George Walton Cummins was born September 3, 1906, in Louisville, Kentucky. This stately southern city was also the one in which he was brought up.

He was baptized into the membership of the Fourth Baptist Church, Louisville, at the age of eleven. Later he moved his membership to the Eastern Parkway Baptist Church, where he served as deacon for a period of seven years. As a young man he was very much interested in the Baptist Training Union, serving for four and one-half years as director of the BTU of the Long Run Association.

Cummins lay job was that of an auditor but in 1935 he surrendered to the ministry and was ordained to preach in August of that year at the age of 29. At that time he was pastor of the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Shelby County and later became pastor of the Simpsonville Baptist Church.

He had a way of combining tasks for while he was preaching he was also getting an education at the University of Louisville, Georgetown College, and Southern Baptist Seminary.

Strangely enough, during his years in lay work, he became involved in the area of the industrial chaplaincy for he ministered to the employees where he worked. To be sure he did not bear the title of "Industrial Chaplain" but he was busy in Christian counseling. As we look back on this two-fold life we see that God was getting Cummins ready for a bigger work in these fields in the years ahead.

It is interesting to note that while in the Southern Baptist Seminary, Cummins was taking all the available courses in the field of clinical pastoral education taught by Dr. Gaines Dobbins. Moreover, he ministered at Norton Infirmary, Hazelwood Sanatorium and the TB Sanatorium.
Then came the years of military service. George was commissioned in the Navy chaplaincy in June 1942. He served on active duty from July 1, 1942 to November 1945 during World War II. Later he was called back to serve during the Korean conflict and he served from 1948 to 1954.

His service in the military was in all areas of the chaplaincy: hospitals, brigs, shipyards and various staff positions.

While in the Navy and Marines, Cummins' first tour of active duty was aboard the battleship USS New York where he served some twenty-two months. He was the only chaplain aboard the battleship during the war years; his parish being some twenty-one hundred men and officers.

During the years 1943, 1944 and 1945, Cummins served as chaplain at the U.S. Navy Pre-flight School at the University of North Carolina. His parish numbered 3,000 mid-shipmen. An account of the effectiveness of Cummins' ministry at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, appeared in the Western Recorder, August 23, 1945, written by R. L. Bolton:

In Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where the University of North Carolina is located we have a Pre-flight school. The chaplain is an ardent soul-winner.

He is George W. Cummins, a native of Louisville, Kentucky. During his chaplaincy here he had been a great blessing to all the churches in and around Chapel Hill. In addition to his duties at the Pre-flight School, he has supplied the local churches, conducted prayer meetings, taught Bible classes, and spoken to missionary societies. He has had over 300 professions of faith in the Pre-flight School, 50 of whom have united with our Baptist church by baptism; over a hundred have united with the other denominational groups. A morning service at the great auditorium, Memorial Hall, is held each Sunday at 10 o'clock. In addition to some 1,500 to 2,000 men of the Pre-flight School, he has from 400 to 500 visitors from the town and university.

Chaplain Cummins preaches Christ and him crucified, as the only Savior of men and of the world. He realizes that his men are here in the Pre-flight School but a short while. They come from everywhere and are sent everywhere. While under his ministry, they are
introduced to a living Christ who is able to save and keep on life's road. Cooperating with him in his services is a large choir made up of the Pre-flight men, and some of the soloists are endowed with rare talents.

If all our camps, military schools, and ships had such warm-hearted faithful, evangelistic chaplains as Chaplain Cummins, hundreds of thousands of men would leave the army and navy and aviation service at the close of the War and return to their homes, rejoicing in their salvation, and anxious and willing to take up the duties of active Christian and church work.

In addition to the midshipmen won to Christ, there was a group of 60 men who surrendered to the gospel ministry, and decided to go to the seminary. Today he still hears from many of these men who found their life-calling back at Chapel Hill.

In 1945, Cummins was transferred to the U. S. Navy Shipyard, Pearl Harbor. While in Hawaii, he worked with the missionaries there and assisted them wherever he was needed.

In October of 1945, Cummins came back to the States where he was returned to inactive duty; but he remained in the Navy Reserve. He located in his native city and state: Louisville, Kentucky. He was asked to become chaplain at the V. A. Hospital. About this time also he received a call from the Beechmont Baptist Church in Louisville. This latter call was he felt of the Lord's leading. His ministry at Beechmont was blessed of the Lord and during this period he worked in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. Wayne Cates and others in the area of clinical pastoral education and cooperated also in this area of his ministry with the General Hospital in Jefferson County, Norton Infirmary and the prisons in the area and at the same time worked with many of the doctors in the early development in this field of pastoral ministries.

In 1949 he was called back to active duty during the Korean Conflict. He was assigned to the Navy Chapel in Washington, D. C., located at the U. S. Naval Communications Station on Nebraska Avenue.
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEMS

One of the helpful little things that the Chaplains Commission did for its chaplains over the years was to supply them where needed with PA systems. Entries like this are common in the Minutes of the Commission:

Motion carried that the Committee recommend that the Home Mission Board contribute not more than $145.70 toward the purchase of a public address system for use by Chaplain Alford V. Bradley of the 424th Infantry; title of to the equipment to be vested in the HMB, and to be turned in when Chaplain Bradley had no need of it.

The price of the PA systems varied: $259.64; $185.00; $180.00; and the like. And it was stipulated always that the PA set was to be returned to the Home Mission Board when the chaplain no longer needed it. Some of the sets were damaged; some were lost; one was destroyed by fire in Korea.

In many cases the systems were turned over to other chaplains. Or sold and the money returned to the Home Mission Board. Possibly as many as one hundred sets were bought and shipped out to Southern Baptist chaplains.

One day a secretary at the Chaplains Commission figured on the sale and loss of PA systems used from July 1941 to July 1951. She found 32 sets sold, salvaged, lost, reassigned which came to a total of $5,288.71.

Of course, no one will ever know how many lives were blessed by the prayers, the devotionals, sermons that went out over the PA systems.

FIELD VISITATION

The director of the Chaplains Commission, his associate, and some of the officers made from time to time field visits to the chaplains around the world and to military personnel. On the closing pages of volume III of the Minutes of the Chaplains Commission, Dr. Carpenter lists nine overseas itineraries up to December 31, 1960.
Fall 1945  India-Burma-China and Pacific Theaters by Carpenter
Summer 1946  European Theater by Dick H. Hall, Jr.
Spring 1947  European Theater by Dr. O. M. Seigler
Fall 1947  European Theater by Carpenter
Fall 1949  Caribbean Area by Carpenter
Fall 1954  Alaska-Pacific Theaters by Carpenter
Fall 1957  Pacific-Mediterranean Theater by Cummins
Fall 1959  European-England Theaters by Cummins
Spring 1960  Alaska-Hawaii by Cummins

Dr. Dick Hall, Jr., made the European itinerary in 1956 at which time he was the principal speaker at the first family retreat at Berchtesgaden. Previous to this, chaplain retreats were held at the Baptist Seminary at Rushlikob, Switzerland. Hall reported 545 in attendance; 35 life commitments; and 16 accepting Christ as Savior. Hall visited installations in Spain, France, and Germany. He mentions Barcelona, Madrid, Lisbon, Frankfurt, Berlin, Stuttgart, Paris.

In England he visited several installations and held conferences for chaplains in conjunction with the Baptist World Alliance.

During the years 1961 to 1971, annual trips were made to Berchtesgaden. Here were held Baptist assemblies. Outstanding speakers, such as G. Allen West, Arthur Rutledge, Wayne Oates and others, shared their convictions.

In the year 1967, Dr. Arthur B. Rutledge, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Home Mission Board, and his wife visited chaplains and military personnel in the Far East, the Near East and the European area. The secretary dubbed his trip: "Around the World in Sixty One Days."

The Far East was not neglected. Significant conferences were held at the Sanno Hotel in Tokyo, from 1964 through 1971.
What were the purposes of such visits?

1. Assure the chaplain of the denomination's interest in his ministry.

2. Bring him up-to-date on denominational news and the Commission's activities. Discover his point of interest, or lack of it.


4. Mention new books or other reading matter helpful to his devotional life.

5. Encourage the chaplain in his preaching ministry.

6. Share with chaplains useful techniques and methods found by others.

7. Where possible get into the chaplain's home to become better acquainted with his personal life.

8. Inform the Commission of the highlights of his journey and suggest any improvements which need to be made.

Getting Ready for the Trip

The field trip will not automatically be a success; it takes thorough and careful preparation. Keep these elements in mind:

1. Know the area to be visited.

2. Outline the trip in detail: time element; travel connections; isolated installations.

3. Notify chaplains by mail regarding mode of travel and approximate time of arrival. Also time of departure. Have a schedule.

4. Have full information regarding Commission's activities, current programs for military and VA, denominational trends, dates for general meetings. Be informed.

5. Carry samples of tracts and other materials available to chaplains. Not a supply, for the chaplain should order this material.

6. Keep a record. Have a notebook to record places, names, matters of interest.

On the Field. Keep in mind these important matters:

1. Observe regulations for visitors. Remember they differ on military and VA installations.

2. If possible before you get there contact chaplain by telephone. He will arrange clearance.
3. If you cannot contact your Baptist chaplain, always get in touch with
the senior or supervisory chaplain.

4. Meet your Baptist chaplains in a group conference. Arrange necessary
personal interviews. Remember there are no closed doors.

5. Observe the individual chaplain's program of work: worship, classes,
counseling, cooperation, community activity, denominational
connection. Ask: Is his ministry well-balanced?

6. View his facilities and equipment. Ask: Is he using it to the best
advantage?

7. Call on the Command or Administration; the supervisory chaplain
assumes this responsibility. Call on the command of your
individual Baptist Chaplain.

Courtesies

1. As far as possible stay out of the VIP status. Do not expect courtesies.
   You are a servant, a workhand. Take the attitude of an inside man.
   Use the pronouns: "our" and "we"; not "your" and "mine."

2. Never walk around like you are a denominational inspector. Show
   that you have come on this field trip for fellowship and to be
   a helper.

3. Never interfere with the chaplain's duties or administration pro-
   cedure. No one owes you their time. Stay on your own side of the
   fence.

4. Be careful about making promises you cannot personally fulfill.

5. Remember that you do not actually represent the Commission or any
   other Baptist group. Always seek to be a representative Baptist.

A SIGNIFICANT FIELD VISIT

A sample of a significant field visit is that of George Cummins who,
while he was associate director, made a trip to the Far East and the
Mediterranean areas from August 17 through October 28, 1957. George
reported on his return:

It was indeed a wonderful privilege for the Associate Director of the
Chaplains Commission to visit our Baptist chaplains and other chaplains;
the military establishment of all branches of the service; to call
on the staff officers and military personnel; to drop in on Baptist
missionaries; to see the native churches and note their work, their
schools, seminaries, hospitals, orphanages; to see firsthand the
outstanding contribution chaplains and military personnel have made
to the cause of world missions.
And seeing all these things causes one to raise his voice in thanksgiving to God for his many blessings and his wonderful leadership.

Cummins recorded in detail some of his reflections as he observed the chaplains at work, the military commands and the mission fields. Condensed here are some of the things he said:

1. Our chaplains are rendering an effective spiritual ministry. Wherever I found a chaplain with an organized program of work which was evangelistic, Bible-centered, and carried out on a high spiritual plane the people were responding in a most gratifying way.

2. The chaplains are doing a very fine job of preaching; this was evidenced by the large numbers attending the worship services.

3. Chaplains have a passion for the lost; and as a result professions are being made from week to week.

4. Fully graded Sunday schools are in operation; Baptist Fellowships are being effectively carried on. Vacation Bible schools are well-attended; up to 500 in some places.

5. Baptist tracts are being used and more are needed.

6. Retreats for chaplains and their families are being held with a very good attendance and a well-rounded program.

7. The outstanding support of each military command in the chaplain's ministry and religious program was much in evidence. One commander wrote in part: "I consider religion is necessary for a full life as an individual and as an American. I am deeply aware of the religious foundations of our country, and our dependence on God."

8. I had the privilege of visiting the front lines in Korea. I found men cared for in every respect. Excellent food, satisfactory living quarters, recreational facilities, libraries, movies, snack bars, hobby shops, recording machines and records, wholesome entertainment, instruction in high school and college subjects and many other things to help the military man maintain a high morale.

9. Chapel facilities were well provided and other physical assets needed by the chaplain to carry on an effective religious program were provided him.

10. Of course, evils are present and participated in by some of the men but we need to be reminded that these same evils are present in our own communities and are participated in by our civilian neighbors: e.g., cohabitation and prostitution; alcoholism and narcotics; gambling with its related evils.

11. Southern Baptist missionaries are doing a grand work; they are making wonderful progress through their schools, seminaries, hospitals and churches.
12. I was impressed in all these countries with the great number of Americans living and working there, either with the military or private firms or businesses. Added to this group are the large number of natives who speak the English language. There is needed in many of these countries English-speaking Baptist churches. (The fulfillment of this need presses in upon us in the very near future.)

13. Today the military is composed of family men which was not the case, to the extend, as it was some years ago. The chaplain must minister to the families of the men in his command as well as those who live in the area of the command... One cannot say he will not minister to these groups, the chaplain finds it a case of necessity.

14. Moreover, the need is still urgent for the local churches to accept their responsibility to prepare their young people for military service.

15. It was indeed thrilling to see military personnel and their families carrying on an outstanding mission program and making a positive contribution to world missions... Indeed, military personnel are in a number of countries where our missionaries cannot go... Southern Baptist church members are in 63 foreign countries... We need not expect them to do the job of missions... unless we prepare them back in our local churches.

AREA CONFERENCES

Area conferences were thought of by many chaplains and lay Christian military men as more helpful than a trip to the Southern Baptist Convention. Ridgecrest sparkled with concerned military planners; so also Glorieta. A conference that beamed with chaplaincy persons and ideas was Golden Gate.

From time to time a conference would be held in the hinterlands: e.g. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Alexandria, Louisiana; one of the Baptist seminaries such as Southeastern.

The importance of these conferences was emphasized by granting of allowances for attendance: $25.00 per chaplain; dependents, $10.00 each; but a limit of $50.00 per family. Allowances fluctuated on the basis of what was needed to cover expenses.
MINISTRY TO CADETS

Southern Baptists entered a new phase of ministering to the nation's five military academies with the appointment of workers for two academies October 1, 1962.

Appointed as director of military personnel and Baptist student ministries at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, was Sidney Joe Hall of Lexington, Virginia. The ministry is a joint effort of the Division of Chaplaincy of the Home Mission Board, the Student Department of the Sunday School Board in Nashville and the Baptist State Convention of Maryland.

Appointed to the same position with the same sponsors—except in this case it is the Baptist State Convention of Colorado, was Keith Harris of Covington, Texas.

Selected for the Director of Military Personnel and Baptist Student Union Ministries for the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York was Caby E. Byrne.

Prior to Caby's selection the Manhattan Baptist Church in New York ministered to cadets at West Point. They called it: "The Southern Baptist Fellowship."

Later a director of Military Personnel and Baptist Student ministries served the cadets of the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, Groton, Connecticut. Another director was employed to devote his time to U. S. Maritime Academy, King's Point, New York.

In view of the resignation of Sidney Joe Hall, Richard F. Bumpass became Director, Military Personnel and Baptist Student Ministries at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Gene Gurney in 1969 became Director Military Personnel and Baptist student Ministries at the Air Force Academy.
DIVORCE & ENDORSEMENT

In the Minutes of the Chaplains Commission, the question of divorce comes up again and again.

"This chaplain has been divorced and asks if the Commission can make an exception." The answer is usually no--a resounding no!

"This man is divorced and remarried. The Commission will not continue his endorsement."

"Motion made that endorsement not be given to Chaplain X due to his marital differences."

Chaplain Y whose divorce became final on July 1. Voted to maintain his original and basic denominational endorsement to the Navy chaplaincy.

There is no absolute on what decision is to be made about divorce. Another time the chaplain is not endorsed and the main cause is his divorce.

In a period during 1967 two papers were prepared and adopted by the Commission, one dealing with the matter of divorce (Suggestions, they are called--not carrying the force of law); the other on glossolalia (again Suggestions), as follows:

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions to the Administration of the Home Mission Board regarding appointment, approval or endorsement of personnel who have been involved in divorce.

The Home Mission Board has followed the practice of not appointing missionary personnel where either has been divorced. It has also followed the practice of not approving men for mission pastoral aid where either the man or his wife had been divorced. The Board has not taken official action on any general policy in this area. Each time the question has come to the executive committee or to the full Board, however, the divorced person involved has been declined.
The steady increase in the number of candidates where divorce is involved seems to indicate that the Administration should set up definite guidelines in this area.

The committee feels that any guidelines should take into serious account both the biblical ideal concerning marriage and also the constraints of Christian forgiveness and compassion. The committee feels that some of the same guidelines may be applied to candidates who have been alcoholics, drug addicts, have a prison record, have received extensive psychiatric treatment, et cetera; however we believe that there are unique aspects to the divorce problem because of the definiteness of biblical teachings on the matter.

We therefore make the following suggestions:

1. That a candidate who has been divorced will be given consideration, and each case, including those where remarriage is involved will be considered according to its own merit.

2. That sufficient time should have elapsed since the divorce to demonstrate evidence of satisfactory adjustment on the part of the person involved.

3. That a candidate who has been divorced may be appointed, approved or endorsed for an area or position where the fact of his divorce does not seriously impair his service; and that a mission pastor who has been involved in divorce may be approved for assistance only if the fact of his divorce does not seriously impair his service in the church for which the assistance is being given.

4. That the Home Mission Board require such candidate, at his own expense and his own initiative, to furnish psychiatric and psychological evaluations by qualified examiners approved in advance by the Personnel Department, giving evidence of his emotional maturity and stability; and that this same procedure also apply to the applicant for mission pastoral aid.

5. That if a missionary or mission pastor who is already in Board employment becomes involved in serious marital difficulty or divorce, factors such as the contributing circumstances, the context of the area in which he is working, the attitude of his associates, the effect on his ministry and his emotional stability shall be evaluated to determine the Board's future relationship to the worker.
IF INVOLVED IN GLOSSOLALIA

Suggestions to the Administration of the Home Mission Board regarding appointment, approval or endorsement of personnel who have been involved in glossolalia.

To properly utilize the Bible as authoritative, the grammatical and historical background principles should be basic and important. Difficult and peripheral passages should be understood in the light of the clear Bible teachings.

Furthermore, the Baptist heritage is important in formulating doctrinal guidelines. We must remember, however, that it is possible that some commonly accepted views and interpretations should be revised in the light of continuing Bible study and experience.

Southern Baptists have rejected the so-called "Pentecostal" emphasis throughout the years. A new factor, however, is the development of the "neo-pentecostal" movement. This approach is more sophisticated and less extreme and is accepted by a sizeable number of people within the more established denominations. It requires serious study and evaluation. Does it violate basic New Testament principles or is it simply an effort to follow out the implications of principles found in the New Testament? The study committee believes that its emphases magnify and distort that which is incidental in the New Testament. The committee believes also that this movement may be rooted in psychological and sociological factors and is not strictly a matter of biblical interpretation or doctrinal belief. Even if most of its emphases cannot be accepted, however, there will probably be lessons which can be learned from this movement.

The Home Mission Board has a positive role as an evangelistic and missionary agency. It should constantly point its workers and the denomination to the central purpose and now allow glossolalia or similar
peripheral emphases to divert its energies and interests. A major criterion for evaluating glossolalia should be whether or not it is helping in reaching more people for Christ and in building stable and Christ-like character.

We therefore make the following suggestions:

1. That while Southern Baptist polity calls for rather extensive liberty and autonomy for local churches and local associations, the work of a nationwide denominational organization such as the Home Mission Board presents different problems.

2. That in consideration of the negative influences; in the light of the limited positive evidences for good; in view of the lack of clear and extensive biblical teaching; and with regard to Baptist tradition, official Baptist groups such as the Home Mission Board should not endorse public glossolalia.

3. That a person who is presently promoting public glossolalia in the churches should not be appointed, approved or endorsed by the Home Mission Board.

4. That if a missionary or mission pastor who is already in Board employment becomes involved, factors such as public demonstrations, the depth of his involvement, the context of the area in which he is working, the attitude of his associates, its effect on his ministry and his emotional stability should be evaluated to determine the Board's future relationship to the worker.