

THE IMPACT OF CHURCH PLANTING ON SOUTHERN BAPTIST
EVANGELISM

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Submitted to Dr. Charles Kelley

Roland Q. Leavell Professor of Evangelism

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

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Will H. McRaney, Jr.

B.A., Mississippi State University, 1985

M.Div., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
I. HIGHLIGHTS FROM EVENTS AND STATEMENTS PRIOR TO 1951.....	3
II. SELECTED EVENTS AND EMPHASES ON CHURCH PLANTING FROM 1951 TO 1964.....	9
III. SELECTED EVENTS AND EMPHASES ON CHURCH PLANTING FROM 1965 TO 1988.....	26
IV. SELECTED FACTORS AND METHODOLOGIES OF CHURCH PLANTING.....	34
V. SELECTED IMPACTS OF CHURCH PLANTING ON SOUTHERN BAPTIST EVANGELISM	43
CONCLUSION.....	49
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	51
APPENDIX	55

INTRODUCTION

Task of Home Mission Board

A need for new churches in an expanding and changing country has always been present during the life of the Southern Baptist Convention. Leon McBeth said,

For Southern Baptists, the home mission task in the twentieth century has been formidable. It has included the need to provide gospel preaching where none existed; to plant churches in destitute areas; to strengthen weak churches by helping support their pastors and providing funds for buildings....¹

Much of the success of the Southern Baptist Convention's program of evangelism would lie in the Convention's ability to carry out the task of planting productive churches.

The Problem and Its Setting

The Statement of the Problem

The problem was to highlight selected events prior to 1951 and to investigate selected emphases and methodologies of the Southern Baptist program of church planting in the years from 1951 to 1988 in order to determine selected ways church planting has impacted Southern Baptist evangelism.

The Statement of the Subproblems

The first subproblem was to highlight selected events and statements related to church planting from 1845 to 1950 in the Southern Baptist program of evangelism.

¹H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 639.

The second subproblem was to investigate selected events and emphases related to church planting from 1951 to 1964 in the Southern Baptist program of evangelism.

The third subproblem was to investigate selected events and emphases related to church planting in the Southern Baptist program of evangelism from 1964-1988.

The fourth subproblem was to investigate selected factors and selected methodologies of church planting.

The fifth subproblem was to determine selected ways church planting has impacted Southern Baptist evangelism.

The Delimitations

This subject of this paper was limited to the program of church planting of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

For the purposes of this study the terms church planting and church starting; Home Mission Board and the Board; and Southern Baptist Convention and Convention are used synonymously.

The only years researched in detail were from 1951 to 1988. Thus, the material presented on the years prior to 1951 are only presented to serve as background and introduction the time period researched.

CHAPTER ONE: HIGHLIGHTS FROM EVENTS AND STATEMENTS PRIOR TO 1951

In 1845 the Southern Baptist Convention was formed with 4,126 churches.² The number of churches which made up the Convention would multiply by more than six hundred percent to 27,788 churches in 1950.³ Russell Holman and Roland Q. Leavell were men who recognized the importance of the Convention sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in places where there was not a Southern Baptist church established.

In the later part of this time period, the expansion of Southern Baptists to the West presented the Convention with additional opportunities to share the gospel. A survey was conducted in 1949 to investigate these opportunities and cities. The Home Mission Board needed money and missionaries to be able to plant churches in the expanding territories.

Russell Holman

Russell Holman conducted a study of the religious condition in the southern states early in his tenure as Secretary of the Home Mission Board. Holman's survey furnished the background for developing a mission strategy after it was presented to the Home Mission Board in its second annual meeting in May, 1847.⁴ Holman used the print media consistently and strategically to inform Southern Baptists of the pressing needs among the Blacks, the newer

²*Quarterly Review*, July 1989, 70-71. Produced by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Here after the Southern Baptist Convention will be referred to as the Convention.

³Ibid.

⁴Here after the Home Mission Board will be referred to as the Board or the HMB.

settlements in the West and the older communities in the South. Blacks made up nearly one third of the ten million persons in the southern states by 1850. The need for home missions grew drastically with the population growth of over a quarter of a million annually, including newly acquired territories. Holman motivated Southern Baptists to share the gospel with these groups of people.⁵ Rutledge and Tanner quote Holman as saying in 1850,

'Many places do not receive a visit from a minister of the gospel for many consecutive years. Not a few persons of mature years have never seen a minister of Christ and are as ignorant of the plan of salvation as are the heathen. This destitution is daily increasing, as the increase of population exceeds the efforts to spread the gospel. The field is not only destitute of the gospel, but it is infested with ruinous errors of almost every form.'⁶

Articulating the Board's objectives was important during its early years of service to Southern Baptists. In 1851 it emphasized two chief objectives:⁷

(1) To assist feeble Churches throughout the Southern and South Western [sic] States and Territories, to obtain the stated preaching of the gospel, and (2) to supply newly settled and growing parts of the country, with the preaching of the gospel where we have at present no churches.⁸

There are references made at other times to the special concern of the Board "to preach the gospel to the colored people."⁹

Most of the HMB's task was outlined when the Board was constituted in 1845 by the Convention. During the period between 1877 and 1917 the Board carried on with their assigned

⁵Arthur B. Rutledge and William G. Tanner, *Mission to America: A History of Southern Baptist Home Missions* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 20. Also, see *Southern Baptist Missionary Journal*, November 1850, 137-139.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., 20.

⁸Ibid. Also, see *Southern Baptist Missionary Journal*, May 1851, 281.

⁹Ibid. Also, see *Southern Baptist Missionary Journal*, August 1849, 89. Also, see November, 1850, 137.

tasks, but additional areas of ministry were added to the Board's responsibility during this period.¹⁰

Starting new churches and missions were "principal" ministries of the Board. A committee reported in 1889 the need for new churches in some of the older states because there were still many important towns without a Southern Baptist church or mission. Robert Baker reports:

a careful study of the Annuals of the Convention indicates that year by year a strong emphasis was made during this period upon constituting new churches and missions. In many reports the exact number is not shown, but typically there were 244 churches constituted in 1891, 133 in 1894, 195 in 1900, and 213 during 1917.¹¹

Efforts were made during the 1880s to establish an active church building department. This effort was abandoned for the time because it did not receive enough support.¹²

Roland Q. Leavell

Roland Q. Leavell served as evangelism secretary from 1937 to 1942. Leavell gave strong emphasis to lay people leading others to a personal relationship with God. Leavell also had a concern for areas which did not have a Southern Baptist church. In regard to protracted meetings and unchurched areas Leavell said,

Southern Baptists will practice mass evangelism by seeking to have a protracted meeting in every one of our 24,844 churches. An effort will be made to have preaching in every destitute place and in every unchurched community."¹³

Leavell's concern for the unchurched community foreshadowed the church planting emphases that followed his years with the Home Mission Board.

¹⁰Robert A. Baker, *The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People 1607-1972* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1974), 289.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Norman Wade Cox, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptist*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), s.v. "Evangelism, Home Mission Board," by C. E. Autrey.

Rapid Expansion Causes Perplexity

The question of what to do with the rapidly expanding West and the North "briefly perplexed" the Convention.¹⁴ The Convention had a desire to establish numerous churches for the estimated 1,300,000 Southern Baptists people who moved West or North between 1940 and 1950.¹⁵ Hesitation was soon put aside and began to "admit as constituent bodies state conventions" that had formerly been outside the recognized territory of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptist General Convention of California in 1942 became the first to be admitted to the Convention. Other conventions soon became admitted as well. Kansas was accepted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1948, followed by Oregon-Washington in 1949. Pressure from the western movement mounted until the Convention changed its position in regard to territorial limitations.¹⁶

Survey

A 10-year survey was conducted over the years from 1938 to 1948. This survey revealed that there were 1,545 urban centers within the territory of the Southern Baptist Convention. A city must have a minimum of 2,500 people to be classified as an urban center. The Convention received information from 1,102 of these cities,

showing 227 new Catholic churches, 39 new Jewish synagogues, 165 new Presbyterian churches, 177 new Christian churches, 280 new Methodist churches, 1,100 new Southern Baptist churches. but, the following facts astound us when we compare them with the above: Four groups consisting of the Assembly of God, Pentecostal, Church of Christ, and Nazarenes have built 1,355 new churches in these 1,102 urban centers during this period.¹⁷

¹⁴Pope A. Duncan, *Our Baptist Story*, (Nashville: Convention Press, 1958) 138-139.

¹⁵Cox, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptist*, s.v. "Pioneer Missions." by M. Wendell Belew.

¹⁶Duncan, 138-139.

¹⁷Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention 1949: Containing the Proceedings of the Ninety-Second Session, One Hundred Fourth

This survey showed that these same cities needed 2,100 new Baptist churches and 6,000 mission stations to meet "Baptist obligations" in those cities. At that time the Home Mission Board felt that the 1,400 churches in the Convention with membership from 500 to 8,000 would be able to do all this needed mission work without decreasing their Cooperative Program receipts.¹⁸

Early Loan Fund

As the Home Mission Board's work began to expand, a "modest start" was made to start a church building loan fund in 1884. In 1886 the Convention gave instructions to the Home Mission Board to develop a work in western Cuba. An additional ministry was begun with mountain missions in the Southern Appalachians. The Board gave strong encouragement to Woman's Missionary Union which was organized in 1888 to raise funds for missionary causes to help finance these Board's expanding ministries.¹⁹

The Home Mission Board revived the effort to establish a church building loan fund with strong assistance from Woman's Missionary Union. In 1903 a campaign was launched to raise \$20,000 by 1910 in honor of I. T. Tichenor. Under the leadership of Woman's Missionary Union, in 1908 the \$20,000 goal was reached. A important fact was revealed during the Board's reporting this success to the Convention 1910:

That one or more of what were then the strongest churches in the capital city of every southern state had been helped by the Home Mission Board.²⁰

In the early 1920s the Board's loan funds surpassed \$700,000. This fund was set up during the years that Baron DeKalb Gray served as corresponding secretary for the Board.²¹ Woman's Missionary Union supported most of the denomination's missionary efforts. While contributing

Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1949), 188.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Rutledge, 41.

²⁰Baker, Its People, 289-290.

²¹Rutledge, 45.

to the Judson Fund for foreign missions, the Union assumed a goal of \$325,000 as the women's part of the effort to raise a one-million-dollar church building fund, and exceeded it.²²

With the creation of the new Department of Extension at the close of this period, Louis B. Warren led in a successful drive for funds to lend to churches who needed to build.²³

Early Church Planting Results

In the first one hundred and six years of the Convention, HMB missionaries who were sent out started 10,012 new churches. The number of churches which constituted made up more than one-third of the total number of churches in the Convention.²⁴ The the number of churches which made of the Convention experienced much growth during this time period.

²²Ibid., 49.

²³Baker, Its People, 289-290.

²⁴Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention 1951: Containing the Proceedings of the Ninety-Fourth Session, One Hundred Sixth Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1951), 200-201.

CHAPTER TWO: SELECTED EVENTS AND EMPHASES ON CHURCH PLANTING FROM 1951 TO 1964

The Convention was now made up of 27,788 churches. The vast majority of these churches were located primarily in the South. If the Convention was to begin to minister in the name of Christ throughout its territory, the HMB would have to assist the Convention by intentionally starting new churches. Home Mission Boards leaders J. B. Lawrence and Samuel Courts Redford understood the importance of church planting to denominational expansion.

1951-1954

The period from 1950 to 1954 set before the churches of the Convention a denominational emphasis. Part of the emphasis was on church planting. This year long emphasis put before the churches the need for more Southern Baptist churches throughout the land.

Aid During Expansion

The Home Mission Board aided in the geographical expansion of Southern Baptists. When individual Southern Baptists formed churches outside the South, the Board did respond to their appeals for assistance. After 1950 the board launched aggressive mission efforts in the North and West, switching from a regional to a national outlook. During the 1880s Isaac T. Tichenor, head of the Board, defended the "Southern Baptist territory" in the South. By the 1950s, the Board reversed the Tichenor policy.²⁵ In the 1951 Convention in San Francisco, the Convention adopted the following statement:

²⁵McBeth, 640.

Whereas the Southern Baptist Convention has defined its territorial position in reports to the Convention in 1944 and in 1949 by removing territorial limitations, and whereas the Northern Baptist Convention has changed its name so that it is continental in scope, the Home Mission Board and all other Southern Baptist boards and agencies be free to serve as a source of blessing to any community or any people anywhere in the United States.²⁶

The Board started to plan programs to plant Southern Baptist churches throughout the nation.²⁷

Influence of J. B. Lawrence

J. B. Lawrence served as the leader of the HMB in the position of executive secretary-treasurer from 1929 until 1953. During his service with the HMB Lawrence noticed that the fields of service and the task of the Home Mission Board had undergone continuous expansion from conception of the Board. He recognized the Board's field of responsibility was no longer just the South, but encompassed much more. The Convention added 988,642 square miles of territory to the Board's field from 1940 to 1950. This new territory created a seventy-eight percent expansion in the area served by the HMB.²⁸

The expansion West increased the population served by the HMB by thirty-nine percent. Most of the 22,000,000 newly added people were unevangelized. In 1940 there was one Baptist for every five people on the average. After the territory was added there was one Baptist for every sixty-four people on the average.²⁹

The expansion in territory for the HMB did not include just the continental United States. Expansion also took place in four western provinces of Cuba, the Canal Zone, Panama,

²⁶Southern Baptist Convention, Annual 1951, 461. Also, see W. W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention 1845-1953*, 291.

²⁷McBeth, 640.

²⁸Southern Baptist Convention, Annual 1951, 201.

²⁹Ibid.

and Alaska. The HMB then had a "field of 75,000,000 people of who were wholly unchurched."³⁰

The people who made up that expansion were not all Americans or English speaking people. There were 10,000,000 foreigners, of which over 2,000,000 were Spanish-speaking people; 700,000 were French; 600,000 were Italians; and more than 3,000,000 were in the smaller European and Asiatic groups.³¹

J. B. Lawrence had strong convictions concerning church planting. He knew that the 27,000 Southern Baptist churches and the 16,000 Southern Baptist pastors could not meet the challenge alone. The Board would need more churches and more pastors to begin to meet the expanded needs of the additional territory. He wrote, 'It is the task of the Home Mission Board in co-operation with our state mission boards to evangelize this great unevangelized group in our home mission territory.'³²

Relationship Between Home and Foreign Missions

In Lawrence's portion of the Home Mission Board's report to the 1950 Convention he wrote,

There can be no more short-sighted policy of which God's people can be guilty than to fail to plant the homeland down in churches. The churches are the divine agencies for bringing in the kingdom, and the Home Mission Board is dedicated to that specific task.³³

Home and foreign missions do not operate in isolation of each other. Lawrence felt that Christianity lost Europe, Asia, and Africa because they failed to continue to evangelize their own homeland. Lawrence asked,

What went with the New Testament churches once planted in all this territory? They were lost because those in authority in the churches overlooked the fact that each generation had

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Southern Baptist Convention, Annual 1951, 201.

³³Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention 1950: Containing the Proceedings of the Ninety-Third Session, One Hundred Fifth Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1950), 189. In a speech written by J. B. Lawrence on the "Kingdom of God."

to be evangelized, and, failing to evangelize each generation, the evangelical faith-New Testament Christianity-was lost.³⁴

If Home Mission Board and the people failed to evangelize its homeland, the task to evangelize the world would become impossible.³⁵

Five Year Crusade

The denomination launched a comprehensive Five-year Crusade for "more converts, more churches, more mission stations, and more effective witnessing" in order to meet the needs of the Home Mission Board for more liberal and permanent financial support .³⁶

In 1950-51, the special emphasis is on evangelism, with the purpose of leading people to accept Christ.

In 1951-52, the specific emphasis will be upon church extension, with the purpose of organizing churches and mission stations, and leading churches into a soul-winning program.

In 1953-54, the special emphasis will be upon effective witnessing, with the purpose of securing soul-winners, enlisting unaffiliated Baptists, and crossing all racial and language barriers with the gospel.³⁷

The leaders of the Home Mission Board stated that the gospel was for everyone in the territory of the Southern Baptist Convention. In order to reach everyone with the gospel.

The Board declared that the gospel was for everyone, no matter who he was or where he lived, and that the churches of Christ had been chartered by the Lord to carry this gospel to lost people in every corner of the world.³⁸

The Board established some goals to help take the gospel to every person. One of the goals was "to double the number of churches in the outposts of the Board's mission fields."³⁹

³⁴Southern Baptist Convention, Annual 1951, 204.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Southern Baptist Convention, Annual 1951, 204.

³⁸J. B. Lawrence, *History of the Home Mission Board*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 158-159. Also, see *Southern Baptist Home Missions*, May 1950, 6-7.

Reaching the Cities

Home missions faced a great challenge to reach the cities for Christ. The Board saw several conditions and forces which accentuated their opportunities. Among those conditions and forces were the following:

(1) The place of the United States in today's struggle for world power and influence. (2) The rapid increase and improvement in world communication and transportation which is minimizing the importance of time and space and is making of the world one big neighborhood in which Southern Baptists may serve as good Samaritans. (3) The rapid movement of population within our own borders, increasing enormously the number of communities and people having no Baptist ministry. (4) The increase in juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, degeneracy, broken home, crime, and other attendant evils which are outgrowths of the world population movements. These create an increased demand for mission centers, Good Will Centers, rescue homes, etc. (5) The problems growing out of the rapid integration of language and minority groups, some of which can be served by Anglo churches, while others can be served more effectively by direct missions. (6) The continued draft of young men into military service, which means that nearly every able bodied young man will soon be an alumnus of the armed forces. His life beyond military service will depend largely upon the spiritual ministry he receives while in service. (7) The changing location and changing status of the Negro, which makes necessary a reevaluation and strengthening of our ministry to this large segment of our population. (8) The shift of population from the farm to the city and industrial areas and change in farm life and farm labor which necessitate a long look at the rural community and proper provision for a more effective spiritual ministry through the rural church. (9) The new emphasis on evangelism and church extension among many denominations. This makes necessary an aggressive mission program on the part of Southern Baptists if they are to find their rightful place of service in the ever-increasing population centers.⁴⁰

The importance and urgency of starting more missions and more churches became more apparent to the Board. These factors also gave rise to an increased demand for more money to build church buildings and pastors' homes.⁴¹

³⁹Southern Baptist Convention, Annual 1951, 204. Also, see J. B. Lawrence, *History of the Home Mission Board*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 158-159.

⁴⁰Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the Ninety-Seventh Session, One Hundred Ninth Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1954), 208-209.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

The Cooperative Missions Department became one of the larger departments of home mission work while S. F. Dowis served as secretary.

The program of work in this department grew to include city missions, rural missions, mountain missions, Western and pioneer missions, a rural survey program, trailer-camp ministry, military personnel program, work with broken homes, work with juvenile delinquents, a correspondence bible course, and a rural church building program.⁴²

The new city mission work promoted by the Home Mission Board was different from anything ever attempted by Southern Baptist. J. B. Lawrence said,

The work is not for and in the churches, but rather through the churches. The heart of the program is the establishing and mothering of missions. The Board assumed that the only way to evangelize the cities is to fill them with churches. There are other important features in this program, but that of first importance is the planting of churches."⁴³

Dowis exclaimed that mission efforts to reach cities should be high priority in the Board's total mission program. Part of Dowis' reasoning was that more than half the population the larger urban centers gave "no evidence of any measure of Christian experience."⁴⁴

Progress with Church Loans

Up through 1951, the Building Loan Fund was not a mission fund and could not be used in the building mission churches."⁴⁵ Because the Church Building Loan Trust Fund could not be used as a mission fund, the Board set up two other loan funds:

(1) The Revolving Church Loan Fund, the maximum loan of which is \$10,000, to be loaned on a six year contract

(2) A Material Loan Fund, the maximum loan of which is \$5,000, to be lent to newly organized churches to purchase material, with the understanding that the congregation will build the church.⁴⁶

⁴²J. B. Lawrence, *History of the Home Mission Board*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 149. Also, see Southern Baptist Convention, Annual 1954, 220.

⁴³Ibid. Also, see Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1953, 223-224.

⁴⁴Southern Baptist Convention, Annual 1949, 189.

⁴⁵Ibid., 205.

These two funds could be used as mission funds for newly organized churches.⁴⁷ The next year the Home Mission Board again revised their loan funds and established the Church Extension Loan Fund from which it made loans to newly organized churches. The maximum loan from this fund was \$15,000.00 to be repaid over a period of ten years. The church applying for a loan must have held clear title to its property. Each loan was to be secured by "first mortgage and personal endorsements by responsible members of the church totaling the amount of the loan will be required."⁴⁸

The Church Building Loan Fund was a memorial trust fund given by individuals, churches, and missionary societies and was administered in trust by the Home Mission Board. The corpus of that fund as of December 31, 1956, was \$2,187,515.33.⁴⁹ The Church Extension Loan Fund was set up by the Board at its annual meeting in 1943 out of available funds secured from undesignated gifts, wills, and bequests received after January 1, 1942. On December 31, 1956, the corpus of this fund was \$1,748,634.79.⁵⁰

⁴⁶Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the Ninety-Fifth Session, One Hundred Seventh Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1952), 243.

⁴⁷Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1952, 243.

⁴⁸Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the Ninety-Sixth Session, One Hundred Eighth Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1953), 239.

⁴⁹J. B. Lawrence, *History of the Home Mission Board*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 160-161. Also, see Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1957, 132.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

Results of Five Year Crusade

During the crusade the workers of the Home Mission Board increased in number from 754 to 954 regular missionaries and from 271 to 370 student missionaries. The number of new churches constituted was 1,440; and the number of missions started was 2,974.⁵¹

The finest cooperation was enjoyed by the Board in working with the state mission boards, the associations, and the churches during the five year crusade. Southern Baptists reported a 24 percent increase in baptisms over the previous five year period. The five year total for baptisms was 1,467,829 baptisms, which was 284,198 or 24 per cent more than were reported in the four previous years.⁵²

The total receipts received by the Board were also greatly increased in 1955. The Board received \$1,149,800 from the Cooperative Program, \$1,256,254.58 from the Annie Armstrong Offering and \$116,099.02 from general designations. The total receipts were \$3,134,363.86, which was \$403,459.38 more than the Board received in 1953.⁵³

1955-1958

In 1955 the Southern Baptist Convention committed itself to be involved in a world evangelistic crusade in which the cooperation of all the Baptist forces in North America were to be solicited. The Home Mission Board entered enthusiastically into the movement as did other denominational agencies. To prepare for the world movement, a Four-Year Conquest for Christ was launched in 1955 by the Convention.⁵⁴

⁵¹Ibid., 159. Also, see *Southern Baptist Home Missions*, March 1954, 10-11.

⁵²J. B. Lawrence, *History of the Home Mission Board*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 159.

⁵³Ibid., 164. Also, see Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1956, 217.

⁵⁴Ibid., 164-165. Also, see Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1954, 209.

Launching of Crusade

The four-year conquest on home missions took as its slogan the words of Caleb, "Let us go up at once and possess it (the land), for we are well able to overcome it." "Evangelism and church membership" were the emphases in 1955. Efforts were to be made to get every church to participate in the simultaneous evangelistic crusade in the spring. Additionally, efforts were to be made to get a large number of the non-resident members to transfer their membership to churches in the community in which they live.⁵⁵

In 1956 the emphasis was "church extension and the building of new church buildings." A goal was set to start 2,666 new churches and mission stations in one year. Special efforts were also to be made to increase the building loan funds sufficiently to care for the ever-increasing needs of the churches which were dependent upon the denomination for aid in financing their programs.⁵⁶

The 1957 emphasis was the "promotion of work among the language groups, minority groups, neglected and underprivileged groups, and people who are separated and isolated from our denominational work." In 1958 the emphasis was the "Rural Church Program," "ministries to the large cities," and "missionary education in general." Special attention was to be given to implement the recommendations from the Twenty-Five Year Rural Church Program which had been formulated by a special committee of the Convention. Special attention was also to be given to some of the large cities in the Convention's territory which needed help. The Convention hoped that the missionary education emphasis would do much to prepare the hearts and minds of Southern Baptists for the sesquicentennial effort that was launched in 1959.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the Ninety-Ninth Session, One Hundred Eleventh Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1956), 209.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

Church Extension Goal: "2,666 in 56"

In 1956 the HMB sought to reclaim some of the Baptist churches which were previously lost to the Convention and associations. The effort was to be made to revitalize many of the smaller churches which had closed their doors or had irregular services. Through concerted efforts of all concerned it was hoped that a minimum of 666 inactive churches would be revitalized.⁵⁸

The emphasis on the New Testament church had always been in order among Baptists. There were a number of reasons why the Convention felt it should emphasize the church during that time:

1. It is God's chosen agency for kingdom advancement.
2. It has the responsibility of keeping the gospel pure and indoctrinating our people. This service is especially needed at this time.
3. It is the best agency for Christian enlistment and Christian training.
4. It is the epitome of all efforts in Christian service, evangelism, missions, education, and care for the needy.
5. It is the primary unity of Christian fellowship and co-operation.
6. It is the principal outlet for Christian literature and missionary information.
7. It is the primary source of all resources and personnel for Christian service.
8. It is the proper channel through which the tithes and offerings of our people may be distributed to kingdom causes at home and abroad.
9. It is the local agency through which Christ will evangelize, train, and utilize the local constituency.
10. In co-operation with other churches, it participates in all that Christ suggested for kingdom advancement.
11. It has the promise of Christ for ultimate victory.
12. The making of new converts and the constitution of new churches have been the primary means by which Baptist have grown throughout their history.⁵⁹

The Home Mission Board report of 1955 also stressed the continued importance of church planting:

The church-centered program is the very heart of home mission work. The whole mission effort is to strengthen our churches, build new churches where needed, and utilize the resources of the kingdom for reaching the unreached and enlisting the unenlisted.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1956, 192.

⁵⁹Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the Ninety-Eighth Session, One Hundred Tenth Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1955), 199-200.

⁶⁰Ibid., 200.

During 1956 the Home Mission Board was to cooperate with state mission boards in emphasizing church extension. With joint efforts of several agencies of the Home Mission Board, 2,000 new churches were hoped to be constituted during that year. The slogan for the year was "2,666 in '56."⁶¹ The Board was only successful in constituting 296 churches.⁶²

Loan Fund Increase in 1956

At the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in St. Louis in 1954, a request of the Home Mission Board to borrow an amount not to exceed \$3,000,000 to supplement the funds in its Church Loans Department in helping to make loans to new churches was referred to the Executive Committee with power to act. After appropriate consideration the Executive Committee approved the request with certain restrictions agreed to by the Home Mission Board.⁶³

Crusade Results

The achievements from the five year crusade proved to be "steppingstones" to greater results during the four year crusade. In 1956 the Home Mission Board made its one hundred and eleventh report. The year 1955 had been one of unprecedented growth and achievement. Evangelism had received special emphasis. Thousands of churches engaged in the Convention-wide evangelistic crusades. These crusades were simultaneous revival meetings. The Convention recorded 25,000 more baptisms than in any previous year.⁶⁴

⁶¹Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1956, 192.

⁶²Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the One Hundredth Session, One Hundred Twelfth Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1957), 208.

⁶³Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1957, 207.

⁶⁴Lawrence, 164. Also, see Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1956, 81.

Reasons for Expansion

The Convention went through a period of expansion during this period. According to Robert A. Baker there were two constant factors in the Conventions geographical expansion.

Baker said:

The development of tension ... has generally followed a common pattern. One basic factor has never been lacking: there have always been Baptist immigrants from the South as the cause of tension....The second constant factor has been a dissatisfaction by the southern emigrants with the Northern Convention churches already in the area.⁶⁵

There were other factors present, but these factors have never been absent. Baker concludes that "migration, not mission policy, led to early Southern Baptist churches outside the South."⁶⁶

McBeth adds that:

The depression of the 1920s, the dust bowl of the 1930s, and military movements of the 1940s scattered people throughout the country. High wages lured millions of Southerners out of Dixie to work in the vegetable fields of Arizona, the citrus orchards and vineyards of California, the packing plants of Chicago, and the defense industries of Detroit.

Baptist churches existed in the North and the West, but the Southerners found them to be different. Sociological factors, not theological differences, divided the older residents from the incoming Southerners. McBeth's research revealed that:

Northern Baptist churches tended to have beautiful buildings, robed choirs who sang stately anthems, a robed minister who preached from a divided chancel, no Sunday night services, open communion, and an emotional reserve in worship. Somewhat like exiles of an earlier day, Baptists from the South hung their harps away and lamented that they could not sing the Lord's song in a strange land.⁶⁷

The 1920s and 1930s migration contained mostly impoverished Southerners moving Northward.

The possibility existed that many of the Southerners had always been unchurched, and possibly

⁶⁵Robert A. Baker, *Relations Between Northern and Southern Baptists*, (Forth Worth: Evans Press, 1948), p. 218.

⁶⁶McBeth, 623-624.

⁶⁷Ibid.

could have been effectively ministered to by the Northern Baptists, but little effort was expended in reaching out to them.⁶⁸

Little clusters of Southern Baptists formed home fellowships in the North and began to meet separately for worship. Later the home fellowship would elect a pastor from their group or from the South and become a church. The churches began associations and state conventions as the number of churches grew. The churches, associations and state conventions appealed to the Convention for help. These church found the Sunday School and Home Mission Boards to be helpful to them. The Southern churches in the North became known as "Dixie Clubs," because of their tendency to reach out to Southerners. McBeth concludes that, "while the SBC did not originally launch the geographical expansion, it undergirded such church in every way possible."⁶⁹ The support extended to Southerners in the North would prove to be helpful in the expansion of the Southern Baptist Convention.

1959-1964

Third Jubilee Program: 30,000 Program

The workers and agencies of the Home Mission Board sought to cooperate in the promotion of the 30,000 Program. By working together the Convention anticipated starting 30,000 additional churches and mission stations by 1964. The Home Mission Board:

conducted surveys to discover needs and opportunities for new work; (2) cooperate with state mission boards and other agencies in adding 10,000 new churches before 1964; (3) cooperate in helping the churches to start 20,000 additional mission stations.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1957, 207.

Increased Loans

The Home Mission Board tried to help as many churches as possible through the Church Loans Department. By helping new churches financially, a contribution was made toward reaching the goal of 30,000 new churches and mission stations by 1964. In order to increase the potential aid provided, the Church Loans Department sought to increase the corpus of Church Building Loan funds to \$5,000,000.00, Extension Loan funds to \$10,000,000.00; and the Church Site Loan funds to \$1,000,000.00 by the end of 1964.⁷¹

Each of the church loan funds increased in principle during the five year period, but only the Church Site Fund reached its goal. In 1964 the Church Building Loan Fund had a corpus of \$2,840,902.26 and loaned out a total of \$519,706.00 during the year. The Church Extension Loan Fund was increased to \$7,396,744.79 in 1964 and \$3,521,742.00 had been loaned out during the past year. The Church Site Fund developed a corpus of \$2,192,542.60. The Board purchased 34 sites at a price of \$378,443.00 during the year, but 22 of these sites were purchased from the Board by local churches.⁷²

Pioneer Areas

The Board decided to cooperate with other denominational agencies and forces to increase the number of churches in pioneer areas to a minimum of 6,600 by the end of 1963. The Board decided also to redouble its efforts to assist the Baptist churches in pioneer areas by starting new missions and churches, constructing new buildings.⁷³ To assist in these efforts the

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the One Hundred Seventh Session, One Hundred Nineteenth Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1964), 157.

⁷³Ibid., 208.

film *Taking the Church to the People* was produced. This film release on church sponsored missions was to be used to help in reaching the goal of 30,000 missions by 1964.

Language Missions

Language missions was one of the oldest and one of the primary concerns of the Home Mission Board. Within the United States more than thirty million persons were estimated to have not more than one generation removed from a non-English language background. Millions of those were without an adequate evangelical witness. Language missions was recognized as an essential part of the total strategy of winning America to Christ⁷⁴. The service of missionaries was indispensable, and the need for large numbers of new missionaries continued to grow.. However, during the 1960s, the Board in cooperation with mission leaders in the various states, began to shift its language missions efforts from a missionary-oriented to a congregation-oriented approach. This shift did not minimize the service of missionaries, instead it viewed the missionary "as an instrument of God for development of the language peoples." The objective was to "win converts, bring them into a church, assist them to mature as Christians, and help the congregation to develop such strength as to become a vital base for witnessing apart from outside help."⁷⁵

Results of Efforts

A total of 18,226 missions and 6,658 churches were established through June 30, 1964. These numbers were lower than the goals set, but strides forward had been made in starting new missions and churches as a result of the Convention's efforts. The Home Mission Board felt this effort was "one of the most successful ever under-taken in the Convention."⁷⁶

⁷⁴"The Human Barrier in the Language Maze," *Home Missions*, May 1961, 31. Also, see Rutledge, 169.

⁷⁵Rutledge, 170.

⁷⁶Southern Baptist Convention Annual 1965, 166.

After the adding of churches and trying to reach the cities for Christ in the 1950s, A. V. Washburn in 1960 said of Southern Baptist churches, "Small 'first unit' churches dot the landscape of the expanding population centers and affirm the vitality of the Christian faith to claim new communities for Christ."⁷⁷ Southern Baptists were having an impact on their fields of service.

Leon McBeth also writes of the success the Home Mission Board was having in beginning churches all across the nation. He reports,

"with the formation of a church in Vermont in 1964, Southern Baptists had churches in all fifty states, from Florida to Alaska, from Charleston on one coast to Seattle on the other. Despite its regional name, the SBC has become a national denomination."⁷⁸

The Convention which was once limited to fourteen states of the old South had spread and multiplied its work to a nation.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ A. V. Washburn, *Outreach for the Unreached*, (Nashville: Convention Press, 1960), 1.

⁷⁸McBeth, 623.

⁷⁹Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE: SELECTED EVENTS AND EMPHASES OF CHURCH PLANTING FROM 1965 TO 1988

The Convention at this point in time had a Southern Baptist church in every state. The challenge before the Convention was to continue to plant churches in areas where there was not a Southern Baptist church. Additionally, the growth in size and number of large cities presented the Convention with a tremendous challenge.

Church Planting Responsibility

In 1966 the Southern Baptist Convention approved a statement concerning the Home Mission Board's responsibilities. This statement sought to clarify the Board's responsibilities in terms of twelve programs: "evangelism development, chaplaincy ministries, church loans, establishing new churches and church-type missions, associational administration service, pioneer missions, rural-urban missions, metropolitan mission, language missions, work with national Baptists, Christian social ministries, and work related to non-evangelicals."⁸⁰ Three programs directly affect Southern Baptist church planting:

- (1) The Program of Church Loans- purpose To work with and assist churches, associations, and state conventions in establishing and brining to self-support new churches and missions that may become churches.
- (2) The Program of Church Extension- purpose To assist churches, associations, and state conventions to secure financing church buildings and church sites in keeping with their ability and opportunities.

⁸⁰Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the One Hundred Ninth Session, One Hundred Twenty-First Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1966), 67-79. Also, see Rutledge, 78.

(3) The Program of Language Missions- purpose To work with and assist churches, associations, and state conventions in their efforts to bring person identified with ethnic groups, other than English, into a right relationship with God, to establish language-culture congregations, and to bring them to self support."⁸¹

The concern for the Home Mission Board was to further expand the Convention's work throughout the United States. To help with expansion, the Program of Church Loans, the Program of Church Extension, and the Program of Language Missions had been given specific tasks in regard to church starting.

Major Emphases

Project 500

Project 500 was a two-year effort which began in November of 1967 until October 1969. This project was the first Convention-wide effort in church planting after the 30,000 program. The objective was specific:

The objective is long-range: to establish 500 new churches or church type missions in carefully-defined strategic locations throughout areas of the U.S. entered formally by the convention since 1940.⁸²

The normal church development and extension in communities of need would continued during this special two year period.⁸³

The Board committed themselves to achieving the objectives of Project 500 in terms of finances and manpower. An estimated \$25 million would be spent on Project 500. This project involved most of the denominational agencies of the Home Mission Board. According to Dallas Lee, the Board decided to use only "quality" personnel in this effort to reach out to the "nation's centers of influence- capital cities, ports, educational centers, transportation, communication and

⁸¹Rutledge, 265-266.

⁸²Dallas M. Lee, "Project 500: Bold Experiment with Strategy," *Home Missions*, February 1968, 8.

⁸³Ibid., 8-9.

business hubs." Crossing cultural, racial and language lines as part of the strategy would be costly in terms of manpower and financial resources.⁸⁴

Many of the Project 500 locations targeted colleges or universities across the northeast and west. The HMB felt that if college and university people could effectively be reached for Christ, then the spread of the gospel would be multiplied potentially to influential people from all over the country. These church plants entailed an experiment on how to effectively reach academic communities for Jesus Christ.

The strategy also entailed trying to reach a broader "area of influence" for Christianity. These influential people reached for Christ would in turn reach other people once leaving college. This strategy was different than trying to reach a particular "field," which would be the local area from which the church would draw its permanent membership. This strategy sought to prepare influential people to go into the field. Loyd Corder, the program director of the Home Mission Board wrote, "The success or failure of Project 500 depends on whether or not we learn how to do it the next time."⁸⁵ A total of 211 new churches and missions had been established in the specific target cities at the end of 1969.⁸⁶

Bold Mission Thrust

The Home Mission Board's emphases of "evangelizing, congregationalizing, and ministering," took shape in the form of an emphasis called "Bold Mission Thrust". This emphasis was a comprehensive national strategy for missions. In 1975 the Board approved these objectives for the "Bold Mission" thrust:

Let every person in our land have an opportunity to hear and accept the gospel of Jesus Christ!

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵"Reaching the Academic Community," *Home Missions*, February 1968, 18-19.

⁸⁶Woolley, Davis Collier. ed. *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptist* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1971), s.v."Project 500," by Fred B. Mosley.

Let every person in our land have an opportunity to share in the witness and ministry of a New Testament fellowship of believers!⁸⁷

Bold Mission Trust started out as a four year emphasis from 1976 to 1979. This national strategy would be scheduled to continue through the year 2000. In 1979 Bold Mission Thrust emphasis took on an additional name of Target AD 2000.

Target AD 2000

The efforts of a twelve month study by the HMB culminated in a national strategy. The program was named "Target AD 2000." and reflected the holistic approach of the long-range plan of the Home Mission Board. This program would be in effect from 1979 to 2000.⁸⁸ Under Target AD 2000, the Board developed objectives, strategies and guidelines to help reach their goals. These objectives, strategies, and guidelines were revised in 1983.⁸⁹

TARGET AD 2000

Objectives of Home Mission Board:

1. To lead Southern Baptist in evangelizing our land by presenting the gospel to all persons and giving them an opportunity to respond.
2. To lead Southern Baptists in congregationalizing so every person will have the opportunity to share in the life of a New Testament church.
3. To challenge and equip all Southern Baptists to minister to meet the needs of persons.
4. To move into new frontiers where the need for evangelizing, congregationalizing and ministering is most crucial.

⁸⁷Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the One Hundred Eighteenth Session, One Hundred Thirtieth Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention 1975), 133

⁸⁸Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the One Hundred Twenty-Second Session, One Hundred Thirty-Fourth Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention 1979), 108.

⁸⁹Rutledge, xix.

5. To lead Southern Baptists to a greater awareness of missions and evangelism needs and opportunities for response.⁹⁰

Home Mission Board Strategies:

1. The HMB will appoint, support and equip missions personnel to serve in their vital role as a means to accomplish the purposes of the Board.
2. The HMB will look upon the service of short and long-term volunteers and bivocational ministers as an important resource in the work of missions and evangelism.
3. The HMB will lead in strengthening Baptist associations.
4. The HMB will work in cooperation with various Baptist state conventions according to mutually agreed upon plans.
5. The HMB will assist churches in the development and promotion of evangelism and missions with special emphasis on the Church Evangelism Committee and the Church Missions Committee.
6. The HMB will lead in the development of an effective, comprehensive and cohesive approach to the great cities of our land.
7. The HMB will lead in the enlistment and development of leaders from among the people served, recognizing them as full participants in Southern Baptist life.⁹¹

Home Mission Board Guidelines:

1. State conventions, associations and churches shall be encouraged to accept responsibility for evangelizing, congregationalizing and ministering in their areas, freeing the Home Mission Board to do what churches, associations and state conventions cannot do alone.
2. The Board's continuing emphasis will be placed on investment in personnel involved in missions and evangelism.
3. The Cooperative Program shall continue to be emphasized as the basic means of support of the Home Mission Board. The Board shall continue to assist the Woman's Missionary Union in the promotion of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and gladly receive other special gifts.
4. The principles of good stewardship of the funds entrusted to this agency shall permeate all of its operations.

⁹⁰"Target AD 2000," *Missions U.S.A.*, March 1983, 35-47.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 48-50.

5. The Home Mission Board will work in close cooperation and consultation with other SBC agencies.

6. Communication and cooperation with other denominations shall be welcomed and initiated by the Home Mission Board where there is no sacrifice of principles or weakening of basic beliefs and practices.⁹²

In 1979, the HMB staff developed some "mid-range" goals. The goals were designed for the years 1979-1982 to bridge the gap between the short-term and the long-term goals. One of the goals was to establish 5,800 new churches and missions during the time period. This goal was surpassed with the starting of 7,465 churches and missions.⁹³ Additional mid-range goals were set for the period 1983-1985. One of these goals was to organize 1,500 new churches. At the end of 1985, 1,321 churches had been organized.⁹⁴ These short-range goals were designed to help reach the long-range goals.

An effort of the HMB is to have a total of at least 5,000 new Southern Baptist churches by the year 2000. According to statistical projections by J. Gordon Lawrence, the Associate Director of the Program Research Department, the goal of 50,000 constituted by the year 2000 is very unlikely. From 1970 to 1987, there was an average annual net gain of 172 churches. During the period from 1980 to 1987, an average annual net gain of was 210. If the Convention adds churches at the rate of 172 per year until the year 2000, there will be 39,522 churches. If projections are based on an average net gain of 210 churches per year, there will be 40,016 Southern Baptist churches in the year 2000.⁹⁵

⁹²Ibid., 50.

⁹³James Edmonson, "The Department of Evangelism: 1970-1982," (Th.D. major paper, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, October 3, 1989), 9.

⁹⁴Southern Baptist Convention Annual; 1983, 1984 and 1985.

⁹⁵J. Gordon Lawrence, "Changes in the Number of Southern Baptist Churches: 1970 to 1987," June 1989, Research Department of the Southern Baptist Convention, 21.

Based on the growth trend between 1970 and 1987, it would be necessary to start 1,686 churches annually. This figure takes into account the average number of churches lost to the Convention each year from 1970 to 1987.⁹⁶

Expanding Opportunities

With the growth rate of the number of Southern Baptist churches not producing enough net annual growth to meet the 50,000 church goal for the year 2000, other means of reaching that goal were sought. The HMB hoped to increase the number of people starting churches. Bivocational ministers, women and volunteers were sought to help plant more churches. More educated ministers graduate from the six Southern Baptist Seminaries than were necessary to fill open local church positions. In 1983 approximately one-third of all Southern Baptist congregations have at least one bivocational minister. William Tanner felt that if Bold Mission Thrust goals were to be met, at least one-half of the 14,000 new congregations needed to be started by AD 2000 would have to begin with bivocational pastors. Women and volunteers would also have to play a increased role in church planting for the Board to reach its goal of 50,000 churches by the year 2000.⁹⁷

Results

Most of the mid-range goals set for Bold Mission Trust were not reached. Sunday School enrollment, baptisms, as well as most other areas missed their time table goals. Church planting and mission starts have been behind also, but there has been increased emphasis on church planting and starting new missions.⁹⁸

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Rutledge, xxii-xxiv.

⁹⁸Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings of the One Hundred Twenty-Eighth Session, One Hundred

The amount received by the Convention through the Cooperative Program, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering were all above the previous years receipts. These offerings support the work of the Home and Foreign Mission Boards.⁹⁹

Fortieth Year (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention 1985), 98-104

⁹⁹Ibid., 98.

CHAPTER FOUR: SELECTED FACTORS AND METHODOLOGIES OF CHURCH PLANTING

Church planting is not an exact science with an exact method of procedure. However, there are some factors that are important to trying to develop a stable church. Additionally, there are some methods being used which have produced healthy churches.

Selected Factors

Growing an Indigenous Church

The goal for the type of church being started is a factor. The goal of producing an indigenous type church is a factor to be considered. Starting and building indigenous churches was the plan used in the New Testament. Melvin H. Hodges feels the plan of building a living and growing church is workable in America and in foreign lands today. Autrey quotes Hodges as saying,

'The three basic elements which make the church indigenous are: self-propagation, self-support, and self-government. Should any of these essential elements be mission, the church is not truly indigenous.'¹⁰⁰

The indigenous church adjusts itself to the customs and civilization of the people whom it serves. The adjustment has to do largely with methodology, and not with composition and quality of life. The church that follows the pattern of the New Testament church will find within itself the ability to govern, support, and reproduce itself. Its nature will be such that it can grow naturally in its environment.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰C. E. Autrey, *The Theology of Evangelism*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1966), 104-105.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*

When converts are made and the church has been established, it must be a self-governing body. The home and foreign missionary should allow it to grow up and develop with minimum supervision. The new church is not an invalid. It should not be given unnecessary support through missionary direction and finances. The longest period of time that Paul remained in any one place was two years. Generally he preached, taught, made converts, organized them into new churches, and then moved on. Later, he would often send letters of instruction to the churches.¹⁰²

It is a mistake at home and abroad to depart from the pattern of New Testament. A company of true believers in Christ is a sturdy group and is capable of surviving and growing in its natural environment. The surest way to make an invalid of a child is to hold him by the hand indefinitely, or make him use crutches to walk. Each new church matures faster with a minimum of outside support.¹⁰³

The purpose of evangelism is not to establish mission stations and places of service for missionaries and evangelists but to preach the gospel of Christ, to form the converted into indigenous churches and to win the world as soon as possible."¹⁰⁴

Rights/Safeguards of New Church Plants

Each church started should have built in safeguards. A. V. Washburn believed new ministries should have safeguards to protect them and give the best opportunity for growth. These basic rights or principles should be safeguarded when new Sunday schools, missions or new churches are established. He said,

(1) *A New Testament church, mission or chapel, has a right to be wellborn.* It needs to be started by a mother church in a spirit of prayer and conviction that the Lord is directing the work.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

(2) *A new work has a right to be properly located.* We need to locate the people and find where new work is needed now. We also need to determine where people are going to be living in fast developing areas, and be there first with churches.

(3) *A new work has a right to be encouraged and protected.* It should be under the sponsorship of a church, financially underwritten by that church, with provision of needed leadership to guarantee a worthy beginning."¹⁰⁵

Observing these rights could prove helpful in starting and building a church.

Sponsoring Church

The role and responsibilities of the sponsoring is another factor deserving consideration. James L. Hill is the associate director of the Church Starting Department of the Home Mission Board. Hill believes launching a church start is an exciting time in the life of an existing church. He does offer some pointers to the sponsoring church from his years of experience. Two key factors should be considered by the sponsoring church to determine the appropriate time to launch the new work publicly.

First, the core groups of members for the new church should be large enough to provide the necessary financial and leadership base for the new church.... The second factor is related to 'timing.' The sponsoring church and fellowship groups first must seek to determine God's will concerning the date to begin public services.¹⁰⁶

After the sponsoring church has determined that they are large enough in size and the timing is right, the sponsoring church should assist the new congregation with several undertakings. The new congregation needs assistance from the sponsoring church in planning for the needs of the first few weeks and preparing the new leadership. The sponsoring church can also help with publicizing the first service with an combinations of visitation, newspaper ads, flyers, direct mail pieces, telephone calls, posters, radio announcements, or television ads.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵A. V. Washburn, *Outreach for the Unreached*, (Nashville: Convention Press, 1960), 132-133.

¹⁰⁶James L. Hill, "How to Launch a New Work," *Church Administration*, December 1987, 35.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*

The sponsoring church may want to take the opportunity to conduct practice services to see if there are any problems that need to be worked out before the first service. Finally, the entire sponsoring church can pray through the whole process of beginning this new church that God will rise up a new community of Christians called a church.¹⁰⁸

Nine Steps to Church Planting

Careful thought and planning will improve the chances for successful church planting . Jack Redford has served as director of the Department of Church Extension. He has designed, used and published several times his "Nine Steps in Planting New Churches " The Home Mission Board has published these nine steps in several pieces of materials. The following are Redford's nine steps:

(1) Select a Church Missions Committee, (2) Select Areas for New Work, (3) Prepare the Sponsoring Church, (4) Cultivate the Field, (5) The Mission Fellowship, (6) The Mission Chapel, (7) The Financial Issues, (8) Provide Facilities, (9) Constitute the Church.¹⁰⁹

Selected Methodologies

There have been a variety of methods used to start churches. Many church starters personalize and use one of the following methods.

Lay Led Church Planting

Lay people are important in church planting. The authors of *Missions to America* felt that,

every ministry of an individual congregation in reaching out to establish a mission or a church, to minister to persons in unique need, or to put forth an evangelistic effort is a part of the Christian undertaking to claim 'our land for Christ.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Jack Redford, *Planting New Churches*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978), 28-100. Also, see "Reach People! Start Churches" and "Evangelizing and Congregationalizing: Guide for Establishing New Churches," produced by the Home Mission Board.

The denominational stress that developed upon 'local mission actions' furnished strong hopes that Southern Baptist laymen and women would become increasingly active in meeting local mission needs by local church outreach through volunteer workers. The involvement many people and organizations was necessary in view of growing responsibilities and opportunities. The authors went on to say, "If it were possible for a mission board to appoint enough missionaries to do the necessary work, it would not be a healthy procedure."¹¹¹ The Home Mission Board sent missionaries to places of unique need, where the training and talents of vocational missionaries were required for an effective response.¹¹²

Church Planter Apprentices

The Home Mission Board developed a new church-starting model in 1979. This method made an impact in the Southern Baptist Convention. Recent seminary graduates serve for two years as Church Planter Apprentices, under Home Mission Board appointment. They visit in homes, lead bible studies, and start new churches. The church-starting efforts of Church Planter Apprentices are supervised by experienced pastors. The efforts result in new constituted churches being started in many cases.¹¹³

Using Seminary Students

The Home Mission Board began the Praxis program to start new churches. Praxis program was a ten week church starting effort, worked in coordination with each of the six Southern Baptists seminaries. With the help of a sponsoring church, students were sent to a

¹¹⁰Rutledge, 235.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³David D. Benham, "A New Church Is Born," *Royal Service*, January 1988, ii.

designated spot in hopes of beginning a new church. They took surveys and conducted Bible studies that would hopefully become churches in the future.¹¹⁴

According to Dan Crawford, assistant professor of evangelism and director of the seminary's Praxis program, 57 Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary students worked in 26 teams during the summer of 1988. These teams worked across the country making thousands of telephone calls, 7,000 personal visits, and started 36 Bible studies. As a result of their efforts, 47 professions of faith were made and nine churches started as of October of 1988. The Praxis program has worked in planting church in needy areas throughout America.¹¹⁵

Dr. Keith Parks, President of the Foreign Mission Board, has said that the lessons learned by students in the United States, will also work overseas. Dr. Parks goes on to say,

We're totally dependent on the seminaries for our church planting staff. I could not over emphasize the importance of courses related to church planting. We're going to have to intensify our efforts at how we

approach the cities. The old methods of a 'churchy' building with a staff are not going to work.¹¹⁶

Parks goes on to say new high-tech methods of church planting need to be developed and used.¹¹⁷

Tele-marketing

Tele-marketing is one method of church starting that has become increasingly popular among some innovators in the field of church planting. A church planter makes thousands of calls to find those who might be interesting in attending a new church. Then the church planter

¹¹⁴"High-Tech Planting: Students Use Innovative Ideas to Start Churches," *Southwestern News*, October 1988, 1.

¹¹⁵"High-Tech Planting: Students Use Innovative Ideas to Start Churches," *Southwestern News*, October 1988, 1 and 6.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

writes each person who has indicated an interest to inform the prospect of the date, time and place of the first service. This method has proven to be successful when the necessary work had been completed and the area was large enough to survey several thousand people.¹¹⁸

Using the Sunday School

A church can begin a new church using the Sunday School as a place from which to start. This method requires little money and few people. A church can begin by ordering extra literature, enlist and train Sunday School teachers for each of the age spans, and find a place to conduct classes. A new Sunday School class grows faster than old ones, and the same is true for churches.¹¹⁹

The use of the Sunday School is an expansion of the use of outreach Bible studies. Outreach Bible studies have been used throughout the life of the denomination.¹²⁰

Revivals

Revivals have been used to plant new churches since the 1930s. This method can result in a larger number of people to start a church than some other methods. The Extension Section of the Home Mission Board revised the methods and wrote materials to be used in the Convention-wide "Here's Hope Simultaneous Revivals" in 1990.¹²¹ The Extension Section produced a brochure, "*Using Revivals to Start Churches*," and a methods guide, "*Starting Churches Through Revivals*."¹²²

¹¹⁸"High-Tech Planting: Students Use Innovative Ideas to Start Churches," *Southwestern News*, October 1988, 1 and 6.

¹¹⁹Boyd Rayburn, "Using the Sunday School to Start New Churches," *Sunday School Leadership*, January 1988, 12.

¹²⁰Charles L. Chaney, Phone interview by author.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings for the One Hundred Thirty-Second Session, One Hundred

Target Groups

The Home Missions Board has intentionally starting ethnic churches and done so with indigenous leaders. Chaney feels ethnic leaders are more effective in reaching ethnics. "We should not force people to step over natural barriers to become Christians," barriers such as race, language, and nationality.¹²³

The primary focus of the church extension division is white, English-speaking Americans. Non-English speaking churches and black churches are being started by Language Church Starting Department and the Black Church Extension Division respectively. The black population has been another target group from which to start a church.¹²⁴

Forty-Fourth Year. (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1989), 138.

¹²³Charles L. Chaney, Phone interview by author.

¹²⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE: SELECTED IMPACTS OF CHURCH PLANTING ON SOUTHERN BAPTIST EVANGELISM

The starting of new churches has impacted Southern Baptist evangelism. A. V.

Washburn stressed the importance of new churches in 1960 when he wrote,

As we have learned a long time ago in our Sunday school work, new units grow faster, win more people to Christ, provide more workers and develop members in stewardship. Exactly the same is true in new churches..... Measured by souls reached, workers enlisted, total gifts to the cause of Christ or any other means available, it is profitable for Southern Baptists to start new Sunday schools and churches by the thousands.¹²⁵

More Ministry and Effectiveness

Church planting has always been, and will continue to be, a priority among Southern Baptists. Although church planting has always been important, in recent years it has come to the forefront. David Benham gives a couple of reasons for the recent extra attention church planting is receiving.

Evangelism and ministry are local church enterprises. To increase the amount of effective evangelism means more churches. New churches add new people more effectively than older churches. If we add a new

church, they will add new members more quickly than an older church. They have more reasons, and are more anxious, to do so.¹²⁶

¹²⁵A. V. Washburn, *Outreach for the Unreached*, (Nashville: Convention Press, 1960.), 131-132.

¹²⁶Jim Burton, ed., "Planting Churches is Back in Style," *World Mission Journal*, February 1988, 3.

Reach Non-Christians

Starting healthy new churches requires lost people to be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Robert Hamblin feels the emphasis on church starting I think is going to be good for evangelism:

because the only way you can successfully start churches is by evangelizing. You can take a few people out of other churches, but if that church is really going to grow and become a church, you are going to have to win people to the Lord. The emphasis the Home Mission board is putting on church planting will help us to become more evangelistic.¹²⁷

In 1987 David Palmer was serving as church extension director. He pointed out that:

The new churches have larger front doors. Their baptism-to-church-membership ratio is one to seven, while older churches in the association (Lake Association, West Palm Beach, Florida) have a ratio of one to twenty-five. Also, new churches have a smaller back doors, with two members lost by transfer or death for ten gained. Older churches lose six for ten gained.¹²⁸

New churches reach more new people for Christ on a percentage basis than older churches.¹²⁹

James Hill summarizes why Southern Baptists need more churches.

We need new churches to enable more people to hear and respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We desire to give all people the opportunity to hear the gospel, to become Christians, and to be part of a caring congregation. In the final analysis, we begin new churches to reach people for Christ more effectively.¹³⁰

Reach Large Cities

Southern Baptist churches are predominantly located in rural areas, while the large majority of people in the United States live in metropolitan areas. In 1985 seventy-six percent of

¹²⁷Robert Hamblin, interview by author, September 13, 1989, Pascagoula, Ms., tape recording.

¹²⁸William I. Long, "New Churches Reach People," *Church Training*, November 1987, 45.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰James L. Hill, "Why Do We Need New Churches?," *Church Training*, November 1897, 47.

the population lived in 273 metropolitan areas with 50,000 or more people. This figure leaves on 24 percent of the population living in non-metropolitan areas. Southern Baptists only have one church for every 11,666 people who live in metropolitan areas, but they have one church for every 2,637 people in non-metropolitan areas.¹³¹ A more detailed breakdown of the number and location of Southern Baptist in 1985 is located in the appendix.

Southern Baptists will have to start more new churches in metropolitan areas if they are to keep pace with the growing number of people living in cities.¹³² The effort to start new churches will include most of the programs of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Reach Ethnic Groups

Ethnic people are in need of churches. This group has presented and continues to present a great challenge to Southern Baptists. According to Oscar Romo, director of the Language Missions Division of the Home Mission Board, more than 100 million Americans identify themselves as belonging to a language/culture group. These 100 million Americans makeup more than 500 ethnic groups. People in America speak 636 different languages and dialects.¹³³

In order to meet the challenge of reaching ethnics with the gospel, each week Southern Baptists worship and study the Bible in more than 87 languages and dialects. Charlotte Waston quotes Rome as saying,

131Charlotte Watson, "Where Can You Plant a Church?," *Accent*, January 1988, 11.

132Ibid.

133Charlotte Watson, "Why Do We Need More Churches," *Accent*, January 1988, 16.

there are more than 4,600 language/culture congregations with nearly 250,000 members. These congregations represent 84 of the nation's 500 ethnic groups and 97 tribes and sub-tribes of the 495 American Indian tribes."¹³⁴

Growth Increase

New churches grow faster and baptize a higher number in relationship to church membership than older churches. The Research Division of the Home Mission Board conducted a survey of Southern Baptist church-type missions started between October 1, 1979 and September 30, 1984. The Division estimated that 2,498 church-type missions were started during the time period researched. An estimated 44,000 baptisms occurred in these missions, while another 20,000 persons made professions of faith because of the ministry, but were not baptized due to various reasons.¹³⁵

Financial Support

There are only three sources from which new revenue can be secured by the Convention. "One is the organization of new churches, another is the baptizing of additional people; and the other is to increase the giving of those who give."¹³⁶ In 1949 the missionaries of the Home Mission Board reported more than thirty thousand professions of faith. For the previous five years they have reported more than 30,000 each year. This done in addition to the 800 churches which they organized. Lawrence said, "I do not know what all these churches have

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Rudee Devon Boan and Phillip B. Jones, "Survey of Southern Baptist Church-type Mission Started October 1, 1979 through September 30, 1984," March 1986. This research paper was done for the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

¹³⁶Annual, 1950, 189. In a written speech J. B. Lawrence in on the "Kingdom of God."

given, but I do know what one has given. This one on the third year after it was organized gave \$5,000.00 to the Cooperative Program."¹³⁷

Supports Other Mission Work

The support of mission work comes from churches. This area was where the state and home mission boards had majored through the years. The Home Mission Board engaged for over a hundred years in planting and sustaining churches from coast to coast and from North to South. During this period the missionaries of the Board organized more than 9,600 churches and baptized over 800,000 converts. These churches became permanent supporters of Convention's outreach work.¹³⁸

Charles Chaney expressed his views when he said,

We need more churches today for the same reason that churches needed to be multiplied in Paul's day: to become outposts of evangelistic extension among the various peoples of our cities. Effective evangelizing waits on adequate congregationalizing today just as in the first century."¹³⁹

Chaney expressed his strong feelings toward the use of church planting. He said, "Church planting is the most effective method there is in doing evangelism."¹⁴⁰

Strongest National Protestant Denomination

Territorial expansion changed the Southern Baptist Convention. Expansion increased "the convention's numbers, multiplied its institutions, and enlarged its financial and missionary

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Annual, 1950, 189. In a written speech J. B. Lawrence in on the "Kingdom of God."

¹³⁹Charles L. Chaney, *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1986), 157.

¹⁴⁰Charles L. Chaney, Phone interview by author.

capabilities."¹⁴¹ This expansion thrust Southern Baptists into "prominence as the nation's largest Protestant denomination and embued them with a national vision."¹⁴²

¹⁴¹McBeth, 632.

¹⁴²Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Church planting has occurred throughout the life of the Southern Baptist Convention. Much of the expansion in the number of churches prior to 1950 was brought about by outside factors. First, major shifts in population to different parts of the country from the South led Southerners to relocate in areas with few or no Southern Baptist churches. These Southern Baptists provided the interest which led to the formation of additional Southern Baptist Churches. Second, the movement of large numbers of people from rural areas to major cities increased the need for additional churches in the cities. Prior to the movement toward the cities, Southern Baptists were predominantly a rural people in their thinking, life-style and location.

Historically, the Convention has sought to reach out to people unsaved persons through local churches. This philosophy of reaching unsaved people led the Convention to plant churches where the people were located. Since 1950 there has been intentional efforts to start new churches in order to reach new people for Christ who were not presently involved in a local congregation. In spite of the fact that some of the more recent goals to plant additional churches have been Much of the numerical and financial expansion of the Convention has been brought about by the people reached by new churches.

Several factors have influenced Southern Baptists as they have planted new churches. Southern Baptists have traditionally sought to start churches in such a way as to be indigenous. The goal has been for each church to be self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing. Each new mission has several rights: (1) to be wellborn, (2) to be properly located, and (3) to be encouraged and protected. Each sponsoring church has the responsibility to pray for God's timing on when to begin a new church. The sponsoring church should assist the daughter church

through providing leaders, publicity, and training for the first worship service and the initial months of ministry.

Several methods have been used to initiate the starting of new churches. These start-up tools or methods have included tele-marketing, the Sunday School, and revivals. In determining where to begin new churches, the HMB has been targeting groups of people by race, language, and nationality. The researcher believes the number of types of groups to be targeted will increase in future. Factors such as education, age, music preferences, and economic status will impact where churches will be started. In addition to using vocational church planters, Southern Baptists have used laymen, church planter apprentices, and seminary students to be the primary leader of new churches.

Through extensive reading and research of the materials available on the researched subject, this researcher has concluded that church planting has impacted evangelism in several ways. First, new churches provide the human and financial support for most all other evangelistic and mission efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention. Second, new churches are more effective at reaching unsaved persons for Christ, and therefore, lower the average number of Baptists it takes to have one lost person converted. Third, Church planting has provided Southern Baptists with a strategy for reaching the vast numbers of unchurched people and ethnic groups who live in the fast growing metropolitan areas. Fourth, starting new churches has led the SBC to become the nations largest protestant denomination. Finally, church planting to reach the unchurched is on the cutting edge of evangelism.

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APPENDIX

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Churches</u>
Open country	14,165
Villages	3,676
Towns (pop. 500 to 2,499)	4,222
Small cities (pop. 2,500 to 9,999)	3,649
Medium-sized cities (10,000 to 49,999)	
Downtown	1,029
Neighborhood	2,358
Suburban	2,263
Large cities (pop. 50,000 or more)	
Downtown	465
Neighborhood	2,877
Suburban	2,412

"Church planting is the most effective method there is in doing evangelism. We reach people with indigenous churches."¹⁴³

Revivals have been used to plant new churches since the 1930s. The Extension Section of the Home Mission Board revised the methods and wrote materials to be used in the Convention-wide "Here's Hope Simultaneous Revivals" in 1990.¹⁴⁴ The Extension Section produced a brochure, "*Using Revivals to Start Churches*," and a methodological guide, "*Starting Churches Through Revivals*."¹⁴⁵

The Home Missions Board is intentionally starting ethnic churches with indigenous leaders. Ethnic leaders are more effective in reaching ethnics. "We should not force people to step over natural barriers to become Christians," barriers such as race, language, and nationality.
146

The primary focus of the church extension division is white, English-speaking Americans. Non-English speaking churches and black churches are being started by Language Church Starting Department and the Black Church Extension Division respectively.¹⁴⁷

"We need more churches today for the same reason that churches needed to be multiplied in Paul's day: to become outposts of evangelistic extension among the various peoples of our cities. Effective evangelizing waits on adequate congregationalizing today just as in the first century."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³Chaney, Phone interview by author, November 8, 1989.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵Southern Baptist Convention, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention: Containing the Proceedings for the One Hundred Thirty-Second Session, One Hundred Forty-Fourth Year. (Nashville: Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, 1989), 138.

¹⁴⁶Charles L. Chaney, Phone interview by author, November 8, 1989.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Chaney, *Church Planting*, 157.

