



# **SOUTHERN BAPTIST STUDENT WORK:**

by Lynn E. May, Jr.  
and A. Ronald Tonks

# **A HISTORY**

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**SOUTHERN  
BAPTIST  
STUDENT  
WORK**

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## Contents

- (Part I:)** Southern Baptist Student Work Gets Going  
by Lynn E. May, Jr.
- (Part II:)** Marching Forward  
by Lynn E. May, Jr.
- (Part III:)** A Decade of Expanding Ministries, 1950-60  
by Lynn E. May, Jr.
- (Part IV:)** A Decade of Transition and Change, 1961-72  
by A. Ronald Tonks

LYNN E. MAY, JR. is executive secretary of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

A. RONALD TONKS is research director of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.



## Part I:

# Southern Baptist Student Work Gets Going

From North, South, East, and West they came, 1,531 strong. Never before had such a large, enthusiastic group of Southern Baptist students gathered in one place. This first Convention-wide student conference convened in Birmingham, Alabama, October 28-31, 1926.

For four epochal days the collegians listened intently to the messages of denominational leaders and fellow students on "Christ, Master of My Generation."<sup>1</sup>

The Birmingham meeting brought solidarity and unity of purpose to the Convention-wide student movement which had previously encountered uncertainties, conflicting ideas, and even active opposition. Nine months earlier representatives from all the states had come together for the first time and planned a unified program. The spirit which marked that meeting foreshadowed the achievement of the conference they planned so well.

Charles E. Maddry joyfully declared: "Southern Baptists have at last realized the possibility of saving and conserving the religious life of this generation of Baptist students."<sup>2</sup>

## A Growing Concern

At the turn of the century Southern Baptists were promoting no program to meet the spiritual needs of their students. Interdenominational groups such as the YMCA, YWCA, and the Student Volunteer Movement were conducting religious activities among college students. Three students from Baylor University attended a YMCA-sponsored student conference in 1903 at Ruston, Louisiana. One of them, Joseph P. Boone, later wrote that they returned to their campus with a vision of a denominational organization for enlisting and guiding Baptist students during their college years. Three fellow students covenanted with them to pray that Texas Baptists would initiate such a program. Over fifteen years passed before their vision became a reality."<sup>3</sup>

Slowly Southern Baptists began to recognize that if they "would make their impact on the world . . . they must depend largely on the Baptist students of this generation."<sup>4</sup> The Foreign Mission Board in 1909 began to send speakers to Southern Baptist colleges to deliver lectures on missions. Students responded enthusiastically and the Board continued the program.<sup>5</sup> The Woman's Missionary Union in 1910 created a special division of the Young Woman's Auxiliary for work in the colleges and began to organize YWA circles among the students.<sup>6</sup>

The Baptist Student Missionary Movement was launched November 16, 1914, at Fort Worth, Texas. Under the direction of Charles T. Ball and A. L. Aulick, many "volunteer bands" were organized on college campuses. The Home Mission Board helped to sponsor this program and the student conferences which it conducted in different parts of the country.<sup>7</sup> Although not limited to that group, the movement consisted largely of student mission volunteers.

An awareness of the need for a special program to enlist Baptist students in local churches developed among denominational leaders. Many students who had been active in their home churches failed to unite with the college church. They soon lost interest in their own spiritual development and in the work of their denomination. What could be done to salvage these youth? Many Baptist leaders shared the hope expressed in 1907 by Landrum Leavell concerning a denominational student program: "May the day soon come when the Baptist people will put Baptist money into Baptist organization for the 'gaining, training, and retaining' of Baptist young people!"<sup>8</sup> That day finally came.

Baptist pastors in the college centers of Texas ultimately convinced the state convention of the need for a definite program of student work. The state executive board in July, 1919, employed O. P. Campbell to direct student religious activities and teach Bible to Baptist students enrolled in Texas University. That fall the Texas Convention adopted a resolution submitted by the Texas B.Y.P.U. Convention which called for the election of a state Baptist student secretary. This man was to "give his entire time among the Baptist students of Texas emphasizing Baptist principles, interpreting Baptist life, creating and sustaining Baptist loyalty, enlisting and crystallizing a denominational spirit . . . that shall express itself through the local churches where students hold membership."<sup>9</sup>

The prayers of the six Baylor covenanters were being answered at

last! The state board elected one of the six, Joseph P. Boone, as state student secretary. He began his work in April, 1920.<sup>10</sup>

The following July, Boone presented a suggested plan of work to a student conference called during the annual B.Y.P.U. encampment at Palacios, Texas. This small group of students and faculty members, representing six schools, first determined that the organization should be "distinctly student in constituency, purpose, and plan." The group devoted more time to the selection of a name than to the plan of organization. After days of prayer and discussion, they chose one word at a time: first "Student," then "Baptist," and finally, "Union." The first Baptist Student Convention of Texas, which met at Howard Payne College, October 22-24, 1920, enthusiastically adopted the name *Baptist Student Union*. The state board also approved the selection.<sup>11</sup> Four years later the Convention-wide student movement adopted this.<sup>12</sup>

### **Convention Beginnings**

On campuses throughout the country students were eager for a denominational organization of their own. The sporadic efforts of Convention agencies to minister to students had to be coordinated into a unified program. Upon a joint proposal from the Foreign, Home, Sunday School, and Education boards in 1920, the Convention appointed the secretaries of the four boards and the WMU as an Inter-Board Committee. Southern Baptists authorized it to create a plan for the religious training of Baptist students of the Convention which would coordinate the student activities of these agencies.<sup>13</sup>

B. D. Gray, T. B. Ray, I. J. Van Ness, W. C. James, and Kathleen Mallory, the original Inter-Board Committee, formulated plans for an organization to be known as "The Baptist Student Association," which the Convention adopted in 1921. The plans called for the work to be continued through the Inter-Board Committee. They provided for the establishment of a headquarters, the employment of a Convention-wide secretary and a woman student worker, and the publication of a student magazine.<sup>14</sup>

The purpose of the Association would be "to form into one organization, associated with the denominational life and name, the student religious life in our educational institutions to the end that the unsaved may be brought to Christ and the Christians be led to

consecrate . . . and to train themselves for the best effective service in that field into which our Lord may lead them.”<sup>15</sup>

In their search for a man to direct the Convention student work, the Inter-Board Committee turned to Frank H. Leavell, a man uniquely prepared for such a tremendous task. Pioneering as B.Y.P.U. secretary of Georgia since 1913, he had recognized the need for a denominational student program. Something needed to be done to help young people retain the Christian loyalty and enthusiasm which they had found in the church back home. As he wrote years later, “We were losing at the top, losing all we had put into them through the years in B.Y.P.U. It had to be stopped.”<sup>16</sup> He believed it could be. Baptists placed in his hands the responsibility.

After weeks of prayer, Leavell accepted the secretaryship of the “Inter-Board Commission on Student Religious Activity.” He began his work January 1, 1922.<sup>17</sup> The new commission selected Memphis, Tennessee, for its headquarters since none of the boards involved were located there and because of its central location. Southern Baptists thus inaugurated the Convention-wide student movement in a small room overlooking the Mississippi River, with two desks, a typewriter, a stenographer, and an executive secretary. Here was a man determined to meet the spiritual needs of the thousands of Baptist students in the colleges and universities of the South through enlisting them in a distinctly denominational student movement.<sup>18</sup>

Where should you begin such an undertaking? Leavell recognized that hasty decisions could lead to blunders which would mar the future of the program. An intensive study of the current campus situation revealed more than 250 colleges and universities in the South. These institutions enrolled over 93,000 Baptist students. Less than one third of them attended Baptist schools.<sup>19</sup>

These staggering figures only partially showed the size of the task. The YWA, B.Y.P.U., Volunteer Bands, Ministerial Associations, YMCA, YWCA, and other religious organizations had enlisted hardly a third of the Baptist students on Baptist campuses, and far less on the campuses of state and private schools. The scattered activities of these campuses needed coordination. The collegians needed to be reclaimed for their denomination.

Among the campus organizations Leavell found a “Baptist Students’ Union” in twelve Texas schools. He wrote in September, 1922, “This organization is peculiar to Texas. . . . The BSU . . . is not within itself a separate organization, but rather is an overhead,

unifying organization, which includes all the separate organizations within the school. It is a cabinet, so to speak, composed of representatives from the separate organizations, such as YWA, the Volunteers' Band, the B.Y.P.U., etc. The BSU is the child of Dr. J. P. Boone and his able associates . . . of Texas. The idea is not wholly new but Dr. Boone has gone far in adapting it to the college and school need."<sup>20</sup>

On the basis of the survey, the Inter-Board Commission suggested that no present changes be made in religious organizations already functioning on the campus. It advised Southern Baptists to wait and see what could come from the "crucible of experimentation." In its first report to the Convention in May, 1922, the Commission anticipated many things which have since become integral parts of the student movement: student secretaries on all campuses, college literature, student group meetings on campuses (daily, weekly, or monthly), state student conferences, Convention-wide student conventions, evangelistic campaigns, services for life commitment, Bible study courses, visits to campuses by outstanding denominational leaders.<sup>21</sup>

The Convention directed the commission to work in close cooperation with the state conventions in developing its program. It was to give special attention to the students of state institutions since these schools could make no contribution to the religious life of the students.<sup>22</sup>

How could one person visit 250 campuses? The commission authorized Leavell to secure an associate. In September, 1922, Louise Foreman of Houston, Texas, already experienced in student work, joined the staff as traveling secretary of the commission. Leavell also secured the part-time services of Joseph P. Boone of Texas and Charles H. Stevens of Louisville, in his effort to reach all the schools.

Through personal contact and the distribution of "poster propaganda," these workers sought to acquaint college students and faculty members with the ideals and purposes of the Inter-Board Commission. They met with enthusiastic response. Students were eager for something that would unify and integrate the scattered activities of religious life on campus. They wanted a movement that would reach beyond the local campus and bring them together with other Baptist students in their state and throughout the whole denomination.<sup>23</sup>

The commission recognized that the student movement must have a regular medium of communication if it was to reach the students. The first issue of *The Baptist Student* appeared in September, 1922. Edited by Leavell and published by the Sunday School Board, the magazine grew rapidly in popularity and proved to be a valuable asset to the student movement.<sup>24</sup>

## Conferences and Conventions

The Convention-wide student movement was born into a convention age. Conferences and conventions had boosted the work of the Student Volunteer Movement, the "Y," the BSU in Texas, and other student movements. Why not promote such meetings to reach Baptist students for the denomination?

With insufficient student interest in organized activity to attempt state or Convention-wide meetings, Leavell and his co-workers determined to conduct student conferences in the western, central, and eastern regions of the South in the spring of 1923. They chose and began preparations at Shreveport, Louisiana; Chattanooga, Tennessee; and Greensboro, North Carolina.

Two days before the first conference was to open in Shreveport on March 30, a crisis developed in the plans. Although they had advertised the meeting, the leaders had little idea of what to expect. Leavell wistfully asked Miss Foreman:

"Do you think anybody will come?"

Before the conference was ended, Leavell was elated to find that 250 students had attended from six states. The entire meeting was a resounding success as the students responded to the program with spiritual purpose and life commitment. The other two conferences further proved that student interest would no longer be a matter of speculation. Students representing 106 schools attended the meetings.<sup>25</sup>

Encouraged by the success of the initial conferences and the enthusiasm of students and their leaders, the commission prompted regional meetings again the following year at Shawnee, Oklahoma; Murfreesboro, Tennessee; and Raleigh, North Carolina. The program included more student speakers, gave more time to discussion, and more space to campus analysis. Many of the 1200 students attracted to these meetings embraced the conference theme, "Make the Campus Different," as their personal objective.<sup>26</sup>

Leavell and Miss Foreman visited numerous campuses around the country. They observed religious activities, emphasized personal evangelism, and suggested methods for student enlistment in religious activity. They organized on an experimental basis "Religious Councils," or representative bodies through which the various Baptist organizations on the campus and in the local church could coordinate their activities. The student movement in Texas had already successfully used the "BSU council" on many campuses. Collegians in several other states had adopted a similar plan to unify their religious activities.<sup>27</sup>

Gradually the pattern for the Convention student movement emerged. The basic need was not a new organization but a plan to coordinate current campus religious activities and to link the students to the local church. After two years of experiment, observation, and counseling with students and leaders, the "campus council" plan was adopted. This coordinating agency with representatives from the Sunday School, B.Y.P.U., Volunteer Band, YWA, and other organizations, along with the school's administration and local church leadership, would answer the needs of both Baptist and non-Baptist campuses.

Leavell presented this plan of organization, a constitution, and the name "Southern Baptist Student Union" to the students attending the 1924 regional conferences. They overwhelmingly endorsed it. Many schools in the South had already used this organizational plan and name for their student work. Now it became the official designation for the Convention-wide movement.<sup>28</sup> The students themselves had decided it.

The Baptist Student Union gradually made its way into every state in the South. It worked wherever schools tried it. Leavell wrote in *The Baptist Student* of February, 1925:

"It is the hope and the desire of all who are promoting this student work that every school give this scheme of unified religious work a fair and just trial. It will disturb no activity . . . [now] in operation. It will strengthen each present unit. It will afford a better approach to each student on the campus. It will create a religious morale. It will centralize religious emphasis. It will give your school a point of contact with other schools of the South."<sup>29</sup>

Although generally accepted, the new movement encountered strong opposition in some areas. Some Baptist college presidents and other denominational leaders opposed the work in state schools.

They feared that the student program would lift the moral tone of state campuses to the extent that Baptist parents would send their young people to state institutions rather than to their own denominational schools. Strong student sentiment for the "Y" slowed acceptance of the new movement. The failure to recognize a need for the new plan of religious work delayed the launching of BSU on some campuses.<sup>30</sup>

The Inter-Board Commission determined that the state should be the basic unit for the promotion of the student movement. The Convention leaders called on state executive boards to establish student departments and employ a state director and campus secretaries to minister to the needs of the students. Texas, in 1919, and North Carolina, in 1922, had already organized state student departments. Others gradually followed this pattern and thereby helped to strengthen and solidify the Convention movement. Leavell continually urged the denomination to place qualified, trained, and dedicated student secretaries on the campuses of the South.<sup>31</sup>

By 1924 the number of local Baptist Student Unions had grown to the extent that the students requested state rather than regional conferences. Convention, state, and local student leaders planned thirteen state meetings for that fall.

Mounting enthusiasm and increased attendance marked the fourteen state conventions of 1925. The students endorsed a plan for conducting a Student Evangelistic Week in the spring of 1926. Out of the 3,000 enrolled, 646 made commitments to do personal soul-winning.<sup>32</sup> During these meetings the idea of a Convention-wide gathering of Baptist students arose. State leaders agreed to merge the 1926 state meetings into such a conference.

The All Southern Baptist Student Conference held in Birmingham, October 28-31, 1926, made a lasting impact upon the entire student movement and the denomination that had created it. The Baptist Student Union was no longer a matter of speculation. It was a proven fact; Southern Baptists possessed a student movement with momentous power and potentiality.

During these formative years of BSU, many emphases and activities developed which have become a permanent part of its program. At the suggestion of the Inter-Board Commission, many Southern Baptist churches observed the last Sunday in 1923 as "Student Night," in recognition of their college students. The idea caught hold and "Student Night at Christmas" became an annual event.<sup>33</sup>

The need for enlisting students in the local church led to the annual promotion of "Join the Church Day," first observed in the fall of 1924. Noon Day Prayer Meetings magnified the place of prayer and stimulated campus evangelism. The Education Board and the Inter-Board Commission began jointly sponsoring "Vocational Emphasis Week" in 1926.<sup>34</sup>

In preparing materials for these various emphases, the commission began to develop a distinctive BSU literature. Suggested procedures, methods, programs, posters, and brochures aided the students, student secretaries, and churches in promoting the work. Leavell prepared a book of techniques, *The Baptist Student Union*, in 1927.

Convention-wide student leaders constantly sought to keep their program of work in touch with current campus needs. They called on students, campus secretaries, and state secretaries to help plan all Convention-wide conferences, programs, and emphases. Thus Leavell invited student workers and leading students from selected schools to attend a "Baptist Student Retreat" at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, June 28-July 4, to review and evaluate the progress of BSU and to consider future plans.

About sixty students and student leaders spent a week in fellowship, prayer, Bible study, discussion of campus problems, plans of work, and demonstrations of methods. The leaders considered a Convention-wide summer student assembly premature at that time.<sup>35</sup> From this small but epochal meeting of 1926, the Baptist Student Retreat has increased annually in popularity and power. It reached a peak attendance exceeding 3,000 prior to the beginning of the annual Student Retreat at Glorieta, New Mexico, in 1953.

The rapidly expanding student program revealed the need for additional staff members. But where would the necessary funds be found? An additional appropriation by the Sunday School Board made it possible to employ William Hall Preston, June 1, 1927, as traveling secretary. Preston, formerly president of Hall-Moody Junior College, served well until his retirement in 1964.<sup>36</sup>

After five and one-half years of service with the commission, Louise Foreman resigned in December, 1927, to become the bride of W. Oscar Blount.<sup>37</sup> Ethel McConnell, formerly local student secretary at Rice Institute, succeeded Miss Foreman and served until her marriage to Owen F. Herring in June, 1932.

For seven years the Inter-Board Commission directed the affairs of the Convention student movement. In May, 1928, the Southern

Baptist Convention, in the midst of a financial crisis, directed the commission to transfer its work to the Sunday School Board. The board was to accept all financial obligations for the work and to be recognized as the official "agency for student activities of the Southern Baptist Convention."<sup>38</sup> The Board assumed its new duties June 1 when the Inter-Board Commission was dissolved. Headquarters were moved to Nashville on October 1, 1928, and the Department of Student Work was born.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Annual, Southern Baptist Convention, 1927, p. 23; *Baptist Student*, Jan., 1927, pp. 3-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Baptist Student*, *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph P. Boone, *It Came to Pass* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1953), pp. 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Committee on the Baptist Student Missionary Movement, Annual, SBC, 1916, pp. 36-37.

<sup>5</sup> Annual, SBC, 1910, p. 92.

<sup>6</sup> Norman W. Cox (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1952), II.

<sup>7</sup> John Held (compiler), *A Brief History of the Baptist Student Union* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949), p. 8; Annual, SBC, 1916, pp. 36-37.

<sup>8</sup> Landrum Leavell, *The B.Y.P.U. Manual*, 1907, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Texas Baptist Convention Annual, 1919, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 1920, p. 83.

<sup>11</sup> Boone, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-16; Texas Baptist Annual, 1920, p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> Annual, SBC, 1925, p. 82.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 1920, p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1921, pp. 406-407.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 406.

<sup>16</sup> Claude Broach, *Dr. Frank* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1950), p. 70.

<sup>17</sup> Annual, SBC, 1922, pp. 58-60.

<sup>18</sup> Frank Leavell, *The Baptist Student Union* (Nashville: The Baptist Sunday School Board, 1927), p. 94.

<sup>19</sup> *Loc. cit.*; Annual, SBC, 1922, p. 494.

<sup>20</sup> Leavell, editorial, *Baptist Student*, Sept.-Oct., 1922, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Annual, SBC, 1922, pp. 59-60.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1923, p. 57.

<sup>24</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> *Loc. cit.*; Broach, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>26</sup> Annual, SBC, 1924, p. 59.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>28</sup> Frank Leavell, *Baptist Student*, Sept.-Oct., 1924.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb., 1925, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> W. C. James, "Appreciating the Student," *Baptist Student*, Nov., 1922, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Reports of the Inter-Board Commission, Annual, SBC, 1922-28.

<sup>32</sup> Annual, SBC, 1926, p. 92.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 1924, p. 59.

<sup>34</sup> Reports of the Inter-Board Commission, Annuals, SBC, 1924-26.

<sup>35</sup> Annual, SBC, 1926, p. 93; 1927, p. 23; *Baptist Student*, Sept.-Oct., 1926,  
p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1928, p. 72.

<sup>37</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 1929, p. 319.

## Part II:

# Marching Forward

*"The Baptist Student Union* is a connecting link between the college and the church," declared Frank H. Leavell in his book of BSU techniques. "It is a medium for expressing religious convictions and Christian fellowship," he said.

From its beginning the student movement has magnified the local church. It has sought to tie students into the church and train them for maximum Christian service.

### **An Expanding Program**

The first years of Convention-wide student activity were invested in crystalizing a favorable sentiment and creating a consciousness of the need for a denominational student program. Gradually emerging was a plan of organization capable of meeting the needs of students. The Convention and students alike adopted the plan, and student leaders began inaugurating it on campuses across the country. The initial success of the Baptist Student Union revealed that Southern Baptists were ready to promote a constructive and expanding program of student religious activity. The next big step was to secure an adequate working force to conduct the work on the local campus, in the state, and throughout the Convention territory.

In 1926 Southern Baptists were providing for the entire student movement a total of only thirty workers. Only three conventions had employed state secretaries; nine supported campus secretaries.<sup>1</sup> By 1929 the total number of full-time secretaries had risen to thirty-four. In spite of financial difficulties during the early 1930's, Baptists employed additional student workers. They reported a total of forty-seven in 1936. Secretary Leavell anticipated the day when every state would have a strong department and every campus a competent student secretary.<sup>2</sup>

Numerous activities facilitated the spread of BSU. The Student Department sent out "approved workers" to various schools to teach the book on BSU methods, to unify the students, and to organize a BSU on the campus. Students from active BSUs sometimes visited

campuses which had no organization and demonstrated BSU at work. State and Convention-wide secretaries visited campuses and organized student unions.

The "Standard of Requirements" formulated by students and student secretaries was first published in *The Baptist Student Union* in 1927. It helped to stimulate and stabilize BSU work throughout the Convention. Within one year after inaugurating the standard, "First Magnitude" recognitions were awarded to six local unions. The following year thirteen merited the award. The number continued to climb as students attempted to raise their standard of work.

The perennial program developed by the Student Department strengthened and unified BSU. The department began to publish an annual "Calendar of Events" with suggested dates for various activities. Through the extensive use of the calendar, students and local, state, and Convention-wide workers were welded together into a unified program.

Joint planning and promotion of student conferences and emphases by these workers further solidified the work.<sup>3</sup>

The Student Department sent out to campuses thousands of pamphlets, posters, booklets, placards, and other materials "to keep constantly before the student the ideals, the goals, the occasions, and scheduled meetings of their denomination, as well as to hold up to them . . . the claims of their church, the needs of the Kingdom, the supremacy of the Bible, and the approved principles that govern the lives of greatest Christians."<sup>4</sup>

### **The Master's Minority**

In spite of the depression, 1,864 students made their way to Atlanta, Georgia, October 30-November 2, 1930, for the second All-Southern Baptist Student Conference. There collegians encountered the Christ. Lives were changed and destinies determined. During this conference the Student Department officially launched the Master's Minority Movement.

During the Birmingham Conference four years earlier, a single phrase was used that later influenced the course of BSU. Speaking from a prepared manuscript, Frank Leavell read these words: "You are a minority from the campus." He lifted his eyes from the manuscript to add this sentence: "You are *the Master's minority*

from your campus.” The idea was electric. The phrase “Master’s Minority” stuck in the minds of the students and became a key topic of convention conversation. Soon thereafter, letters from all over the South poured into Leavell’s office announcing: “We have a Master’s Minority prayer group.” They related experiences in prayer, soul-winning, and Christian growth. A new idea had taken root; for many years it produced an amazing harvest.<sup>5</sup>

Leavell later described the evolving movement as “an appeal to that few on the campus who are willing to . . . dedicate and apply themselves that greater spiritual power through them as followers of Christ might be released.” It sought for “more individual prayer life, more personal sacrifice, more Christian experience, more Bible study, the result of which will mean greater Christian character, greater spiritual experience, and greater kingdom leadership.”<sup>6</sup>

Several students related moving experiences in the Master’s Minority on their campus to the Atlanta Conference in 1930. With dramatic effect, Leavell then presented to the conference the Master’s Minority Covenant which called for personal commitment regarding: (1) Salvation, (2) Worldliness Out, (3) Bible Study, (4) Prayer and Meditation, (5) Church Loyalty, (6) Sabbath Observance, (7) Christian Ownership, and (8) Christian Witnessing.

Students and student leaders became thrilled with the idea. They endorsed the covenant and carried it back to their campuses. There they chose prayermates, planned prayer groups, and led fellow students to make the personal commitment they had made in Atlanta. The movement grew rapidly and soon transformed lives and campuses across the country. Later it crossed the ocean and exerted an influence among youth groups in other lands. The study of “My Covenant Series,” a group of Christian culture books based on the eight points of the covenant, has led many students to give their maximum to Christ.<sup>7</sup>

## **Forward Steps**

The Student Department conducted the third and fourth Convention-wide student conferences at Memphis. The 1934 conference attracted 1,997 students. Attendance climbed to 2,689 in 1938. These meetings and the state conventions held in intervening years revealed that the Baptist Student Union was more than an organization. It was a movement undergirded by a dynamic power, a spirit

that pervaded and transformed the lives of young people and their leaders.<sup>8</sup>

Fifteen years after Leavell began his work, the Baptist Student Union was functioning on 70 per cent of the college campuses in the South. It was reaching 60,000 of the 100,000 Baptist students. It had expanded its work to include junior colleges, professional and graduate schools, and schools of other denominations. All state mission boards had incorporated BSU in their state programs.<sup>9</sup> The boards also had provided more local student secretaries. Too, they began to purchase or construct buildings on or adjacent to campuses to serve as student centers. These forward steps set the pace for further advance.<sup>10</sup>

Many capable people came to work by Leavell's side during these years of expansion and growth. Each made a lasting contribution to the cause of Convention-wide student work. Sibyl Brame of Mississippi served as a field worker from 1933 to 1936, when she married Carl Townsend. Her successor, Mary Nance Daniel, of South Carolina, managed to stave off matrimony until 1943, when she became the bride of T. M. Rea. Nelle Arnold served faithfully as office secretary from 1933 until her retirement January 31, 1961. Marjorie Moore became associate editor of *The Baptist Student* in 1935. Claude U. Broach worked as an associate in the department from 1942 until his return to the pastorate two years later.

The current program of student volunteer summer service apparently had its beginnings in Mississippi in 1931. In that year the state BSU president, W. O. Vaught, Jr., and Irene Ward, student secretary at M.S.C.W., organized students to visit the churches in Mississippi. Through messages of information and inspiration, they stimulated Baptists to greater loyalty to their church and to denominational cooperation. This program of voluntary service reached 1,200 of the 1,600 churches in the state that summer.<sup>11</sup>

Convention-wide leaders quickly sensed the potential of this movement. By 1932 all states were promoting such a program. They gave special emphasis to youth revivals conducted by ministerial students. State departments called on students to teach training courses in Sunday school, BTU, YWA, and missions work. Students presented information on the denominational program and spoke on stewardship, tithing, soul-winning, consecration, church membership, and denominational loyalty. In 1932 they visited 3,310 churches without cost to the denomination.<sup>12</sup>

This program of free service by students continued to expand in its scope and usefulness. Vacation Bible School work soon became a popular feature of the work. Since 1945 the number of college students working in Vacation Bible Schools has grown from approximately 7,500 to approximately 14,500 in 1960. Later, the Home and Foreign Mission boards made use of the opportunity to use student volunteers in a summer missions program. In 1949 twenty-five students worked for the boards outside the United States. Many others served as missionaries in this country.<sup>13</sup>

### Guiding Principles

Throughout the rapid growth of the BSU, four principles, laid down in the early years, have guided its development: The following basic principles soon became familiar to student leaders, for Leavell took care to “drill them in” at their periodic meetings.

(1) BSU work was frankly *denominational*. It was *Baptist* student work. No interdenominational activity could substitute for it.

(2) Emphasis was placed on *student initiative*. Students shared in organizing, planning, and promoting the work. BSU was a channel for the expansion and expression of their faith and convictions.

(3) BSU was to *magnify the local church*. It was the link between student and church which sought to enlist him in its work.

(4) BSU was to offer students *nothing but the best* because they *deserve* and *demand* the best, whether it be a choice of speakers for a program, material for a pamphlet, or a student magazine.<sup>14</sup>

### Widened Horizons

The Baptist Student Union was a resounding success in America, but would it work in other lands? The opportunity to answer this question came in 1936. At the invitation of the Foreign Mission Board, Leavell spent five months in Japan and China, working with college students and other young people. Students and leaders responded and he planted BSU in the Orient. The J. W. Marshalls from the Texas Student Department later strengthened the work on their visit to the two countries, a visit made in response to an invitation from Chinese Baptist leaders and Southern Baptist missionaries.

Upon the invitation of Baptist missionaries and educators in South

America, secretary Leavell visited sixteen of their schools and colleges in 1939. So responsive were the students that he organized a Baptist Student Union in all sixteen. Within one year the new BSU of the Baptist College in Rio de Janeiro reached the requirements for "First Magnitude."<sup>15</sup>

As secretary of the Youth Committee of the Baptist World Alliance, Leavell helped to plan and promote the Second Baptist Youth World Conference, held in Zurich, Switzerland, in August, 1937. The conference stimulated the world vision and international outlook of all BSU workers attending the meeting. BSU became a part of the world organization and its international youth activity. The Southern Baptist Student Department has maintained a close alliance with the BWA Youth Committee. Cooperative efforts have resulted in the spread of BSU work around the world.<sup>16</sup>

Numerous factors contributed to the growth of the international BSU. Students and student leaders visited Baptist missions fields to organize or strengthen student work in the schools. The students at home raised funds to help BSUs abroad. For example, in 1947 they contributed \$2,423 to furnish a Baptist student center at the University of Shanghai.<sup>17</sup> The Foreign Mission Board has appointed missionaries to serve as student workers in several countries. Summer student missionaries have organized and strengthened BSU work in several countries.<sup>18</sup> Baptist world youth meetings have further stimulated the outreach of BSU.

The years of World War II marked a period of adjustment in student work. Large numbers of students, and oftentimes their religious leaders, left the campuses to join the armed services. State and Convention-wide forces were also depleted. Training units placed on campuses by the government brought new tasks for local BSUs. In spite of such difficulties, the BSU conducted its work enthusiastically and emerged strengthened and alert for the opportunities just ahead.<sup>19</sup>

The Student Department added three new associates to its Nashville staff in 1945. Robert S. Denny, formerly student secretary at Louisiana State University and Baylor University, joined the staff in August as associate in charge of work in professional schools and the promotion of Religious Focus Weeks. Jenny Lind Gatlin, formerly student secretary at Madison College, served as associate from September, 1945, until her marriage three years later. In September also, Francis Barbour came from the student secretaryship of the Missouri Baptist Hospital to serve in the newly created position of

director of work among student nurses. This new emphasis progressed rapidly under her leadership until her resignation four years later.

Religious Focus Week now became a permanent part of the department's work. Begun on an experimental basis in 1941, this unique program was originally designed for Baptist schools. Unlike the earlier practice of featuring one speaker in a "Religious Emphasis Week," this new program employed a team of twelve to twenty people who were specialists in some phase of Christian activity. These workers spoke in chapel services and classrooms, conducted seminars, directed forums, and held interviews. Dozens of such engagements each day brought students and leaders together to grapple with the meaning of the Christian faith in down-to-earth relationships.<sup>20</sup> This program rapidly became popular. It has been a mighty force in meeting the spiritual needs of students on Baptist campuses.

The news of Frank Leavell's death December 7, 1949, spread rapidly over the country. Baptists around the world paused to give thanks for this man who had devoted his life to Baptist students. Who could count the number who had encountered Christ and committed themselves to maximum Christian living through the BSU which this pioneer and his co-laborers had made possible?

After much prayer and consideration, the Sunday School Board in 1950 called G. Kearnie Keegan, pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Los Angeles, as Leavell's successor.

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<sup>1</sup> Annual, SBC, 1926, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Reports of Frank Leavell, Annuals, SBC, 1926-36.

<sup>3</sup> Annual, SBC, 1934, p. 334.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1931, p. 395.

<sup>5</sup> Frank Leavell, *The Master's Minority* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949), p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Annual, SBC, 1929, p. 39.

<sup>7</sup> Leavell, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-21.

<sup>8</sup> Reports of the Department of Student Work, Annuals, SBC, 1935, 1939.

<sup>9</sup> Annual, SBC, 1938, p. 369.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 1932, p. 304.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1933, p. 321.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 1950, p. 292.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1931, p. 388; Leavell, *The Baptist Student*; Claude Broach, *Dr. Frank* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1950), pp. 89-90.

<sup>15</sup> Annual, SBC, 1940, pp. 377, 379.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 1937, p. 350; 1947, p. 223.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 1947, p. 223; John Held (ed.), *A Brief History of the Baptist Student Union* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949), p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> David K. Alexander, "History of the Baptist Student Union," 1949, p. 18f.

<sup>19</sup> Leavell, *The Baptist Student Union*, p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> Annual, SBC, 1941, p. 395; 1946, p. 416; Broach, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

## Part III:

# A Decade of Expanding Ministries, 1950-60

G. Kearnie Keegan, formerly pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California, succeeded Leavell as secretary of the Student Department May 1, 1950. Prior to his ministry in California, Keegan had served as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Longview, Texas. He brought to his new task "a compassionate heart, a challenging faith, and a world vision."<sup>1</sup> Under his direction the Student Department expanded its campus ministry during a decade of unprecedented progress.

### **Changing Campus Conditions**

Changing campus conditions during the 1940's created growing student needs. Following World War II college enrolments exploded. Among the new collegians were large numbers of married students, graduate students, and commuters. Formerly, the majority of students had stayed close to the campus during the school year. Now thousands of them owned automobiles and returned to their homes each day or on weekends.

College towns now offered students not one but several churches with which they might unite and serve. The rise and expansion of business schools, junior colleges, university branches, and technical and professional schools opened new doors of opportunity. Such changes called for a reorganization of the program of student work, a large staff, and an expanded ministry.

The Baptist Student Union rose to meet the demands of these changing times. The Student Department redefined its ministry to Baptist students. Keegan wrote in 1957 that the purpose of the BSU is "to conserve and help train Southern Baptist students for effective Christian discipleship. It functions to remind each student of his responsibility to Christ, his church, and his denomination, and of his obligation as a Christian citizen to the world in which he lives. . . . It also provides inspiration, information, and fellowship

which create the spiritual climate essential for Christian growth while in college.”<sup>2</sup>

BSU enlarged the scope of its work to encompass the total academic community: the indifferent and unenlisted Baptist, the non-Christian student whether national or international, the married student, the commuter, the occupant of the residence hall, the graduate student, and the Baptist faculty member. By working closely with state and local student workers, the Student Department developed a growing ministry to keep abreast of campus needs.

When Keegan arrived in Nashville in 1950, he found a small but dedicated staff of associates: William Hall Preston, a veteran with twenty-three years of service, Robert S. Denny, and Estelle Slater who had joined the staff the preceding year. Denny continued his effective work in the department until December 31, 1955, when he resigned to become associate general secretary and youth secretary of the Baptist World Alliance. An expanding ministry made more workers necessary.

Miss Billie Russell joined the staff as an associate in 1951. She worked with student nurses during the following three years. Miss Slater assumed that ministry after Miss Russell's resignation. Through publications and campus contacts, she also encouraged students who were prospective teachers to see their opportunity for Christian witnessing. These were but two of the specialized groups to whom the Student Department ministered.

Many a student has had the shock of his life when William Hall Preston called him by name at a student convention, retreat, or on campus a year, or even *years*, after their initial encounter. Associate in charge of state BSU convention themes and promotion, student summer service, the BSU-sponsored summer missions program, vocational guidance, and Christian homes, Preston worked in cooperation with Convention-wide, state, and local leaders to promote these phases of the student program.

The twenty-six state conventions held in 1959 followed the theme “Toward Christian Maturity” and helped thousands of students take steps in that direction. The ministry of BSU to married students rapidly expanded. Through Focus Weeks, student retreats, and the observance of Dedicated Vocations Week, students have been confronted with the need for dedicating their vocations to Christ. Our Baptist seminaries today are filled with students who received guidance through the BSU.<sup>3</sup>

## **Student Summer Service**

For more than thirty-five years student summer service was a powerful force for the denomination. In 1959, 13,136 students served in 18,926 reporting Vacation Bible Schools.<sup>4</sup> Thousands of others taught training classes under the direction of state convention leaders. In 1947 the first BSU-sponsored summer missionaries served in Hawaii for the entire summer. The Home Mission Board had initiated a similar program two years earlier. In 1951 the Student Department, state student departments, and the Home and Foreign Mission boards jointly adopted a plan for all special student missionary projects to be channeled through the two boards. Students have financed this program by sacrificial over-and-above giving. In the summer of 1960, BSUs sponsored seventy-five home missionaries and sixty-two foreign missionaries. The latter served in Hawaii, Jamaica, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Tanganyika, Southern Rhodesia, Paraguay, Korea, and European work camps.<sup>5</sup> "Student Summer Missions" became the new name for the program.

The Student Department employed Bill Cody in 1953 to fill a newly created post, associate in charge of promoting student evangelism and orientation of high school students. In cooperation with state student secretaries, Cody helped to plan and promote youth evangelism clinics, youth revivals, and the enlistment of students as personal soul-winners. An orientation program for high school students was initiated and "Off-to-College Day" was promoted in the churches to help prepare students for their academic career and to introduce them to BSU.<sup>6</sup> Two years later, Cody left the department to become student representative for the Foreign Mission Board.

The rapidly increasing number of international students in American schools offered a glowing opportunity to the Baptist Student Union. Here were potential missionaries for nations around the globe. What could be done to win them to Christ that they might carry the Christian faith back to their people?

Through the joint efforts of local BSUs, the Student Department, and the Foreign Mission Board, thirty-six Chinese nationals attended the 1951 Ridgecrest Student Retreat as special guests. Some of them encountered Christ and committed their lives to him. Hundreds of other international students attended retreats at Ridgecrest and Glorieta during the next ten years. Time alone can measure the influence those who were converted will have in the years to come.

The Student Department chose Jane Ray Bean in 1954 to help

extend its ministry to international students. For five years she worked with state and local BSU workers to make students aware of the world missions field on their campuses. Through materials and personal counsel, these workers have helped Baptist collegians witness effectively to their fellow international students. Jointly they conducted international student retreats in many states. Nine such retreats in 1959 registered a total of 1,328. In one of them, forty-nine nations were represented.<sup>7</sup> In 1960 nine similar retreats were conducted with fifteen states cooperating.

## **Publications and Materials**

The rapidly expanding student ministries called for a vast amount of promotional, organizational, devotional, and other types of materials. In 1955 David K. Alexander became editor of publications and materials. By the end of that year the Student Department had distributed 550,000 pieces of free literature. Within four years the total annual distribution had jumped to 1,500,000. These publications included organizational and promotional literature, special programs, Bible discussion materials, *Calendar of Activities*, student retreat programs, and other materials.<sup>8</sup>

Published by the Student Department, *The Baptist Student*, begun in 1922, reached an average monthly circulation of 30,045 in 1960-61. Its circulation exceeded that of any other student magazine in America. Edited by Alexander, together with the department head and his assistants, it sought to reach all Baptist students in their total collegiate environment. Its emphasis upon the dynamic Christian life of the individual and its appeal to the thinking collegian made it a vital factor in the total collegiate ministry of BSU.

Keegan and Alexander jointly authored a new *Baptist Student Union Manual*. *Key News*, a professional journal for BSU workers, began publication in 1955 to promote the work of the denomination and to provide personal resources and techniques for BSU work.

The enlarging student program and rapidly increasing corps of student workers throughout the convention needed coordination. Doyle J. Baird was employed in 1956 to supervise and coordinate the work of the consultants who served in the administrative section of the Student Department.<sup>10</sup> He was responsible for planning and directing the field program of visitation to state and campus meetings involved in this work.

A major responsibility of Baird and the consultants in the administrative section was the discovery and interpretation of methods and techniques of work. They also were responsible for initiating and developing specific promotional materials to undergird the program. Baird worked closely with the twenty-nine state student secretaries in locating and training competent and qualified local student directors, a term in general use by 1957.

Under Baird's direction the department conducted an annual BSU directors' workshop. The workshop served as a refresher course for experienced directors as well as an orientation for new workers. The number of local directors at the end of 1960 totaled 190.

William Howard Bramlette succeeded Robert Denny in 1956 as director in charge of student work in Baptist colleges and universities and the promotion of Christian Focus Weeks. A unique feature of his work was the development of a Baptist Faculty Fellowship program which seeks to relate the Christian faith to the academic community.<sup>11</sup> *The Baptist Faculty Paper*, begun by Bramlette in 1958, now has a circulation of over ten thousand. He also developed materials to help students who are entering military service.

Charles William (Bill) Junker joined the staff in 1957 as director of student evangelism and high school orientation.<sup>12</sup> He developed and conducted student-to-student personal witnessing clinics and placed graduate students as assistant BSU directors for evangelism.

Continuing to expand its ministry, the Student Department created two new positions in 1960. Ed Seabough joined the staff in June, 1960, to be the director of student work extension. He promoted the organization and development of BSUs in pioneer areas of the Southern Baptist Convention and among students in military academies. Nell Magee began to serve as director of work in junior colleges, business schools, and university branches July 1, 1960. She developed and adapted techniques for these specialized schools.

The Student Department played an important role in the youth activities of the Baptist World Alliance under the leadership of both Leavell and Keegan. Keegan served as chairman of the Administrative Committee and as vice-chairman of the BWA Youth Committee.

He made several world tours during which he organized BSU work and strengthened work already begun in other countries.

The Student World Missions Conference of 1956, which the department sponsored in Nashville and which typified Keegan's

world vision, attracted more than 2,500 students.

“This is a decade of destiny that demands all we have,” declared Keegan as he addressed the 1960 student retreat at Glorieta, New Mexico. Within two weeks, he had done just that—given his all. Death came without warning September 13, 1960, when he had a heart attack as he boarded a plane at St. Louis en route to an assignment in Hawaii. Driven by deep concern for students and a passion to help those who worked with them, he literally gave his life in their behalf.

Shortly before his death, Keegan completed his tenth year as secretary of the Student Department. This, too, was a “decade of destiny” for Southern Baptist student work, as under his leadership BSU expanded its ministry to the academic community. His associates marvelled at the pace he maintained in his administrative duties as secretary of the department, his frequent speaking engagements in campus and state student meetings and in Baptist churches, and his added responsibilities in the work of the Baptist World Alliance.

As was characteristic of Keegan’s decade of ministry among students, the summer months of 1960 were strenuous but fruitful for him. In spite of his extensive summer travels, he accomplished much in staff planning and other administrative duties in the office. Following the student retreat at Ridgecrest, he made a three-week trip to Rio de Janeiro for the Baptist World Alliance. Hours were spent in conference and committee meetings. After his return he preached twice daily at the week-long Oklahoma Baptist state assembly, where some five hundred public decisions were made. Following the Glorieta student retreat, he spent ten busy days at the office prior to his departure for Hawaii.

On January 31, 1961, Nelle Arnold retired after 32 years of behind-the-scenes service to Southern Baptist students in the responsible position of office secretary of the Student Department. She made effective contributions to the success of Convention-wide student work during the administrations of both Leavell and Keegan.

In session at Ridgecrest, North Carolina, on July 28, 1961, the Sunday School Board elected David K. Alexander as successor to Keegan. By 1961 the Baptist Student Union was responsible for ministering to a total of over 250,000 Baptist students—more than two and one-half times the number when its work began forty years earlier. The small handful of local, state, and Convention-wide student workers in the formative years increased to a total of 236

by the end of 1960. The great influx of students demanded scores of additional workers.

Six out of seven Baptist students were enrolled in non-Baptist schools. Here lay a growing potential for denominational and world Christian leadership. Large numbers were yet to be reached. The Baptist Student Union was continuing to expand its program to fulfil ever growing responsibilities. "There is nothing static about the Baptist Student Union movement—it is dynamic, alive, current, and conscious of today's needs of today's campus."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Editorial note by the Student Department staff, *Baptist Student*, Oct., 1950, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> G. Kearnie Keegan, "The Baptist Student Union, What It Is and What It Does," *The Quarterly Review* (Nashville: The Baptist Sunday School Board) Jan.-Mar., 1958, pp. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> W. L. Howse, "Baptist Students Respond to the Call," *The Quarterly Review*. (Nashville: The Baptist Sunday School Board), Jan.-Mar., 1958, p. 18f.

<sup>4</sup> SBC Book of Reports, 1960, p. 104.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1961, p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> Annual, SBC, 1954, p. 294.

<sup>7</sup> SBC Book of Reports, 1960, p. 103.

<sup>8</sup> *News Letter* (Nashville: Baptist Sunday School Board), Sept., 1959.

<sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Annual, SBC, 1957, p. 243.

<sup>11</sup> Annual, SBC, 1957, p. 244.

<sup>12</sup> *Baptist Student*, Dec., 1957, p. 55.

<sup>13</sup> *News Letter*, *op. cit.*

## Part IV:

# A Decade of Transition and Change

The decade of the sixties for the Student Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board began with the unexpected death of G. Kearnie Keegan on September 18, 1960. An era of promotion was modified into an era of transition and change as the new student secretary, David K. Alexander, who had been editor of Publications and Materials for the department, assumed the responsibility of leadership.

With the expansion and multiplication of local Baptist Student Unions a greater portion of the program of student work had been shifting from Nashville to the local campuses and in some cases to the offices of the individual Baptist state convention student secretaries. The Student Department of the Sunday School Board had become largely a service rather than a program organization. But it was beginning to assume more of a programing role. In the early sixties the Department staff members were each assigned a type of campus for which to develop program suggestions.

In late 1959 the state convention student directors formed an association for the purpose of discussing matters of mutual concern. They began to meet annually in addition to the annual joint meeting with the staff of the Sunday School Board's Student Department. Many of their concerns had to do with personnel selection and supervision, the construction and maintenance of student centers, program promotion, and other administrative matters.

The role and place of the local Baptist Student Unions were rapidly changing. The college campus became the place "where the action was" and the church appeared to some to be somewhat out of touch with real life. The local director was more a worker among equals with local church staffs than a "student secretary." In most states these directors were responsible directly to the state director for the direction and results of their program. The 1960's brought major improvements in the academic qualifications of local campus directors. By 1971 over 257 of these leaders had a masters or higher degree. Another significant trend was toward the local direc-

tor's having a longer period of continuous tenure in his position.

There were at least two results of these developments. One, a divergence had arisen both inside and outside of student work about the "proper" purpose and program for the work. Two, the question had arisen as to where the origin for developing programming for Baptist Student Union lay—who was responsible for defining the program of Baptist Student Union. Indeed, the question was often put, could BSU be said to have "a program?" Added to these internal problems in student work was the desire of those in the work to establish it as a valid entity in denominational life and not just a stepchild of the churches.

These changes and uncertainties intensified tensions among the various levels of student work—local, state, and national—and raised questions about the roles each had in the total work.

Despite the tensions and problems the Student Department faced the 1960's with optimism and confidence. In 1960, 157 BSU-sponsored students had been sent out to the home and foreign fields as summer missionaries.<sup>1</sup> The Student Department's aim was clear and certain, "to develop, discover, promote principles and methods for the enlistment and spiritual growth of students in churches and to enlarge and improve the Baptist witness to the campuses."<sup>2</sup> The department was aware that the 1960's required a person in leadership who could present the Christian faith in the light of the academic issues of the day. A shallow presentation of the Gospel tended only to produce cynics rather than devout disciples.

## Studying the Program

In order to get at some of the problems and resolve some tensions, Keegan had appointed in 1959 two study groups, each composed of local and state directors and members of the national staff. Study Group I was to study philosophy, objectives, and nomenclature for student work. Study Group II had as its assignment First Magnitude, basis for membership, and constitution. Study Group I completed its work in 1962 with the publication of "The Philosophy and Objectives of the Program of Student Work." The matter of membership was not delineated until the publication of *Plan Book for a New BSU* in 1971. First Magnitude standard of requirements, under fire for several years, was dropped and not replaced.

These studies led to agreement among the different levels of

Student work on some basic matters but still left many questions unsettled.

Another indicator of the depth of concern with the program was the appointment of six study commissions of local directors who reported their rather extensive study at the 1961 nationwide directors workshop. Their areas of study were, respectively: (1) Faculty, (2) Graduate Students, (3) Married Students, (4) Commuters, (5) Expansion, and (6) Fraternities, Sororities, Clubs, and Athletes. These reports analyzed the problems in these areas and offered suggested changes in program format.

Another important aspect of research was introduced in 1964 when an overall investigation was begun "to discover the requirements of campuses, home churches, and associations for ministering to and utilizing the potential of commuting students."<sup>3</sup> The commuting college student was a growing phenomena of the 1960's and the one that was among the most difficult to reach. The development of the community college and the two-year college in the larger cities compounded the difficulty of local student work as the transient student who spent only limited hours on the campus became the order of the day. Nell Magee was giving special attention to the junior college in the Board's Student Department.

In addition to the transient student on the small campus the married student and graduate student became matters of real concern for Baptist student work on the larger campuses. No longer was one single church in each campus area solely involved in student work, and the student emphasis became both a campus program and a church program.

The student department had set forth in clear form its program "to lead students and faculty members to faith in Christ as Savior, to deepen their . . . commitment and relate them to the fellowship of a local church."<sup>4</sup> In 1963 it offered to the churches extensive physical helps to promote both the work of the Baptist Student Union and also the methods of working with students in the local church. A major innovation was the introduction of an "Off-to-College Day Program" packet (later, On-to-College Day) to provide local churches with the resources to assist the high school senior in being prepared properly for the new college experience. *On to College* magazine was first published in 1968.

During the same period a vital effort was made to make churches aware of the Baptist Student Union and how it could and should be

related to the local church. Conferences were held by the Student Department to assist workers with students, both pastors and volunteer workers, to encourage an appreciation of students and their talents. These consultations also provided insight into the resources available from Nashville, the state convention office, and elsewhere to the churches who were anxious to reach the academic community. In 1969 Doyle Baird became Consultant, church-campus ministries, and gave increased attention to conferences for church workers, pastors symposia, denominational dialogues, and other programs for church leaders. By 1970 the Baptist Sunday School Board had produced Sunday School and Church Training materials for the churches such as *Context* and *Advanced Bible Study* which were specifically adaptable to the university student. Cooperation between the churches and the campus became essential if the student and the academic community were to be reached for Christ.

The year 1963 also marked a beginning of the period of profound study for the department. The department reported that "all projects and plans will undergo constant reevaluation with the hope that they may be refined and improved, ready to be incorporated into a formalized long-range plan by the end of 1964."<sup>5</sup> The extensive effort was continued to expand Baptist student work into the new or "pioneer" areas for Southern Baptists.<sup>6</sup> The work that needed to be done exceeded the resources available which placed a serious handicap on the scope of student work. In the same year William Hall Preston retired from the staff associate position after more than thirty-six years of service in national student work.

## **The College Student of the Sixties**

In the midst of all these studies and organizational changes, the college student of the 1950's had changed from a quiescent observer to the social activist of the mid and late 60's. The nuances of theological discussion were replaced by a concern to be involved in improving the modern world. Social issues such as Vietnam, ecology, and educational improvement captured his attention. Not only did the college student of the 1960's have new ideas, but the post-war student phenomena continued with an emphasis upon the married student, commuter student, graduate student, and the international or foreign student.

By the start of the 60's most state conventions were sponsoring

two major state events each year in addition to the promotion of summer missions—a state Baptist student convention in the fall and a state student retreat in the spring. These usually were considered inspirational meetings open to everyone. But the need for developing student leadership led to increased use of the spring meeting for the training of new BSU officers and the changing of its name in most states to “leadership training conference.”

From time to time students have used these meetings as an opportunity to caucus and discuss needed state convention, church, or SBC action. This sort of expression increased during the 60's. A group of state presidents also met during the 1967 Ridgecrest Student Conference to explore the possibility of beginning a national BSU organization paralleling the state structures and allowing for more student input at all levels of student work.

Plans for such an official organization did not materialize, but at least two results came from the attempt. The Student Department began to include more students and directors in program planning and Baptist Students Concerned was born. The latter was an informally organized fellowship of students who were particularly concerned about the denomination's inaction in race relations and other social concerns. Several students under the auspices of Baptist Students Concerned registered their presence and concerns both in the 1968 and the 1969 meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention. A group of students, including some of these same students, met in Nashville to consider and recommend proposed solutions to convention problems.

Baptist Students Concerned dispersed with the graduation and separation of those students primarily responsible for its beginnings, but the desire of students to participate in Convention actions has continued.

A study in 1964 considered the realignment of the Student Department with another agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Education Commission. Upon recommendation of its Program Committee, however, the SBC Executive Committee voted unanimously to leave student work at the Sunday School Board. Reorganization, new job descriptions, and consideration of personnel for the Department in Nashville also followed this study. In 1965 three new staff members—Norman Bowman as assistant editor; Arthur Driscoll, administrative consultant; and R. H. Falwell, director of program section—were added to the Student Department. In the

following year Larry Allison and Gene Bolin joined the staff as program consultants and Howard Bramlette resigned to join the staff of the SBC Education Commission. In June, 1966, the program statement for the SBC Program of Student Work was adopted by the Convention.

The report to the Convention in 1967 indicated that the Student Department was relating increasingly to work in the new areas of the Southern Baptist Convention. The department provided financial support in the form of scholarships for nine full-time and four part-time workers in pioneer areas in 1966,<sup>7</sup> a program which was begun in 1962. The research projects continued as the Board's Student Department examined the matter of credit instruction in religion by a Baptist teacher on the campus of the secular university. S. L. Harris joined the department in 1967 as consultant in leadership development.

### **Major Leadership and Structure Changes**

By the December 1967 meeting of state directors and Sunday School Board Student Department staff, relationships within student work were at a fairly low level. The difficulties were both personal and philosophical. Some of the tensions of the early 60's persisted. Some of the state leaders asserted that the national program did not relate to the real needs of students. Some confusion existed outside student work as to the exact direction the work should take. At the first session of the 1967 December conference, Alexander announced his resignation as department secretary, effective the following June. W. O. Thomason, assistant to the director of the Education Division of the Board, was assigned as interim department secretary.

The main goal of the interim administration of the Board's Student Department was to find a common ground to continue an emphasis on cooperation between the state and national leadership. A secondary goal was to secure effective new leaders who could be acceptable to a very large segment of the state conventions' student leadership.

Later during the same meeting "the state directors of student work voted to ask the Sunday School Board to invite the Executive Committee to do a major study of student work."<sup>8</sup> The state executive secretaries concurred, and the Executive Committee acted upon the request in February 1968 authorizing an extensive study. The study,

including a National Student Work Consultation in Ft. Worth in May, 1969, was completed in 1970.

This study examined the various phases of student work from the individual college student to the national level. The purposes and objectives of the Student Department, to coordinate and encourage student work throughout the Southern Baptist Convention, was again asserted. The report recognized difficulties within the Student Department and within student work in the 1960's and recommended several possible solutions. Among them were a clearer national identity through a structure change within the Sunday School Board, greater correlation of leadership with specialists for specific areas of concentration, greater coordination among the agencies doing student work, and increased financial support for the work, particularly in newer Convention areas.

The priorities of student work in 1968 and 1969 as set forth in a conference between the state directors and national leadership of the Student Department at Callaway Gardens, Georgia, were largely fulfilled by 1970. The state leaders had called for greater assistance in the areas of campus evangelism, greater work among international students, and the creation of special church literature related to the college community. New staff personnel and additional funds were directed to these specific needs.

By 1969 there had been a series of innovations and modifications of the student program among Southern Baptists, some of which were introduced by the Student Department itself and others by different agencies. A campus ministry curriculum for on-campus study through BSU was approved by the Sunday School Board. The first four booklets in the new series were published in the fall of 1969. The new Sunday School and Church Training curricula for college students improved the ministry and effectiveness of the local churches. An innovation which had a profound effect upon student work was the conference entitled "Mission 70." This conference was aimed at challenging students to the possibilities of missions in the 1970's. The program centered upon a creative witness by Christians to a lost world.

One of the most far-reaching visible changes of the 60's was a follow-through on the 1970 Convention's recommendation to change the identity and structure of the Student Department itself. In January 1971, the Department became National Student Ministries. The change assisted in providing student work with a more independent

stance but still left it at the Sunday School Board, which could provide adequate financing for an aggressive and dynamic program even in the newer areas of the Convention.

In 1969 several important personnel changes occurred in the Board's Student Department. In March, Charles M. Roselle, the director of student work for the Tennessee Baptist Convention and a man with a total of twenty-six years of experience in student work, became the secretary of the Department. Edward S. Rollins, director of student work for the Baptist General Convention of California for thirteen years, became the manager (associate secretary) of the Department. Bill Junker, who had served since 1961 as editor of *The Baptist Student*, became editor of *Collage*, a new magazine for leaders, and continued as director of editorial services. Norman Bowman became editor of student publications with responsibility for *The Baptist Student*, which in 1970 became simply *The Student*, and campus curriculum materials. Jerry Buckner joined the staff in September 1969 as consultant, campus ministries. In 1970 Gene Bolin, Milton Hughes, and Benton Williams joined National Student Ministries as consultants for new work development, campus evangelism, and international student work, respectively. During 1969-70 Doyle J. Baird, Nell Magee, and Arthur Driscoll assumed new responsibilities as consultants for church-campus ministries, and leadership development—students, and leadership development—directors, respectively.

The decade of the 1960's was one of the most trying periods in the life of both the Student Department (National Student Ministries) and student work as a whole. The times presented a different type of and often more thoughtful student. The difficulty of breaking out of old patterns, finding new approaches to ministry, and establishing solid relationships among the various parts of student work produced unusual tensions. All of this was occurring in the midst of much self-study and restructuring within SBC agencies and state convention offices.

### **Student Work in the Seventies**

Student work in the early 70's received a boost not only from the 1970 Convention's action on recommendation of the special study committee, but also from a new wave of student openness to and interest in religion. Independent religious organizations such as

Campus Crusade for Christ revealed areas of student need, particularly in the area of evangelism, which BSU began gearing up to meet. The Jesus Movement, "Jesus Freaks," glossolalia, religious music festivals, campus rallies, youth revivals, and other phenomena both illustrated and encouraged a new, rather fundamentalistic religious expression among youth. Music, beginning with folk music in the 1960's, continued to grow and diversify as a student medium. The number of student music groups multiplied spectacularly in number and contribution. Coffeehouses, resort ministries, and concerts developed into meaningful modes of witness and service.

Several state conventions at the end of the decade instituted studies of their own state program of student work. As in SBC actions of this period, the trend of the reports from the studies was toward a desire for more vigorous evangelism and ministry programs. This trend has increased state director participation in campus planning and influenced the selection of local student workers.

The number of conversions reported in 1971 among students reached its highest reported level to that point. The number of local campus ministries in operation exceeded 850 for the first time in 1971-72, with the number of directors at a corresponding apex. The number of Baptist students serving in the Student Missions Program exceeded 1000 as it had for several years. The total number of students involved in BSU was an estimated 111,000 in 1970-71.

The development of work in newer areas of the Convention, responsible in part for the increased numbers of BSUs, realized a spurt of growth from a special new work development strategy for 1971-72 and the publication of *Plan Book for a New BSU*.

Therefore, Baptist Student Union began 1972, its 50th anniversary year, with the brightest prospects in a decade. A new program manual, *Baptist Student Union Guidebook*, was in process of publication, incorporating a new design and symbolism for BSU which cluster activities under two basic thrusts of the organization, growth and outreach. For the second consecutive year college students had a choice spot on the Southern Baptist Convention program. Many state conventions and SBC boards and committees have included college students in their membership. Many churches are seeking to harness student vigor as never before and Southern Baptist life is much richer because of this experience.

Charles Roselle's insistence that "the more people doing student work, the better" is paying off as several agencies of the Conven-

tion, as well as individual churches and associations, continue in their student ministries. A Student Work Advisory Group, consisting of representatives from all agencies doing student work, meets semi-annually to coordinate the work.

As long as education is both a threat and a promise, the program of Southern Baptist student work must be one of continuing development.<sup>9</sup> The needs for Christian leadership and the alertness and dedication of American youth issue a continuing challenge to Southern Baptist student work. Through its twofold emphasis of Christian growth and outreach it seeks to follow Christ in strengthening students for creative churchmanship—fellowship and service in the U. S. and around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Southern Baptist Convention, *Annual*, 1961, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Southern Baptist Convention, *Annual*, 1964, p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> "Suggested Objectives for Churches with Students," *Quarterly Review* XXIII (January, February, March, 1963), p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> "The Interim and Long Range Program of Student Work as Projected by the Student Department," *Quarterly Review* XXIII (January, February, March, 1963), p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Southern Baptist Convention, *Annual*, 1963, p. 188.

<sup>7</sup> Southern Baptist Convention, *Annual*, 1967, p. 247.

<sup>8</sup> Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, *Baptist Student Work in the Southern Baptist Convention*, 1970, p. cover 2.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel D. Sanford, Jr., "An Appraisal of the Philosophical Statement of Southern Baptist Student Work," unpublished doctoral dissertation New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968, p. 187.











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