

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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August 12, 1977

Editor's Former Teacher Will

Help New SBC Mission Program

77-142

By Erwin L. McDonald

RUSSELLVILLE, Ark. (BP)--The new volunteer missionary thrust of Southern Baptists has attracted support here from a member of another denomination.

Marie Smallwood Thomas, 71, retired educator-musician and member of Russellville's First Christian Church, has pledged a year's financial support for a volunteer to a Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) mission field.

Mrs. Thomas, my English teacher when I was a student in Russellville High School, read about the new SBC program in one of my reports on the recent annual meeting of the convention in Kansas City and offered her support in a letter to me.

Following Mrs. Thomas' suggestion, I located not one, but two, mission volunteers-- Chere Sneed, daughter of J. Everett Sneed, editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, and her fellow 19-year-old sophomore and roommate at Ouachita Baptist University, Beth Patterson, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. J. D. Patterson of Searcy, Ark.

After conferences with Mrs. Thomas, we are now ready to take the next step-- contacting the newly formed SBC Mission Service Corps to make our proposals.

Instead of one missionary for a full year (initial reports have indicated the corps will call for volunteers for one or two years), we will propose that the two mission volunteers-- Chere and Beth--serve six months together. Mrs. Thomas has agreed to finance others to follow them for at least the remainder of the year.

We will request they be sent to Belize, the British dependency on the eastern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula in Central America, where Southern Baptist mission work was started just this year. They are willing to accept an alternate assignment.

The Mission Service Corps is fast getting set up to process the flood of applications for the new program. The corps came into being through the work of a special mission volunteer committee made up of leaders of SBC agencies and state conventions in Nashville soon after the SBC voted in Kansas City to launch the effort to recruit 5,000 short-term volunteers by 1982.

Catalytic agent for the effort for the short-termers to serve on home and foreign mission fields was President Jimmy Carter, a Southern Baptist layman.

The President's personal challenge, presented to the convention messengers through the medium of videotape, turned out to be a highlight of the convention. With his challenge, he pledged his personal financial support of a mission volunteer for two years.

The SBC mission boards--both the Home Mission Board in Atlanta and the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond--have had policies for some time of using extra, volunteer helpers to aid career missionaries on their respective fields. Carter's challenge has given the volunteer program an unprecedented thrust.

Chairman of the special committee organizing the Mission Service Corps is W. Ches Smith, a Georgia pastor, who is also chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

"The idea (of volunteer missionaries) is already catching fire around the Southern Baptist Convention," said Smith in a recent interview. "We need to get organized without losing the momentum and the urgency."

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The Mission Service Corps will be dealing with placement, training and utilization of volunteer workers.

"We don't want wholesale sending (of missions volunteers) without proper support," Smith said. "Great zeal, without support, would cause the effort to flounder."

The committee has set up three work groups, for enlistment and screening; for identification of places of service and assignments; and for financing and administration.

The next meeting of the committee will be held in Nashville on Sept. 1. The committee will report to the SBC Executive Committee at its meeting in Nashville Sept. 19-21.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Thomas, who is making her missions offering as a memorial to her late husband, John Thomas of Magnolia, Ark., excitedly awaits her opportunity to help Southern Baptists launch their ambitious effort to win the world to Christ.

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Erwin McDonald is editor emeritus of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine and current religion editor of the Arkansas Democrat.

(BP) Photo will be mailed to state Baptist editors by the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

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2-Year Broadcast Project Expands Ministry to Arabs

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--Expanding from one to three transmission centers, the Southern Baptist broadcast ministry based here plans to reach all the Arab world by 1979.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board appropriated \$95,576 for the project at its August meeting. Currently the ministry uses Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation and reaches a limited portion of the Middle East, including Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

In the fall of 1976, the Baptist conventions and organizations of Southern Baptist missionaries in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt met and decided "to make a bold thrust in 1978-79 to cover the entire Arabic speaking portions of North Africa, the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula," according to William T. (Pete) Dunn, Southern Baptist missionary and director of the broadcast ministry.

During the next two years plans include the use of two more transmission centers, one in Monte Carlo, Monaco, covering the North Africa area, and one in the Seychelles, covering the Arabian Peninsula.

This expansion will mean broadcasts aimed at 154 million Arabs in all 18 Arab countries and to the Arab-speaking population of Europe. The programming will be done in Arabic, except for one program a week in the Shelhoc language, spoken by more than eight million Berber Arabs in Morocco.

The Lebanese ministry began in 1968 and was only interrupted once for a few days during the Cyprus-Turkey conflict in 1971, when the broadcasting company went off the air. The broadcasts continued throughout the Lebanese war, although some were repeated because writers, directors and other staff could not get to the Beirut studio.

"Our project doesn't end with the broadcasts," Dunn said. "We have graduates of the Arab Baptist Seminary here corresponding with any respondents to our programs. We encourage listeners to enroll in our correspondence courses designed for Muslim audiences.

"After two years, we will send representatives to the target areas for conferences and meetings," Dunn continued. "We hope to develop at least 15 house congregations in at least five of the target countries by 1980. We hope to enroll a large number of these groups to study the new Theological Education by Extension courses offered by our seminary. And we hope to train them to use the cassettes provided by our Baptist Center for spiritual growth."

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Dunn said the programs were in the preparation stage and the follow-up material is already printed. Many of the Arab pastors and laymen in the Baptist Conventions of Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt have expressed willingness to be sent out as representatives. The cassettes are almost finished.

"We are coordinating our efforts with the existing Baptist groups and Southern Baptist missionaries in order to obtain maximum effect of our thrust," he said.

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Bullington West Africa
Field Representative

Baptist Press
8/12/77

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Billy L. Bullington was named field representative for West Africa, effective Oct. 1, by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in its August meeting here. He succeeds John E. Mills, who is now area secretary for West Africa.

As field representative for West Africa, Bullington will advise and consult with Southern Baptist missionaries and act as liaison between them and the board. His territory includes the countries of Liberia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Togo, Senegal, Benin and Upper Volta.

Bullington had been stationed in Lome, Togo, where he was pastor of Coconut Grove Baptist Church, which he and his wife helped develop as a mission. As field representative he will live in Accra, Ghana.

Appointed by the board in 1966, Bullington studied the French language before going to Togo in 1967. He is a native of Charleston, Ark., and was graduated from Ouachita Baptist College (now University), Arkadelphia, Ark., with the bachelor of arts degree. Prior to appointment he was pastor of Leeds Baptist Church, Kansas City, Mo.

He and his wife, the former Evelyn Robinson, have two sons.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

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SBC ACTION Campaigns
Showing Good Results

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press
8/12/77

NASHVILLE (BP)--Significant statistical gains in several categories have resulted in churches using the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Sunday School Board's ACTION program, according to reports received here.

ACTION--the Sunday School enrollment plan to enroll anyone, anywhere, anytime, as long as they consent to being enrolled--was used in 1,666 churches last year. During the first nine months of the 1976-77 church year, 2,729 churches conducted ACTION campaigns, an increase of 64 percent.

A survey of 402 churches conducting ACTION campaigns in the 1975-76 year revealed the gains in comparison to the overall statistics for churches in the SBC in the areas of Sunday School enrollment and attendance, resident and total church membership, Training Union enrollment, mission gifts and total receipts.

Ernest R. Adams, supervisor of the ACTION section, said that interest in ACTION is growing, presumably because "more and more churches are becoming convinced that ACTION is a viable way to reach people for Bible study."

He added that the increase hopefully indicates an increased interest in outreach in Southern Baptist churches.

In Sunday School enrollment, the surveyed ACTION churches had a percentage increase six times greater than SBC churches in the 1975-76 year.

The 15.3 percent increase in Sunday School enrollment in ACTION churches also was an important contributor to the SBC's largest Sunday School enrollment gain in 19 years, according to Adams.

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Sunday School attendance in ACTION churches was three times as large as the increases posted by all SBC churches.

Gains in smaller churches were even more dramatic, Adams said. Where membership is less than 150, Sunday School enrollment increased by 55.7 percent, while average attendance was up 21 percent.

Adams said that many ACTION campaigns in churches were conducted late in the church year, so that the real effect of average attendance will not show up until next year's annual church reports.

For total church membership the percentage increase in the 402 churches surveyed was two and one-half times that of all SBC churches, while resident church membership was double the overall SBC gain.

Churches in the survey posted a small gain in Training Union membership last year while SBC churches lost almost two percent.

Total receipts in ACTION churches were 50 percent greater than the SBC increase, and mission gifts from ACTION churches were 22 percent above SBC gains.

Last year's statistics for the 402 churches in the ACTION survey also were compared to SBC statistics for the previous year. In each of the categories above, the ACTION churches were below the SBC figures, making the current gains even more significant, a Sunday School Board spokesman said.

In Sunday School enrollment, the ACTION churches actually had a small loss in the previous year, compared to a percentage gain six times the SBC increase this year.

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163 Decisions Registered
At Missions Conference

Baptist Press
8/12/77

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--A total of 163 persons made decisions for Christ during two services at the annual Foreign Missions Conference here.

Seventy-five answered a call to foreign missions, 56 responded to a call to church vocations, 29 reaffirmed their commitment to Christ, and three made professions of faith in Christ.

The conference, which recorded an attendance of 1,950, was also the occasion for a number of related meetings in addition to the meeting of the Foreign Mission Board. These included a meeting of Southern Baptist Seminary missions professors with members of the Foreign Mission Board staff, a medical symposium for those interested in medical missions overseas and a debriefing session for the 1975-77 Missionary Journeymen who just returned to the United States.

Seventy-six of the 80 journeymen who served in this group attended the meeting to share experiences and make suggestions for future groups going overseas. The board has commissioned 898 journeymen since the two-year program for college graduates began in 1965.

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Board Pledges Full Commitment,
\$1 Million for New Service Corps

By Bob Stanley

Baptist Press
8/12/77

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board pledged its "wholehearted commitment" to the denomination's new Mission Service Corps during its August meeting and designated \$1 million in its 1978 budget mainly for additional mission field costs involved in the project.

The board, meeting in connection with the annual Foreign Missions Conference here, lined up solidly behind the plan to enlist 5,000 short-term mission volunteers by 1982 for service both at home and abroad.

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A resolution approved unanimously by the 84-member board pledged full cooperation to:

1. Encourage missions (organizations of missionaries in each country) and national Baptist conventions to anticipate making the finest possible use of these volunteers;
2. Define opportunities for service for these increasing numbers of volunteers;
3. Detail the costs of such projects ;
4. Establish streamlined procedures for selecting those who will serve;
5. Assign persons to assist in appropriate orientation, including information on the work assignment, travel involved, and other practical matters;
6. Provide through the mission organization a supervisor on each field to work with the volunteers;
7. Provide a channel for transmitting funds for the support of the volunteers;
8. Receive a debriefing report from each volunteer and the supervisor on the field;
9. Utilize volunteers on return to the United States to increase missions awareness and commitment.

Recommendations worked out here will be carried to the special 15-person committee approved by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) which is scheduled to meet again Sept. 1 in Nashville. The committee held its first meeting June 30 to initiate plans for the volunteer project, approved earlier at the SBC annual meeting in Kansas City, Mo. It is expected to take recommendations to the SBC Executive Committee meeting in Nashville Sept. 19-21.

The \$1 million earmarked for the new project by the Foreign Mission Board will come from Southern Baptist giving through the Cooperative Program and the 1977 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. This year's Lottie Moon goal has been set at \$34 million, a \$5 million increase over the 1976 goal.

"I believe with all my heart that God is at work in Southern Baptist life in a way that few of us have ever experienced," Executive Director Baker J. Cauthen stated in his concluding remarks to the board.

Later, in a meeting with furloughing missionaries participating in the conference here, Cauthen described the ground swell of interest in the volunteer mission involvement as "phenomenal" and called plans for the Mission Service Corps "a bold step" which can have far-reaching effects on Southern Baptists' worldwide missions program.

As it made plans for the new corps, the board continued to stress the importance of career missionaries as the central core of its program to proclaim the gospel to all people of the world by the year 2000. Thirty-eight missionaries were appointed in a special service during the meeting and one special project medical technologist was employed.

W. Eugene Grubbs, the board's consultant for laymen overseas, pointed out that the planning for use of increased numbers of volunteers is in one sense not a new program but an expansion of a volunteer program already under way.

During the meeting, Grubbs noted, the board had approved the sending of 19 volunteers who will be going overseas for the period of six months to one year. One of these is Philip B. Harris, retiring secretary of the church training department of the Sunday School Board, who will spend a year in Rio de Janeiro, working in the publishing house, seminary, training school and with pastors and churches in the area. Mrs. Harris will accompany him.

Fourteen other such volunteers were approved at the July meeting, Grubbs said.

In other action, the board also:

--Heard Frank K. Means, area secretary for Eastern South America, announce plans to retire at the end of this year following 30 years' service on the staff.

--Approved \$243,625 to upgrade and modernize its sound and video equipment as part of its preparations to communicate world missions more effectively to Southern Baptists.

--Voted Billy L. Bullington, a missionary to Togo since 1966, as field representative for West Africa, a post vacated by the election last year of John E. Mills as area secretary for West Africa.

--Elected Isam E. Ballenger, field representative for Europe, as the new president of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, pending ratification by the seminary trustees. Ballenger will continue temporarily to serve as field representative while assuming the president's duties.

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--Approved the transfer of missionaries Mr. and Mrs. William P. Steeger from Ethiopia to the Seychelles. This action officially opened the islands, a former British colony off the east coast of Africa, as the 88th country or territory where Southern Baptists have work.

--Authorized use of \$57,702 from the relief fund and \$7,000 from the hunger fund to meet needs on three continents.

The relief items included \$30,000 to help in the relocation of 20 to 30 Baptist families whose homes were demolished in connection with the building of a new super highway in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and to help in the rebuilding of their church, which also had to be razed. The homes and church had been built on government property.

Other relief items were \$13,102 for a well-digging project in Upper Volta in West Africa, \$8,000 for flood relief in Seoul, Korea, and \$6,600 to assist churches and chapels repair damage from a recent severe typhoon which hit the southern part of Taiwan.

The hunger allocations included \$4,000 to replace crops destroyed by severe drought at the Agricultural School in Ceres, Goias, Brazil, and \$3,000 for grain distribution in the Upper Volta area.

The board also appropriated \$2,081,234 in additional allocations of 1976 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering funds to meet special needs in the eight geographical areas into which the board's work is divided.

With the new audiovisual equipment and facilities, the board can do recording and video taping of missionary interviews, narrations and dialogues that will keep church members better informed on what is happening overseas, said Thomas W. Hill, secretary of the board's communications department.

Hill explained that the capability provided by the new equipment "will enable us to improve the quality and scope of audiovisual products which communicate effectively foreign missions information, education and inspiration to Southern Baptists.

"While in no way competitive with the Radio and Television Commission, what we produce locally in Richmond will be compatible with the production facilities of the commission and can be channeled to that agency for whatever reproduction and distribution may be desired in the communication of Bold Mission concerns," he said.