



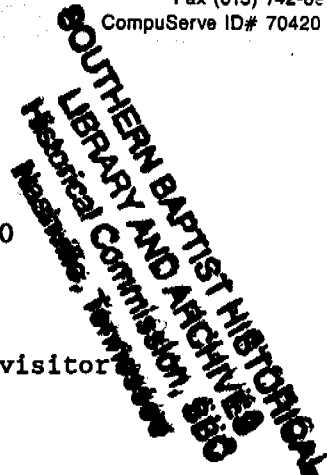
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May 26, 1994

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**Northwest executive seeks
removal of SWBTS officers**

By Herb Hollinger

**Baptist Press
5/26/94**

NASHVILLE (BP)--The executive director-treasurer of the Northwest Baptist Convention has notified Southern Baptist Convention officials he will make a motion at the annual meeting in Orlando to remove the three trustee officers of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Cecil C. Sims of Beaverton, Ore., wrote to H. Edwin Young, SBC president, in a May 23 letter that he will make a motion to "request the resignation of the three officers of the trustees ... chairman Ralph Pulley, Texas, vice chairman Lee Weaver, Texas, and secretary T. Bob Davis, Texas."

Sims, the NWBC chief executive for nearly 14 years who plans to retire this year, told Young he was writing him to "please allow the motion to be presented to the floor and please do not rule me out of order."

"I have carefully researched the SBC constitution and bylaws and the charter documents of Southwestern Seminary. I can find nothing which would suggest the motion would be out of order," Sims wrote Young and copied the letter to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee, and Fred Powell of Moore, Okla., who is chairman of the SBC order of business committee.

Baptist Press was unable to make contact with Sims prior to its May 26 deadline.

Sims, 66 and a native of Texas, told Young it is not his "hope or intent" to restore fired SWBTS President Russell H. Dilday Jr. Dilday was fired by the trustees in a 27-7 vote March 9.

"My motive is two-fold. First, I honestly believe the actions and judgment of the trustee leaders is such that they have betrayed the trust given them by the convention to serve in the best interest of the convention and the seminary," Sims wrote.

Secondly, "the voice of dissent must be respected and given an opportunity to express itself in public forum."

Sims said he could find no provision for the removal of trustees in SBC or SWBTS documents. Since the trustees were elected by a simple majority vote of the convention in annual session, Sims said, "I presume a motion to request their resignation could be carried by simple majority. If this is not the case, please notify me otherwise and the authority for such ruling."

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Sims said he would make the motion as a messenger from First Baptist Church in Beaverton, a suburb of Portland where the state convention office is located. Sims' letter, however, was sent on an official NWBTS letterhead.

Sims was philosophical about his motion.

"I fully realize this motion would not reverse or change any balance of power, but it would give the people an opportunity to express their disenchantment or confirmation of the actions of leadership in this particular action," he wrote.

Chapman had been contacted in an April 27 letter by Sims who requested instructions on the "proper procedure" to ask the SBC to recall or replace the officers of the SWBTS trustees.

Chapman responded in a May 5 letter by referring to SBC Bylaw 23 where all motions are considered by the SBC committee on order of business for "scheduling or an appropriate recommendation to the convention. No motion can be considered at the time it is made without the unanimous consent of the convention."

Chapman also told Sims there is no "guarantee a motion will not be ruled out of order by the president of the SBC who is the presiding officer. How the president may rule is largely dependent on two factors: (1) the wording of the motion and (2) the parliamentary situation existing at the moment the motion is made."

Chapman also told Sims a motion would be out of order during the scheduled report of the seminary but can be made during the times listed in the meeting's program as "Introduction of Business and Resolutions."

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Texas Baptist panel continues
discussion of funding options

By Toby Druin

Baptist Press
5/26/94

DALLAS (BP)--Texas Baptists' Cooperative Missions Giving Study Committee moved a step closer to a recommendation May 23 on the handling of local church gifts to Baptist causes.

The 22-member committee met for six hours at the Baptist Building in Dallas, reviewing recommendations from a writing team named by chairman Cecil Ray to bring together suggestions from the April meeting.

In the April meeting three of four work groups favored a recommendation that would place emphasis on a Texas Baptist Cooperative Program. Texas Baptist churches would continue to support other Baptist causes in or beyond Texas, such as the Southern Baptist Convention or other Baptist entities but would have to indicate on a form similar to the one currently used and sent monthly to the Baptist General Convention of Texas treasurer's office how their gifts are to be disbursed. All would be considered "Cooperative Program" gifts.

The recommendations formulated by the writing team continued that general thrust and were given more consideration by workgroups at the May 23 meeting.

One request that surfaced was that the committee's ultimate report include a "findings" portion that would report current giving patterns. One question raised by a committee member was how many churches now support the current Cooperative Program budget as approved last fall by messengers to the state convention. The answer was about 94 percent whose gifts comprise more than 90 percent of gifts to the budget. The treasurer's office has reported, however, since the firing of Russell Dilday as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in March several hundred phone calls and letters have been received asking about different giving options.

Ray emphasized the committee probably will have no final recommendation until its last meeting July 29. The next meeting is scheduled June 8.

The committee was authorized in the annual meeting of the convention in Dallas last fall to study ways to enhance cooperative missions giving in Texas and report its findings and recommendations to the state convention in Amarillo, Oct. 31-Nov. 1.

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The motion asking for the study was made by Ben Loring, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, who asked to speak to the April meeting to explain his motion. At the May 23 meeting, the committee was addressed by Morris Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee, who also had asked to speak to the panel.

Chapman, quoting from "Cooperation: The Baptist Way to a Lost World," a book by Ray and his daughter, Susan, commissioned in 1985 by the SBC Stewardship Commission, reminded the panel the groundwork laid in 1922 for the Cooperative Program was careful to protect local church autonomy, set state conventions up as collectors of Cooperative Program funds and let them set the percentage to forward on to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Doing the latter, Chapman said, expressed "trust" in the state conventions.

He cautioned against any move away from the partnership that exists between the SBC and state conventions back toward the society approach to missions and institutional support that prevailed before the Cooperative Program was adopted in 1925.

He also gave a word of "caution and appeal," noting although "100 to 150" Texas churches may want to give to Southern Baptist work outside SBC control, "there are still 5,300 to 5,350" (churches) asking no change."

"I would think long and hard before abandoning" the Cooperative Program system, he said, adding the CP is the "one thread that has kept us together" through controversies.

He raised the question of what might happen if the day should come when state conventions and the SBC were making separate appeals to churches for funding. "I don't think any of us know how it would turn out," he said, "but it doesn't seem to be a reasonable and wise risk."

Whatever Texas does in response to the study committee's action could be a "bellwether" for other state conventions, Chapman said, and should it adopt a departure from the CP, "it is my theory that it would begin a chain reaction that would totally change the nature of who we are as Southern Baptists."

Ray said the committee is considering no recommendations that would return the state convention to a form of societal support.

"Providing some freedom or perhaps breathing room within the Baptist family and within our Cooperative Program system is essential to our present, but it may also prove to be the very way for preserving cooperation in Baptist future mission endeavors," said Ray following the committee meeting, which he labeled the best of the three held to date.

"It was very congenial and productive in formulating our recommendation that in the committee's understanding will be both healing and productive for our future cooperation," he said.

Ray stressed again any recommendation eventually coming out of the committee will be subjected first to an evaluation plan adopted at the first meeting:

- 1) Is it fair to all the churches?;
- 2) Is it inclusive of all the churches?;
- 3) Will it enable the churches to provide effective support to Baptists' missions and ministries?
- 4) Is it true to our Baptist polity?
- 5) Will it help each church and each member to fulfill the biblical mandate given by Christ in the Great Commission?

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Muslim family's dinner table
was starting point for visitor By Norman Miller

Baptist Press
5/26/94

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--"My goal was to learn the language," said John, whose name and city of service in a former Soviet Republic must remain undisclosed, "but my overarching goal was to plant a church."

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John recently returned from Central Asia after spending six months there in a church planting program jointly sponsored by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

"I learned the basic survival language pretty quickly while living in a suburban neighborhood of a major city," John said, explaining he tended a garden, raised chickens and also "raised, killed and cooked my own Thanksgiving turkey."

"I continually looked for people with whom I could establish a relationship and ultimately share Christ," John said. "I met a nearby family and, at their invitation, ate with them almost every day.

"The father was my first prospect because of the family and social respect he had. He was the logical choice and also the most difficult. On the social totem pole, I did not have much clout. I didn't see how in the world I could approach him with the gospel. I had no rapport or social standing with anyone."

John said he looked for opportunities to talk about Jesus and the Bible. The first opening came on his birthday; he threw himself a party (as is the local custom) and gave members of the family copies of the New Testament in their language.

"The oldest son read the passage about the rich young ruler that night," John recounted. "The father explained the passage to his sons. He seemed to be saying, 'This is right, this is true.'"

Another breakthrough came one night at the dinner table. "I could tell the oldest son was under stress, primarily due to economic developments which adversely affected him," John recounted. "We began to talk about the basics of right and wrong, all initiated by him. He talked about his religion, Islam; he knows the prayers and the creed, but he is not at all faithful to it. In fact, most of the people I met were like this. They practiced Islam because it was the culturally acceptable thing to do, the national religion."

Noting his discouragement that he had not one convert, John said he began to pray intensely that God would open the door for the gospel.

"That night, while at supper, I recalled the father had a copy of the New Testament in his language and asked if he had been reading it; he said, 'Oh, yes, every day.' I was stunned by this unexpected revelation; it was exciting!" John said.

"I asked him if one of his countrymen could be a follower of Christ? He said 'Yes.' When he finished supper, he left the room as usual."

John said the father came back into the room and "motioned for me to follow him. We walked by his bedroom, and he went in to get his New Testament. I stepped in and noticed that he kept it on the nightstand, right by his bed. We proceeded to another part of his house, and he started pulling books from a shelf. He had a copy of the Russian Bible and some booklets published in Russian by Billy Graham. He had another book in Russian, 'Who is Jesus Christ?' I asked him if he had a copy of the Koran, and he pulled from the shelf a book so crusty with dust that one hand-swipe could not have removed it all. I was impressed that his Koran collected dust while his New Testament got daily use.

"This behavior was so totally unexpected; my mind was going a thousand miles an hour; it was an answer to my prayers."

John asked the father again if one of his countrymen could be a follower of Jesus Christ. "Then I asked him if he was a follower of Jesus Christ, and he said, 'Yes, because the Koran says much about Jesus.'"

"I responded, 'Yes, but there are differences between the Koran and the Bible concerning Christ.' He acknowledged that fact by showing me an illustration in one of his books. Pictured there was a mountain, and at various positions on this mountain were the names of the world's religions. At the top was Christianity. I pointed to the word at the top of the mountain and asked him, 'Is this true?' He said, 'Yes.' I pointed to Islam and asked, 'Is this true?' He said, 'No.'"

John was grateful for the success he had with the family, but he said "it is difficult when you come back to the States, and people ask, 'How many got saved? How many churches did you plant?'"

John said he believes he is called to the world's unreached people groups and now better understands converts don't come easy in culturally different settings.

"Though we did not manage to plant a church, many seeds were planted through the relationships we established and cultivated," John said. "Now I'm praying for God to give a harvest."

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Their true love waited
for foreign mission field

By Norman Miller

Baptist Press
5/26/94

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--One would not expect to find a future spouse on a foreign mission field, but that is precisely what happened to "John and Mary." The couple, whose names and city of service in a former Soviet Republic must be kept confidential, plan a June marriage and continued studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

John recently spent six months in Central Asia in a church planting program jointly sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board and the seminary. Mary served in the FMB's journeyman program.

"We met in a large, informal gathering of missionaries and support staff," John said. "We talked about Mary's ministry, where she had been and where she was going."

"I didn't remember that conversation," Mary said.

"I did," John said, "because Mary was the prettiest girl there. It was quite a conquest just to get to talk to her."

Mary said, "When I left the United States, I thought I would not have a date until I got back. When I discovered John was interested, I thought, 'It's not a good idea to date someone in this setting, because it might be possible to fall in love with someone simply because they are from your own culture.'"

Both Mary and John had official business to complete, some of which was at the same locations in the town. They ate lunch on the way and later returned to their respective apartments.

"When John saw me to the door of my apartment, I decided: 'This has gone far enough; I'm going to nip this in the bud right here.'" Mary then recited a litany of high standards she had developed from godly convictions.

"She was trying to tell me to take a hike," John said, "but every time she cited her convictions, she just engendered more respect. She said she didn't want to kiss someone she wouldn't marry or even date a man she felt she couldn't marry.

Mary said she "tried to drop the 'big one' on him. I said, 'I'm gonna be a missionary.' I would say that to guys who were interested in me, and I'd usually never hear from them again; but that didn't happen with John."

Mary said, "After he left, I closed the door and said, 'I can't find anything wrong with this guy.'" John said he was "on cloud nine."

The couple met a few months later in London, where they were officially engaged. John showed both imagination and sensitivity when he knelt in Westminster Abbey at the tomb of David Livingstone and asked Mary to marry him.

"I asked Mary to go where God wanted us to go and do what he wanted us to do," John said. "David Livingstone never made it back from the field; he died there. I'm not sure we'll make it back either, but I want to serve God with you," John told Mary.

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Anti-Americanism in Guatemala
lessens after tense spring

Baptist Press
5/26/94

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Members of a Missouri mission team got a full slice of missionary life during a trip to Guatemala this spring -- from the spiritual high of hard work helping Christian brothers and sisters to the earthly low of anti-American emotion and even a death threat.

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Seven men representing Phelps County Baptist Association traveled to San Pedro, Guatemala, to help build a church. They did that, but they also found themselves gathered one evening in the remote mountain home of a Baptist missionary who had just been told eight men with guns were coming to kill him.

The Central America nation was ripe with anti-American sentiment fueled by rumors Americans have been stealing children for their body parts. Such rumors, which have circulated in the area for years and never been proven, are believed to stem from a 1987 Soviet/Cuban disinformation effort in neighboring Honduras.

Joe Bruce, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board area director for Middle America and Canada, lives in Guatemala City. Tension was high for awhile, he acknowledged May 25, but he said things seem to be calming down now. The Guatemalan government, the U.S. Embassy and local media have attempted to assure people the baby-snatching rumors are unfounded, he added.

"In spite of this one unpleasant incident, Southern Baptist volunteers are still going to do vital ministry in response to requests coming from our missionaries in Guatemala," Bruce said. "God continues to bless his work there, and our missionaries are not knowingly going to put themselves or Southern Baptist volunteers into dangerous situations.

Bruce added:

"It would be great to live in a perfect world where danger and risk do not exist. We wish it were possible for all our missionaries and volunteers to serve in places where we could assure them that they will always be safe and secure. Unfortunately, no such places exist -- not in Guatemala or anywhere else. If the world were already a perfect place, there would be no need for Southern Baptists to go into all the world to proclaim Christ's peace.

Adoptions by Americans in Guatemala average about 10 a week, according to Associated Press, and suspicions are fed by child stealing and baby trafficking in the country.

On March 29, an Alaska resident working in Guatemala was severely beaten by a rural mob armed with machetes, clubs, sticks and stones after a peasant woman screamed that the American had tried to steal her 8-year-old son. June Diane Weinstock of Fairbanks, an environmental consultant, was reported to be in a coma after suffering a fractured skull, eight stab wounds and a broken arm. The boy turned up later at a Holy Week celebration.

Weinstock, airlifted back to Alaska, reportedly remains in a coma. Another American woman, identified as Janice Wogel of Philadelphia, was rescued by U.S. Embassy security guards in Guatemala City May 13 after being chased by a group of angry people accusing her of stealing a Guatemalan baby she had adopted.

One other American and a Swiss citizen also reportedly have been attacked since the child-stealing rumors spread widely in March.

On March 31, the U.S. State Department warned American citizens to defer all non-essential travel to Guatemala and urged Americans already in the country to "avoid crowds, avoid traveling alone and exercise utmost caution." The travel advisory warning Americans against non-essential travel to Guatemala remains in effect.

On April 5, the Peace Corps reported it had told volunteers in Guatemala to leave rural areas for safer cities. There are 206 Peace Corps volunteers in the country. "Some volunteers tell us that in some villages, mobile trucks with loudspeakers were ... announcing that foreigners steal children," Peace Corps deputy director for Guatemala Jack Leeth told Associated Press at the time.

After calling its 200-plus workers around the country to gather in Guatemala City for about a week in April as a "precautionary measure," the Peace Corps began sending them back to their work stations, a spokesman for the service agency said May 25. All of them have now returned to their posts and none has experienced attacks, the spokesman reported.

The Missouri missions trip was organized by David Ford, a former missionary to Argentina who is now minister of missions at South County Baptist Church in St. Louis.

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"It's a tense time right now in Guatemala," Ford reported after the late March/early April trip.

Ford said one missionary who has served in Guatemala since 1967 called the anti-Americanism the worst he has seen in 30 years.

Guatemala has been in civil war for 33 years. Rebels and the government had signed agreements to guarantee human rights, but the president of the nation's Constitutional Court was assassinated April 2. President Ramiro De Leon Carpio warned a state of emergency could be imposed if violence continued.

The Missouri team's main task on the trip was to build a worship center for First Baptist Church in San Pedro, a city of about 80,000 people. Near the end of their stay, on Good Friday, they accompanied a Baptist missionary on a 40-kilometer, two-and-a-half-hour drive to his home in a mountain village where he has worked with Indians for the last four years.

As they rolled into the village, stones struck their vehicle. Some in the group thought they were being stoned by angry villagers. Ford speculated boys with slingshots may have been taking target practice.

They arrived late Friday afternoon at the missionary's house a kilometer outside the village. Shortly afterward, two young people came to the house and told the missionary they had been instructed to inform him that eight men with guns would be coming to kill him that night or the next morning. Ford said a university publication had accused the missionary of being part of a child-stealing ring.

Some in the group wanted to leave immediately, Ford said, others thought they should stay the night. A neighbor and friends of the missionary advised them to stay, saying an abrupt departure might cause suspicion they were stealing children.

"We just prayed and asked the Lord to give us wisdom on what to do," Ford said. Once they had done so and had decided to stay, he added, the group felt a peace and everyone slept pretty well. They rose at daybreak and left the village by a different route.

Ford said the men could see the campfires of rebel guerrillas camped on mountainsides above the village that morning. On the route back to San Pedro, government soldiers guarded all bridges.

Although the Missouri group got a glimpse of Guatemala's turmoil, team members also experienced the gratitude of the congregation they helped. "The response of the people there was overwhelming," Ford said. "They've been praying for a church for years."

When the Americans arrived, the building had only a foundation and steel bars for support pillars. After a week of laying blocks and pouring cement for the pillars, "they were ready to put the roof on," Ford said. Phelps County Baptist Association contributed \$5,000 in building materials and \$4,500 for travel expenses. The congregation came up with \$800, which Ford called a miracle in such an impoverished place.

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Tim Palmer, Art Toalston and Erich Bridges contributed to this story.

SBC legal counsel warns
of Nigerian fraud scheme

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
5/26/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Last December a Southern Baptist Convention agency was notified it is a beneficiary of \$2 million from the will of a Nigerian man.

Sounds too good to be true, you might say.

According to Guenther and Jordan law firm, the SBC legal counsel, it is a scam of some very persistent and smart Nigerian hustlers.

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The Nashville law firm represents two Baptist entities which were notified they were to be benefactors of a "Harry Olson." In one instance last December, the client received a communication which appeared to be from a law firm in Nigeria indicating that entity was a benefactor "to the tune of \$2 million"

"But from the very first of what came to be series of exchanges the deal did not smell right," James Guenther told Baptist Press. "However, we recognized that what is a strange way to do business in the United States was not certain to be a strange way to do business in Nigeria."

The law firm contacted a Nigerian attorney who confirmed the Nigerian communique was false and no estate was being administered in the courts of that country regarding Harry Olson.

According to a story in the May 25 USA Today newspaper, a Roman Catholic church in Sioux Falls, S.D., was told it was to receive \$3 million, the church was to wire \$90,000 to the Central Bank of Nigeria to cover a "government inheritance tax" and then fly to Nigeria to collect the gift.

The church wired the money and made preparations to make the trip. But now, the trip is on hold while church attorneys look into the matter. The "gift" is probably a trick, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, and is part of a scam going on in Nigeria for a decade, leaving swindled victims worldwide.

"The Nigerians engaged in this scam were at times plausible and at other times totally unartful," Guenther said. "While we could send faxes to their fax number we could never find a telephone number which we could call. When we asked for a copy of Mr. Olson's will they gladly sent it to us."

However, Guenther said, the will had words and phrases "inexplicably" blacked out and, remarkably, the SBC agency was nowhere named as a beneficiary.

"Within the past month we learned that another entity in the Southern Baptist family has had a similar communique from Nigeria," Guenther said. "We compared notes last month in a conference with attorneys who represent many of the denominations of the country and most denominations represented in that group had received the same kind of notices of bequests."

Guenther said the SBC agency was not asked to send money but the Nigerians insisted officials from the agency fly to Nigeria to collect this windfall.

"We assumed that the sting operation would have involved an effort upon their arrival in Nigeria to get some fees or expenses or court costs," Guenther said.

The SBC agency was advised it was dangerous to make personal contact with the Nigerians. In fact, the USA Today article reports three people in separate instances were killed when they agreed to the Nigerian insistence on a personal contact and refused the request to pay some money before they got the bequest.

Guenther urged Southern Baptist churches and ministries to be careful about such offers.

"We hate to see (them) put to the trouble of checking this scam out, much less run the risk that some money will be lost or someone will be harmed," Guenther said.

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45-year bookstore employee
recounts retailing memories

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
5/26/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--If Dorothea "Dot" Owens has a regret from her years of work for the Baptist Sunday School Board, it is that she never had a camera nearby when she needed one.

Owens, a sales coordinator who has achieved 45 continuous years of full-time work at the Chattanooga (Tenn.) Baptist Book Store, recalled during the board's 103rd anniversary celebration May 24 some of the mental "snapshots" she wishes she had recorded on film across the years.

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"One day years ago, a man dressed in a military uniform marched into the store followed by his wife and a dozen children," she remembered. "He announced that he was a general and this was his army. He then told his family they could choose one item each to buy. They scattered throughout the store to select their purchases, but before they could bring their items to the cash register, they had to kneel before the man and have him bless them and the item they had selected."

Owens said she remembers vividly the sight of the children kneeling before their father to be blessed and watching the family literally march out of the store after the sale had been made.

"We never knew where they came from or where they went," she said laughing and shaking her head. "We never saw them again."

She recalled that in one location the store was on the first floor of a building that housed a health club.

"One morning we arrived at work to find the club's pool had sprung a leak during the night and had ruined quite a bit of merchandise."

And on a related matter of work inconvenience, she tells of the year a new front was put on the store, leaving the building open to the street except for tarpaulins hanging across the entrance.

"It was one of the coldest winters we ever had," she declared. "It's one of those things you just want to forget!"

She also remembers the mixture of humor and inspiration when a newlywed couple, the bride still in her wedding dress and veil and the groom in his tuxedo, came to the store to buy a Bible.

"They wanted a family Bible, but no one had given them one for a gift," Owens explained. "They refused to leave for their honeymoon until they had the Bible they wanted, and they spent quite a bit of time choosing just the right one!"

Owens has had an almost-lifelong love for selling, and with some urging she will admit amidst giggles that her introduction to retail sales is a funny story, too.

"I had planned to sign up for a Latin class in high school, but the class was full. I was searching around for something to take and decided to enroll in the sales class because the teacher was such a good-looking fellow."

Even if her initial motive for choosing to study merchandising was not totally pure, Owens found the subject challenging and inspiring.

Her first job was in a dime store, followed by a seven-year stint for Sears, Roebuck & Company.

"That was during the war," she explained, "and all the men were away, so I wound up in the plumbing department. The experience was wonderful training for selling, but I felt there was something missing in my life. The Lord was dealing with me, but I hadn't given him all of my life."

Through the invitation of the local director of missions, Owens was given the opportunity to work in the Baptist Book Store, which had opened only three years before. After a year of part-time status, she became a full-time employee in 1949.

She has worked for only two managers during her career -- June White, manager from the store's opening in 1945 until her death in 1989, and Tim Burton, who has been manager since that time.

"Dot is always wanting to learn and improve," Burton said. "She has probably waited on more customers than nearly anyone else in the history of Baptist Book Stores, and she has modeled customer service long before it became popular to do so. She genuinely cares about the people she serves, and she is loved by so many people."

"And she still gets excited over new products."

Owens contrasts today's wealth of books and other products on the store shelves with earlier days when she says "we just had to learn to read the catalog faster than the customer could."

Despite a lengthy career, Owens said she would like to work "a few more years. There is not anything that can equal the joy of putting the right product in the hand of the person with a need."

An avid reader, single adult Sunday school teacher and active in hospital visitation, she admitted "the thought of retirement comes through my mind occasionally."

"But I still find fulfillment in seeing people, doing new things and making decisions," she concluded.

"And we need Dot, too," Burton added.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press.

HMB collecting stories, photos
of former student missionaries

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
5/26/94

ATLANTA (BP)--If you have served as a student missionary with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, a researcher of that program's history would like to hear from you.

Scott Hudgins is collecting stories, photos and statistics about student home missions, which began in 1944, for a 50-year review to be presented at a student missions festival in December.

Hudgins, a former campus minister at Columbia University, said the project could develop into a book on the impact students have made on Southern Baptist work.

"I don't think any denomination has put as much confidence and trust in students as have Southern Baptists, particularly when it comes to the mission task," Hudgins said. "Students were pioneers, and they were used in many cases for experiments."

Their groundbreaking work included resort missions, some forms of Christian social ministry and work in pioneer locations, he said. "Student missions set the pattern for how many of the later programs would be carried out effectively."

During its first year, the board assigned 71 students to home mission projects, Hudgins said. Three years later, more than 300 students were assigned, and in 1954, about 700 were assigned, he said.

Last year, the board assigned 1,429 college students to summer missions work, said Van Simmons, HMB associate director of student missions. Another 223 college students were assigned during the school year as semester missionaries, he said.

Student work ranges from conducting Vacation Bible School in small rural churches to helping missionaries in inner-city mission centers, Simmons said.

Through the years, student mission work has provided several rewards, Hudgins said. Among them:

- increased missions awareness. Students go back to their church or school and tell others about what Southern Baptists are doing.

- a feeling of being important and worthy to do missions work.

- personnel assistance to missionaries that otherwise would not have been financially available.

- inspiration to consider full-time missions service. "For many career missionaries, God's call to home missions came through student missions."

Former student missionaries can contact Hudgins through the Home Mission Board's volunteers in missions department, in care of Student Missions History Project; 1350 Spring St. NW; Atlanta, GA 30367.

Pictures and information received by Oct. 1 will be used in the Mission '95 student conference in Louisville, Ky., Dec. 27-31.

Students interested in current missions opportunities can contact the HMB Student Missions Department at the same address or call 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

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