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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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December 16, 1980

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**HMB Sets New Policy
On Bivocational Work**

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has outlined a new policy on its relationships with bivocational pastors.

The new policy was necessary, according to James Nelson, director of the associational missions division at the board, because the numbers of bivocational pastors has mushroomed in the past five years.

Currently, there are about 9,400 bivocational pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention and some predictions indicate as many as half of the pastors in the convention may be bivocational by 2000 A.D.

Bivocational ministers support themselves financially in secular occupations but devote major priority to missions and ministries.

Nelson said the new policy was developed because bivocational work has mushroomed so fast a great deal of confusion has developed concerning the ways in which the board relates to pastors, education directors and other ministers who work secularly but serve churches as well.

The new policy makes a bivocational sub-committee of the Home Mission Board's Rural-Urban Council responsible for coordinating all inquiries and policies concerning the work of bivocational ministers relating to the board.

Quentin Lockwood, director of the rural-urban missions department for the Home Mission Board, will be the key contact person and coordinator of response to requests concerning bivocational pastors, Nelson said.

Two staff persons in different departments will continue to work with bivocationals, Nelson said. J.T. Burdine, national consultant on bivocational ministries, works under Lockwood in the rural-urban missions department; and William Slagle, associate director of the board's church extension division, works to recruit and place bivocational pastors as "church planters" to start new missions work.

Nelson said two national conferences for bivocational ministers are planned for next year, one at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, Aug. 8-14, and the other at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, July 11-17, 1981.

Arizona Baptists Discuss
Aid To New, Dying Churches

By Elizabeth Young

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Concern about the birth and death of churches has led Arizona Southern Baptists to adopt a two-pronged approach to starting new churches and to prolonging the life of older ones.

"We're losing churches faster than we're starting them in some areas," Jack Johnson, executive director-treasurer, told the executive board at its December meeting. "I'm deeply concerned."

The discussion about new and old churches was prompted by concern over the disbanding of three churches in Phoenix—Central, Southern Avenue and Ingleside—within the past several months.

"Sometimes it is easier to die than to struggle for life," Johnson said of the churches, adding Baptists "cannot condone the indiscriminate closing of churches...and we have to come up with some kind of strategy to help these churches that are in difficult times."

One of the prongs was proposed by Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church, one of the strongest congregations in the West. Directors adopted a Jackson motion that the denominational cooperation committee of the ASBC make a study of how the convention can help troubled local churches, through the associations.

Jackson said: "We close churches only because we've forgotten what the purpose of the church is. We've talked ourselves into saying, 'The purpose of this church is to minister to the social ills or the human ills or whatever of this community.' The purpose of the church is to bring people to faith in Jesus Christ and along the way we minister to other things, but anytime you lose where the priority is, you've lost it."

Jackson, 42, was critical of denominational agencies for what he says is lack of support of older churches, and cited North Phoenix Baptist Church as an example.

"Any time you turn to any denominational agency to even give you a word of encouragement, it was deaf ears because they don't work with established churches. They only work with those that are storefront missions or new work."

The pastor also encouraged churches to use the resources available, including ministerial students from Grand Canyon College, a four-year school affiliated with the ASBC.

"There was a time," he said, "when churches, little blitty churches, used Grand Canyon College students to pastor them, and those churches prospered and are now strong churches. But all of a sudden we...got so sophisticated that a church that's got 300 members has decided a college student can't handle it. These Grand Canyon College students can pastor churches."

Johnson presented the second part of the plan as he outlined a goal of starting 75 new churches in the next 10 years, emphasizing they will be strong churches, not church splits or fellowship Bible studies. The plan calls for establishing five new congregations a year for the first five years and then 10 a year for the second five years.

Each new work, he said, will be started with a minimum of seven acres and a building of between 5,200 and 10,000 square feet, to take care of between 150 and 400 people. Leadership, including a pastor and, in some cases, an educational director, also will be provided.

The state convention, a local church, the Home Mission Board and others will work together to compensate the budget of the new church for five years.

"Those churches will be some of the strongest churches we have in Arizona," Johnson told the board.

Jim Thweat, vice president for promotion and development of the Baptist Foundation of Arizona, said his organization will help by purchasing sites for new churches and financing the first church building on the site.

"Our board was excited when we shared with them what we were trying to do in the next few years, and I think there is more excitement about this one project and plan than anything else that we've done in a long, long time," Thweat said.

Johnson said he hopes to have the first new work in operation by November.

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27 Years and Into Retirement,
'Cotton' Leaves Them Laughing

By Mike Livingston

Baptist Press
12/16/80

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—E. L. 'Cotton' Wright has been a moving force in foreign missions for 27 years.

Since coming to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board as business manager in 1953, Wright estimates he's handled moving arrangements for 6,000 missionaries going overseas.

"But the actual figure may not be that high because I learned to count from some of my minister friends," jokes Wright with a boyish grin, demonstrating one of the two tools—humor and understanding—which he says helped him do the job.

Wright, who retires Dec. 31, came to the board after successful careers in both teaching and real estate. "I was never happy in those other jobs," he says, explaining, "I felt the Lord had a place for me somewhere and I just couldn't find it."

The son of a Baptist minister, Wright never felt called to seminary, but feels everything he had done before was preparation for his work at the board. His early duties—manager of board offices and property, supervisor of all shipping and mailing, and home office personnel manager—could have been fulltime jobs in themselves.

That was only the beginning, however. He also handled travel arrangements for missionaries, personally acquiring the necessary documents and permits, and he purchased all items needed by missionaries after they arrived on the field. Wright's concern has always been to free missionaries to do their jobs: "The rest I want you to leave to me," he told them.

He has counseled with every missionary appointed since he came to the board. His style has been personal; his interest genuine. And, of course, there's been plenty of humor thrown in.

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"I always told all new missionaries that they needed to have a 'manana' philosophy," chuckles Wright. "The Spanish word manana translates to tomorrow. But it doesn't always mean tomorrow. Everybody doesn't operate on a time schedule the way Americans do. In some of the places these young missionaries are going, manana might mean next week or it might mean a year from now."

Every missionary needs three things. "The first is patience, the second is patience, and the third is patience," he says.

Frank Means, retired area director for Latin America, says one of Wright's greatest assets may be his ability to work through problems. "On more than one occasion missionaries have packed their passports away with their overseas freight, but nobody ever missed their departure schedule, even if 'Cotton' had to send a runner to New York to retrieve their passports."

Many of his board reports are legend. "The Divine Swine Project" was a continuing report at several board meetings which detailed the introduction of a new bloodline of pigs and the way Wright worked through problems encountered in shipping six of the new breed for an agricultural project in Brazil.

Wright's circuitous journey in becoming business manager of the largest Protestant missionary sending organization in the United States began after he graduated from the University of Richmond in 1933. He clerked in a Richmond bank and studied banking at Virginia Mechanics Institute. He taught and coached high school athletics while playing baseball in semi-pro leagues around Richmond, where he grew up and received his nickname. After naval duty he entered the real estate business until he went to the board.

While at the board, not many scares equal a close call he had on a trip to Yemen early in his career. Revolutionaries were still at war in the country when he encountered a machine-gun-bearing soldier and raised his camera to photograph him.

Suddenly the soldier turned and pointed his weapon at Wright. But then, even the fierce-looking warrior fell victim to his humor and erupted in laughter when Wright began backing away with outreached arms, saying, "Down, boy."

Nearly a quarter of a century later, the easy-going Wright was even cooler under fire. Last summer in Bogota, Colombia, when he went to sleep in an automobile at a heavily guarded military checkpoint and was awakened by an armed soldier, Wright just smiled and said, "Hi, y'all," and the guard walked away laughing.

As he packs away 27 years of such memories from an exciting career in shipping and transportation, Wright gives the same benediction he's given to 6,000 missionaries: "May the good Lord—and your luggage—go with you."