

BAPTIST FEATURES

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First of two articles.

WHERE DOES WORLD EVANGELIZATION BEGIN?

BY: H. Guy Moore, Chairman
Committee on World Evangelization

Where does world evangelization begin? Some will say it begins at home, others in the field of foreign missions. Yet others will say it begins with the individual or the local church. We would all agree that back of these human agencies it has its source in the eternal purpose of God and will and must continue wherever and whenever in this world man needs redemption-and that need now is desperately urgent.

It was this sense of urgency that brought forth this action by the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in St. Louis, Mo., June 2-5, 1954. Since the action was taken at the last session and many had already gone home let us look briefly at the background.

Dr. Baker James Cauthen, speaking before both the WMU convention and the Southern Baptist Convention presented the cause of world missions and out of a burdened and burning heart made an impassioned plea that we speed up our "Mission Advance Program." "If we did not," he declared, "It would take us from fifteen to seventeen years to reach the goal we had set for ourselves five years ago."

It was in response to that appeal that a resolution was presented and the following action taken:

Following the adoption of a resolution presented by R. Paul Caudill, a committee was named "to study additional ways and means by which the rank and file of our churches may be aroused to action in increasing their support of all our Convention agencies, and particularly world evangelization." The action stated: "That the committee be instructed to meet with the Promotion Committee in June and report to the Executive Committee in December with specific proposals" and that their report be made to the Convention in Miami in 1955 "in co-operation with the Promotion Committee." The committee is composed of: H. Guy Moore, chairman, Leon Latimer, Wade Bryant, John W. Raley, Harold W. Seever, A. Warren Huyck, and R. Paul Caudill.

In keeping with the instructions of the Convention the entire committee met in Nashville, June 21-22, first with the Promotion Joint Conference and then with the Promotion Committee for study, formulation of plans and, subsequently, the submitting of a progress report. The committee is now continuing further study of "ways and means" toward the realization of an enlarged and more extensive program of world evangelization and to be ready to report to the Executive Committee meeting in Nashville in December, 1954.

So much for the history. Time is of the essence. The urgency abides. If we do not get some word to the churches and the state conventions before December

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we shall have to wait another year before action can be taken where it will count-- not at the Executive Committee in Nashville or the Convention in Miami, but in your church and mine - in your state and mine!

As Southern Baptists we do not need instructions for such immediate action. We know what to do. Let's do it now - this year, 1954.

World evangelization embraces the total program of Christ. It is sending more missionaries into our home and foreign fields but it is also preparing those missionaries in colleges and seminaries and it is also winning, enlisting, teaching, and training them in our churches. What phase of our work indeed could we leave out? Advance must be total advance. Armies that have failed to note this strategy have failed.

Further, that the program must be supported by sustained, continuing, dependable resources. Surely Southern Baptists need not be educated in the inadequacy of spasmodic giving. The vast enterprise of our work cannot depend upon "impulsive gifts." They will help, and we hope there will always be a place for them, but we have passed from the stage of a sporadic support for the world mission of Christ.

What then? What method do we have that assures a steady income and goes to support the total cause of world evangelization? It is the Cooperative Program operating through our churches, channeling the undesignated gifts of our people into the ministry of every agency, every institution, out to the ends of the earth.

Do I hear a murmuring of disgust and disappointment--some reader saying, "I thought he was going to really present something new, different, challenging-- for winning the world to Christ."

Your committee on world evangelization will give its best in discovering "other ways" to implement this, but just now let us give our most careful attention to this program which has meant and is meaning so much to the cause of Christ.

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H. Guy Moore, pastor, Broadway Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Tex., is chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's Committee on World Evangelization. Other members of the committee are: Leon Latimer, South Carolina; Wade Bryant, Virginia; John W. Raley, Oklahoma; Harold W. Seever, Alabama; A. Warren Huyck, Florida; and R. Paul Caudill, Tennessee.