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Board Names Worker For Deaf, Appoints Missionaries

ATLANTA (BP)--For the first time the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board will have a language missions staffer who can interpret deaf culture to the hearing, says the board's language missions director, Oscar Romo.

During the November Home Mission Board directors meeting here, Rodney Webb, 33, the son of deaf parents, was named assistant director of the language missions department, with responsibility for ministries with the deaf and other language groups.

Directors also appointed Harold Wilcox as assistant director of the Christian social ministries department and approved the transfer of Charles McCullin from assistant director to associate director of the Christian social ministries department.

Twelve persons were appointed to missions service during the meeting, including two missionaries, two missionary associates/student and eight mission pastors who will receive salary supplements.

Romo noted that although the language missions department has a national consultant for ministries with the deaf, Carter Bearden who is deaf, the difference will be that Webb can identify with the hearing culture, as well as with the deaf culture.

"Webb, who can hear, has grown up in the culture of deafness and because of this he is able to add both dimensions to the work," Romo added.

Webb also will give emphasis to cross-cultural outreach for churches and provide a closer emphasis and relationship to work among Arabs. He will serve as a language missions administrative liaison with the western states.

Romo said there are about 650 deaf church groups within the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)--including 14 separate deaf congregations, one Southern Baptist church building managed and owned by the deaf, and two deaf churches that cooperate with the SBC--totalling nearly 4,000 deaf persons attending an SBC church on a given Sunday.

An estimated 13 million Americans have some hearing impairment. Southern Baptists have been striving to minister to these persons since 1906, when the first missionary to the deaf was appointed.

Webb, coordinator of language work for the Mississippi Baptist Convention and an appointed home missionary, will assume the position on Jan. 1, 1978. Before joining the Mississippi Convention in 1975, he was a Home Mission Board missionary to the deaf in northeast United States for six years.

A Florida native, Webb is a graduate of Carson-Newman College and holds a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and Suzanne Chaffin Webb have three children.

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Wilcox will assume the responsibilities of assistant Christian social ministries department director when McCullin moves to associate director on Jan. 1. McCullin succeeds Clovis Brantley, who retires the end of 1977. Wilcox has been national consultant in migrant ministries and criminology and missionary for the Christian social ministries department since 1975.

He served as superintendent of migrant missions in southeast U. S. before becoming a consultant based in Atlanta. He worked in corrections in Oklahoma and as a Home Mission Board missionary associate in Virginia, as well as minister of music for several churches.

Wilcox, a native of Irvine, Ky., is a graduate of Campbellsville College and Georgetown College. He holds a bachelor of sacred music degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a master of science in criminology from Oklahoma State University. He also studied at the University of Virginia graduate school in sociology. He and his wife Martha Kent Wilcox have two children.

McCullin, assistant Christian social ministries department director since Jan., 1970, has served with the Home Mission Board since 1967. Prior to that he was director of Baptist centers in New Orleans. He taught welfare ministries at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, as well as directing students who chose the New Orleans Baptist centers for practical experience.

A Poland, La., native, McCullin also served several Louisiana churches as pastor and was visiting Christian social ministries professor for Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in 1974. He and Dora Fleming McCullin have three children.

Robert and Sharon Plunkett of Othello, Wash., were appointed missionaries to serve the Christian social ministries department and the Northwest Baptist Convention. The Plunketts will live in Mesa, Wash., where he will be area director of Christian social ministries for eastern Washington.

Plunkett, a Wisconsin native, has been serving in Mesa as a missionary associate for the Home Mission Board, working in social ministries.

He is a 1976 graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with master of religious education and master of divinity degrees. He is a graduate of Biola College in La Mirada, Calif.

Sharon Massey Plunkett has also been serving as a missionary associate working in Mesa. She is a graduate of Texas Women's University at Denton, Tex., with a master of education and is also a graduate of Biola College. She is a native of Klamath Falls, Ore., and has taught school in Texas.

Steve Vanlandingham of Mill Valley, Calif., and Jerry Buckner of Mill Valley, have been appointed missionary associates/student. Vanlandingham, a native of Duncan, Okla., will serve at the Dolores Street Baptist Church in San Francisco. He is attending Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and is a graduate of Oklahoma State University. He served as a US-2 missionary for the Home Mission Board after graduating from college. Buckner, a Bakersfield, Calif., native, will serve at the Fillmore Baptist Center in San Francisco. He is attending Golden Gate Seminary also and is a graduate of California Baptist College and Bakersfield College. He has served as youth director for Community Baptist Church in San Francisco.

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'Void' Caused Moon To
Mislead Him, Elkins Says

By Charlie Warren

Baptist Press
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OLIVE BRANCH, Miss. (BP)--A 25-year-old former member of the Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church told a group of Southern Baptists here that he became a "Moonie" because he had a void in his life that had not been filled in his Southern Baptist upbringing.

Chris Elkins, who has reaffirmed commitment to his Southern Baptist beliefs, addressed staff members and trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Brotherhood Commission at their semi-annual meeting here. Now a consultant with the inter-faith witness department of the SBC Home Mission Board, Atlanta, Elkins told of his three years as a "Moonie."

"There were several needs in my life that I didn't realize that I had," Elkins said, referring to his first contact with the Unification Church in 1973, when he was a senior at the University of Arizona. "But what I met the afternoon these people came into my life was a group of people who really loved each other, that were dedicated and offered something very dynamic to me.

"I had never seen that level of dedication or motivation in my own church. They worked together, sought for things together, and loved together in a way that I had never experienced before. I was immediately taken by them. I wanted to be like these people, because they seemed so dedicated. They had a 'commission of God' in their life."

Elkins believes it was the lack of spiritual preparation in his church upbringing that made him susceptible to the teachings of the Unification Church. "When it came time for me to face a group that had a strong ideology that was different from my own, I couldn't defend my faith.

It was not until late in 1975 that it dawned on Elkins he was "a slave to that movement," that his "loyalty was to Moon, not to God."

"If I had had a little more understanding of what my own faith was, would I have been drawn into that organization?" he asked. No, he would not, he answered, adding that the theology of the Unification Church would have been unacceptable to him if all of it had been presented from the beginning. "But they presented it in such a way that it seemed to be a logical progression. Things seemed to fit into place like a puzzle."

He told of his experience of running from his family when he discovered they were planning to have him "deprogrammed," a practice he is against because deprogramming does not allow freedom of thought.

"If they (Moon supporters) want to believe he (Moon) is the messiah...I don't want to take that right away from them," he said, explaining he feels that way because he doesn't want anyone trying to jeopardize his right to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Messiah.

He went on to say, however, that when the leaders of the Unification Church take advantage of the nation's freedom of worship, take the "cream of the crop of our young people," use indoctrination and organize into a so-called "Christian" church so that their funds will be tax free, he said he wonders whether we should "be so lenient."

He spoke of a philosophy used by the group called "heavenly deception," explaining they feel they are commissioned by God to build the physical kingdom of heaven on earth even "if they have to lie a little bit."

He told of the work of the fund raisers who go out under the guise of soliciting money for charitable projects, raising as much as \$1 million in five days. Moon, he says, is worth \$60 million, all held in the name of the church, making it tax free.

Challenging the Baptists, Elkins said, "the fraternity, the love, the understanding-- it all exists in our churches. Youth ought to be able to find what they are looking for in our churches. "There are a lot of people today who are my age and younger who want to devote their lives to something, who want to reach out and help the world, who want something dynamic."

Referring to Bold Mission Thrust, the SBC's goal for reaching the whole world to Christ by the year 2000, Elkins encouraged the group to fill the void in the lives of those youths who are seeking deeper meaning in their lives.

"From my point of view," he concluded, "Bold Mission Thrust is possible. We can reach the world."

Ecuadorian Villagers Attack
Missionaries, Church Members

CONOCOTO, Ecuador (BP)--Several Southern Baptist missionary couples and a group of some 40 Ecuadorian Baptist church members were attacked by intoxicated Indian villagers here as dedication services were held for a new church property.

The attack occurred Oct. 22 in this small village northwest of Quito. One missionary, Richard D. Clement, received a deep cut on his right hand and as he tried to protect himself against a bucket which one of the attackers threw at him. Others on the scene were hit with sticks and some smeared with manure before police arrived, but no critical injuries were reported.

Reports on the incident were sent to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond by Mrs. Clement, who was with her husband at the scene when the attack occurred, and Pat Muse. Mrs. Muse had attended a part of the dedication activities but had left with her husband, James C. Muse Jr., for another responsibility before the group was attacked.

One of the missionaries at the scene took photographs during the attack. They were shown to police as evidence of what had happened, according to Carol (Mrs. Floyd E.) Patterson, press representative for Ecuador. Seven of the attackers were jailed as the result.

Mrs. Muse said that subsequent to the attack a "peace pact" was proposed between the Baptists and the villagers who participated in the attack. "It looks certain the people will sign the peace pact stating they will leave the Baptists alone," Mrs. Muse wrote. "They are still in jail and anxious to get out. This is the third time they've caused trouble, but the peace pact should settle the matter."

According to reports, missionaries and members of the congregation had gathered that Saturday afternoon for a luncheon expressing gratitude for the land purchased jointly by the Ecuador Mission (organization of missionaries) and Indian believers. Later, as the group walked to the proposed church site, several onlookers shouted abusive language at the passersby.

At the church site the group saw a number of others approaching with sticks. Clement and missionary Garreth E. Joiner attempted to talk with the group, but unrest broke out.

Several years ago work was begun among the Indians in the community of Cocotog, near here. Despite opposition there, the work progressed and a mission was begun here in Conocoto. Earlier this year, in March, two nationals were injured and a revival tent nearly destroyed when a group of some 500 Indians entered the tent during the final preparations for an evangelistic service in Tambo. A similar incident occurred prior to the one in Tambo in the provincial capital of Canar.