the scriptures.

Bratcher said the Bible once was the property of priests and scholars, but now it has been "put in the hands of the people."

Emphasizing the importance of understanding, he recalled when the prophet Ezra read the scriptures to the people and gave an oral interpretation as he read the Hebrew.

"The people rejoiced because they understood the meaning of words which heretofore were locked up to them," Bratcher said.

He pointed out some differences between the Good News Bible and more familiar versions.

In the King James Version, he noted, the 100th Psalm begins, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

In the Good News Bible that portion is translated, "The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need."

Good News for Modern Man," the New Testament in Today's English Version, was published in 1966 and the entire "Good News Bible" published in December 1976. One million copies of the new translation were circulated in December alone, and ABS officials say they expect distribution to reach a record 10 million copies by yearend 1977.

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Ethiopia Officials Release
Missionary After Questioning

By Susan Cahen

Baptist Press
4/19/77

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BP)--Dr. Samuel R. J. Cannata Jr., Southern Baptist medical missionary, was released by Ethiopian government officials here April 19 following 16 days of confinement.

Dr. Cannata was released on a guarantor, much like bail in the U. S. judicial system, which is an assurance that he will not leave the country pending final disposition of the case. Government officials say they will still continue some investigation into the case.

Dr. Cannata phoned officials at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond to notify them of his release but was not able to tell them details of charges or reasons of detainment. That word is not expected until government officials complete all aspects of their investigation and finally close the case.

Dr. Cannata has been in official custody since April 3, when he and his family were brought here from their home in Alem Ketema. The action followed a search of the Cannata home earlier that day.

Mrs. Cannata and their three children were held under house arrest over night, then released but Dr. Cannata was detained for further questioning. After provincial officials completed their report, it was forwarded to higher authorities.

House-to-house searches have been under way in Ethiopia in recent weeks, with newsmen being told that the searches were directed at the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and three Ethiopian groups which the government blames for a wave of assassinations and turmoil in the country.

None of Dr. Cannata's family was involved in the case beyond the house arrest for one night. No other missionaries were ever implicated in the questioning, nor did it seem directed at Southern Baptist missions work in general. Mrs. Cannata was free to visit with and take food to her husband throughout the experience and she related that he had been treated very nicely while being detained.

In his phone call to board headquarters, Dr. Cannata expressed thanks for all the prayerful concern in his behalf. And, when asked what had been going on in the case, he said, "God has been teaching me an awful lot about my life." The missionaries who had gathered in Addis, he related, had set up a prayer vigil in his behalf during the last 24 hours of his incarceration. It was to end at 6 p.m. on April 19, the day they had been alerted official decision in the case might be forthcoming. One minute before the vigil was to end, Dr. Cannata walked into the mission compound.

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