

MARCH-APRIL 1974

Home

Life

The
association flexes
its muscles.



home missions

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Cover: Harold Smith, inner-city pastor, finds reason to smile in the support of associational churches.

Opposite: Pastor Gary Carter (top far right) and Richard Goff (right) find help for new programs from "Commandments in Crisis" funds.

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MARCH-APRIL PREVIEW

The SBC funnel?

Nobody likes to admit it much, but Southern Baptists have, over the years, developed a sort of reverse hierarchy. It's not much as governmental structures go, but it runs the SBC wheels—with appropriate nudges and shoves on occasion. On top of SBC life are individuals, below them local churches. Then come, in descending order, associations, state conventions and, somewhere in last place, national agencies and assorted warm commission-and-organization bodies. Of course, those SBC agency folk don't always like to admit they're really on bottom, but that's SBC power-structure. It's important to note here that midway in the equation comes the association, an hour-glass shaped funnel into which

both sides pour numerous and assorted things, usually more important to the pourer than the pouree. From this input the association (especially the superintendent of missions) selects, cafeteria style, those that best suit everybody's needs. It's a coordinating, developmental task that indicates, to some extent, the value of the association in denominational life and structure. But it barely scratches the surface of associational tasks, and those who see the association's role as this limited are wearing 1940s bifocals. Its funnel-task doesn't account for the growing strength and vitality of SBC associations today. What does? Glad you asked. Answers follow.

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the fellowship of CHURCHES on mission

A decade ago Baptist historian Robert Baker, speaking to a national meeting of superintendents of missions at Gulfshore, Miss., said he had heard a superintendent describe a Baptist association as a "Baptist body which no one can define; that everybody uses; that few attend; that many seek to control; and that is growing rapidly in stature, in importance and in confusion."

There may be more truth than humor involved in his remark.

Definitions will vary, of course, simply because no two Baptist associations—like no two Baptists or Baptist churches—are the same, and no two opinions about them, if they go below surface observations, will be identical either.

Many persons see the association as the "annual meeting"—a yearly get-together to hear reports of various denominational agencies, a couple of sermons (one doctrinal, of course) and "dinner on the grounds." The accent is on *meeting*.

For others in recent years it has become a doctrinal battleground resulting in some lines being drawn and some churches on the outside looking in—if they are looking at all. The accent is on *controversy*.

And for still others the association has become a creative instrument serving the churches, asserting leadership and pointing to new areas of service and witness.

Of course, there are associations which combine all three of these areas.

E.C. Watson, state missions director for the South Carolina Baptist Convention, former Home Mission Board consultant on associational administration, and author of *Superintendent of Missions for an Association*, defines an association as "a self-determining body, created by the churches affiliated with it and respon-

sible to them through messengers, through which the churches seek to establish their unity in faith and practice, and to give and receive assistance in their work of bringing men to God through Christ."

Lloyd Corder, director of the HMB's Division of Associational Services, sees the Baptist association as "a fellowship of churches on mission in their setting." He emphasizes that the entire wording is necessary to carry his concept.

Corder, who has virtually spent a lifetime dealing with associations, including a stint as a superintendent, says four things are unique to every association:

- the place where it is located. Location determines the kinds of churches which make up the association and their goals;
- its purpose or mission;
- pluralism of churches: no two are alike, and
- a plan to accomplish its purpose.

The first Baptist association was formed in the early 17th century in London. Five churches in Philadelphia began the first American association in 1707. Today almost 1,200 associations dot the Southern Baptist Convention landscape.

Some associations are tiny in numbers, huge in geography: Minnesota Association's 1,533 Baptists are spread over the state's 84,068 square miles. Some are rural like Mississippi's Alcorn, which has only about 1,000 members. The SBC's largest association, Union, centered around Houston, has 220 churches and 200,000 members and is larger than half of the 30 state conventions.

Originally associations were organized for fellowship, to provide for doctrinal unity, to ordain and discipline

continued



**With rosy cheeks
and healthy outlook,
the association
flexes its muscles**
By Toby Druin

isters and, after 1750, to provide a means of promoting and implementing missionary work. Some historians add that they existed to help the churches.

The record of their numerical growth is symbolic of the early good health of associations. But the rise of mission societies, state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention cut into their effectiveness as churches began to focus their attentions on broader planes. The associations more and more became mere channels—sometimes chattels—of denominational agencies utilizing them for promotion.

Most of those close to the associations indicate that the association is moving

back into a place of prominence.

Robert A. Baker, professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said recently, "The association isn't the same today as it was in 1707, today it is gaining in importance."

"Take Tarrant County (Fort Worth) Association or Dallas Association, for instance. With their budgets and manifold ministries, they are small conventions—microcosms of the larger convention, if you please."

Corder says the nature of today's society and the function of the association make the association more important to Baptist work than ever before. "The

association draws us together in the bonds of fellowship; it commits us to the mission where we are; it enables us to understand and adjust to distinctive circumstances of time and place; and it facilitates concerted planning and action for here and now."

Like it or not, one of the keys to the growing recognition of association is the annual meeting.

Russell Bennett, Corder's associate and director of Associational Administration Service, says the continued vitality of Southern Baptist witness may hinge on the course associational meetings take. Too often, Bennett says, the annual

Upgrading the key man in the association

RUSSELL BENNETT



Key man in any Baptist association is the superintendent of missions. And the key to his effectiveness is the degree of expertise he can bring to bear in fulfilling his role.

With that in mind the Division of Associational Services of the Home Mission Board offers a program of professional development of association staff personnel.

Associational Leadership Development (ALD) requires training in 12 areas—associational administration, counseling, denominational programming, ecclesiology, educational principles, group dynamics, mission perspective, mission techniques, communication, public relations, research and writing and sociology of the Baptist association.

The study is available through conferences sponsored by the state conventions, the Home Mission Board and the seminaries.

Completion of the course re-

quires at least one credit in each study area.

Each ALD course must be led by an instructor approved by the training director of the Division of Associational Services. No credit will be granted for courses taken prior to application for participation in the program. No time limit is set for completion; the course is intended to encourage continuing education.

"I think the key to a vital association is a competent superintendent," says designer of the course F. Russell Bennett.

The course grew out of Bennett's experience with management education and recommendations from a select panel.

Adds Bennett, "It will take the average person five years to complete the study. I am not as interested in their completing the procedure, however, as I am in their continuing their education." •

The role of the superintendent is increasing in stature and responsibility.



Not the framework, but the life of mutual concern

One of Southern Baptists' leading exponents of the association is Russell Bennett, assistant director of the Home Mission Board's Division of Associational Services.

Bennett, whose doctoral dissertation was on the theology of the Baptist association, outspokenly advocates the potential of the association as a living, viable unit expressive of God's love and plan for his churches.

"To me the expression of the association is not the organization or the framework, but the life of mutual concern where one church watches over another church of like faith and order to their edification," Bennett says.

"For example, when a church has a fight, I think that sister churches ought to take time to pray for them instead of just sitting around hoping that the disgruntled will move their letters to their congregation.

"And at the pastors' conference, instead of just wondering where everybody from that inner-city church is going to go, they ought to pray for one another."

The association is rooted in the question of one Christian asking what he can do for his brother, Bennett says.

"Our division [of associational services] defines an association as churches in fellowship on mission in their setting," he explains. "It is our understanding that these churches have a mission and that together they are on mission to glorify God in the world."

"I have heard Baptist leaders say the association came into being because there were some things the churches couldn't do singly, so the churches joined together to form associations to accomplish these things," Bennett says. "Then they say there were some things the associations couldn't do so the churches formed state conventions and for the same reason the Southern Baptist Convention."

"I don't believe that at all. There is some truth to it, but I don't believe it is the whole truth."

"The association is an essential expression of the gospel. Church order is an expression of good news, because part of this total redemption of the world is a redemption of the way groups relate as well as the way individuals relate, and if the church is the

locus of the redeeming action of God, then churches who are created by a loving God should be loving toward each other. To me the association is this expression of the concern of one congregation for another congregation."

Bennett wants to strengthen the "indigenous vitality" of associations by getting them to plan their own work rather than be mere funnels for denominational programs.

Consequently the association will become even more significant in Southern Baptist life.

Another impetus to indigenous strength, he says, is the increasing stature of the superintendent of missions.

"Southern Baptists are losing about 1,000 pastors a year to secular employment and the average pastor moves every 18 months," Bennett says, "but superintendents are more stable, now averaging about six years in tenure. For the most part they are secure men in secure positions."

"There was a time when if you couldn't pastor a church you could be a superintendent. That is no longer true. When a position becomes open now, there is a significant number of men who want the position and consequently the caliber of men in the position has significantly improved."

Bennett is also outspoken on his belief that the association has been, is and should remain a doctrinal body.

"When a church applies to affiliate with the association," he contends, "the association doesn't ask how much money the church is going to give, they ask what the church believes. And the church has to present evidence of doctrinal position—that it is in harmony with the association."

State conventions and SBC use of associations as promotional channels for denominational programs prompted associations to forsake their doctrinal heritage and become "organizations of doers," rather than "a family of believers," Bennett claims.

"The association doesn't have any right to speak to the churches and say they have to do certain things, but it does have the right to say its basis for fellowship is doctrinal—on what the churches believe."

"The significant majority of associations have a statement of faith. And their credentials committee examines the applying churches for the conduct of their services, their conduct as a church, and their statement of faith and practice—is it in harmony with the fellowship?"

"Now if they are not in harmony, then they don't recommend them for membership and they prohibit their seating messengers. They are not saying that they are not a church and denying them access to the Lord; they are excluding them from their fellowship. This is the legitimate right of the association."

Bennett says recent difficulty has come because some associations have not had a statement of faith.

The settling of doctrinal disputes belongs on the "associational level," he contends, because only on that level of organization can "everybody know everybody pretty well. They may not know you, but they know your church."

"If an association chooses to make immersion a test of faith, that is the association's business," Bennett argues. "If they want to make their association a premillennial or fundamental test of fellowship, it is their business. But I think that this ought to be kept at the level of the association."

Bennett argues that if doctrine is left at the associational level it will remain at least within the hearing of the laity.

"If Baptists begin to shift the creedal requirements to the Convention, they are going to be putting it in the hands of the clergy and that will accelerate any tension that already exists between laity and clergy in the denomination."

Bennett contends neither he nor his division is pushing for associational uniformity. The unity, or "oneness," should come from acknowledgment of a common task of proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom.

"We are not trying to develop any uniformity of program," he observes. "We are trying to produce diversity of program. We are trying to say every association ought to plan its own work—get about the job of being churches in fellowship on mission in their setting."

ing has been prostituted for promotional purposes. Instead, it should be for the problems of the day, including an emphasis on doctrine; it give time to hearing reports of achievements and needs of the associational organizations and building vitality."

All annual meetings achieve this state leader, who agrees on the importance of the association, says most associational meetings are "totally blunt," he says, "the annual meeting has become so sterile and repetitive and so structured in most associations that it is not supportive or interesting to laymen."

There is no one there except faithful pastors, older women and retired laymen. Thinking laymen and other persons involved in decision-making and community action simply are not attending.

There are exceptions, of course, where they have gone from the old concept to one or two well-planned inspirational night sessions or maybe an afternoon-through-dinner meeting and evangelistic or youth service in the evening.

Where they have done this or used modern communications methods such as visual aids, young people and modern music, drama or skits," says the state man, "they have vitalized the program. But this is an exception. Most still stand up and read or hear reports from the denominational agencies, hear recaps from the associational organizations and close up shop till next year."

The power of the Baptist association, sufficiently motivated, was evidenced in North Carolina last fall when the association largely became the locus of the effort to defeat liquor-by-the-drink legislation in the state.

Poor liquor forces purposely scheduled the election in an off year to cut down on the number of people going to the polls. But they failed to note that virtually all of the state's 80 Baptist associations met in the few weeks prior to the election date. Anti-LBD forces used the association to organize the opposition and successfully trounced the measure with more than 90 percent of the votes.

The most vital factor in any association

is the superintendent of missions and to a great extent, the "fellowship of churches on mission in their setting" depends on him.

Almost everyone agrees that the role of the superintendent is increasing in stature and responsibility.

"There was a day when the superintendent or associational missionary was primarily a study course teacher," says Jack Harwell, editor of the *Georgia Christian Index*. "He went in to help a church pump up its Sunday School or Training Union or some other organization."

"His work now is more and more an outreach thing, helping locate new ministries and new ways to apply the gospel."

"Of course, this is requiring a totally different kind of missionary. The superintendent's job is no longer a dumping ground or a place to coast until retirement. Some of the brightest men I know now are serving the associations."

Tom Roote, who recently moved from Jacksonville Association in Florida to Birmingham Association, sees a move toward men with educational orientation.

Roote grew up in the home of a superintendent of missions, his father, who still serves in northeast Florida, and went to school with the definite idea of training to be a superintendent of missions for an association.

He sees no basic change in the superintendent's role—his as contrasted with his father's—except possibly in geography. "My role is a two-pronged thing," he says, "it exists to help churches and to help churches do together what they can't do for themselves. I am an enabler. My job is to help pastors."

"In the rural setting, where my father served, the superintendent's essential role has always been to help churches and in most instances that help was in getting a preacher, or a better preacher, to train the leadership and then to do it all over again."

"The larger associations in metropolitan areas—Atlanta, Louisville's Long Run, Birmingham—have always had cooperative ministries. There really has been no basic change."

Doctrinal disputes have thrown several associations into the public eye in the last few years.

Wayne Ward, Southern Baptist Theo-

logical Seminary professor, remarked in an address to the Texas convention last fall that associations which have withdrawn fellowship from churches because of doctrinal practices were "usurping church authority. He called it a 'tornado warning' for the denomination."

"Historically, if you go back to old English connectionalism they did encourage and discuss with one another on matters of doctrine," Ward adds.

"But never, absolutely never, has there been an absolutely consistent doctrinal unity in any Baptist association I have ever read anything about."

"The early associations were always debating or discussing doctrine, but when they drew up a statement it expressed a consensus with all kinds of variations and allowed for differences."

Ward believes the primary reason for early Baptist connectionalism, the forerunner of today's associations, was for evangelism and missions.

"The very intimate matters of receiving people on profession of faith and church membership and for baptism has to be done only at the local church and whatever we call the association it is not a church."

Lloyd Corder feels doctrine should remain a "topic of discussion" in associations rather than a "matter of deliberation" as to whether a church is acceptable or not.

Back when we had doctrinal sermons at every associational meeting, people got an understanding of doctrines; we need that knowledge. If we don't get an understanding of it the day can come that we will be so diverse in our doctrinal concepts that when doctrine becomes an issue we will be divided."

"We really have no forum in which to work out the differences unless it is in the association. We would do well to have some debates on doctrine. It would tend to divide us in some ways but more likely would tend to consolidate us."

The problem is that doctrine too easily becomes a whipping boy when other issues—pastoral politics and personality differences—really are at the core of the dispute, many observers will admit.

One person seemed to sum it up fairly well with the observation "our differences seem rather petty in facing the challenge of leading men to Christ today." ■

Never has there been absolute doctrinal unity in any association.

A look at
some of the people who give
flesh and blood—
and meaning—to the role
of superintendent of missions.

JIM WRIGHT PHOTO



ROOTE

Tom Roote, Jacksonville, Fla. Son of a superintendent of missions, Roote is one of the few whose education was geared toward a career as superintendent. For the past three years, he's headed Jacksonville Association, strengthening ties with churches despite huge pastor turn-over—75 of 100 churches have changed pastors—a situation Roote attributes to low salaries and inadequate education. He's also battled church splits, finances and independent churches. But Roote sees inroads being made toward "the development of a strong missions program in the associations."

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PRINCE

Elizabethtown, N.C. As one of 10 women superintendents, Prince believes she has a career, although she admits it's not every woman. "I get a great deal of respect from Bladen Association's 33 churches. My pastors don't refuse to come to me as a woman, either. In fact, some say they can't wait to meet me more freely because I'm a woman." Prince, superintendent for the past eight years, sees her role as "planner, promoter, helper—help make our people become concerned about something besides themselves."

KATHA BARNETT PHOTO



INGRAM

Frank Ingram, Gaffney, S.C. One of the SBC's most innovative, hard-working superintendents, layman Ingram has guided Broad River association for the past two years, stimulating widely accepted activities such as last year's popular missions fair and a thriving youth/family counseling service. Believing the association to be an entity unto itself, Ingram points out its individual needs, objectives—and programs. "The FMB, HMB, Sunday School Board and state convention can't meet grassroots needs," he feels, "but they can assist us in our efforts to meet our own needs."

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John Duncan, Columbiana, Ala. Riding the waves of an association changing from rural to urban as Birmingham grows southward, Duncan finds it "frustrating and challenging" to get Shelby Association's 52 churches—and 12,000 people—working together. But he sees progress in their maturing attitudes toward resort ministries and accepting newcomers. As superintendent for 12 years, he's learned to be a reconciling agent, even amid the tenseness of a church splitting over race. "I'm Baptist enough to believe every congregation has a right to make its own decisions," he says, but openly sided with the integrationist faction. His unequivocal stand could have hurt, but he bridged that gap by bringing both old and new churches into the associational fellowship.



Leon Young, Meridian, Miss. Association's just moved into new and Young's excited about opportunity to provide more services—continuing education for pastors, training for laymen, audio-visual equipment, a center for the 14,500 members of the 52 churches and missions. Young, a Mississippi with a lifetime "world view," works to knit Baptist churches together. "In an old, well-churched area like ours," says Young, a 20-year superintendent, "we stress strengthening churches."



T.M. Underwood, Monroe, Ga. Far from metropolitan-fringe of Atlanta to farmlands, Underwood works with Baptist churches in four middle Georgia associations. As area missionary for the 12 years, he believes the association provides a vital link in Baptist denominational structure. "It is basic to our way of life," Underwood says. "If we were without this sense of fellowship and cooperation at the level, it would be difficult as a denomination to maintain the sense of unity, fellowship and purpose necessary for effective ministry."



Robert McGinnis, Dallas, Tex. "A servant of the local church," McGinnis believes his role is to provide resources and leadership—not help the association, or the Convention, "become institutions." There's danger in that, he says. McGinnis adds that local needs are as important as "those in Nigeria," he contends. "Too many save their consciences by meeting needs 'over there' and forgetting people who live at their doorstep."



Russell Duffer, Corning, Ark. After 11 years as superintendent of Current River/Gainesville Association, Duffer stepped down this spring. During his years winding Ozark backroads to visit 31 churches—often with his wife—he became a father to many younger, newer pastors. His own 32 years in the pastorate, he says, helped him understand their problems—as well as be more efficient and successful. Duffer's accomplishments include long-range planning, well-attended VBS clinics, popular annual Bible studies, a youth camp that attracts hundreds of youngsters each summer. He mediated a merger of three churches "in dying communities." And he learned two rules: "Be versatile; you can't fit an answer here over there." And "recognize laypeople's abilities; you've got to give them responsibility, and more. You've got to get to know them man to man."

Baptist Church
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 - MORN. WORSHIP 11:00
BAPT. TRAINING 6:00 - EVE. WORSHIP 7:00
SPECIAL SERVICES 7:30



VENOSDEL



Don Venosdel, Daly City, Calif. Encouraging the wide variety of people that attend the 25 churches and three missions in the San Francisco Peninsula Association is a big part of Venosdel's job. He has watched his association grow for eight years, helping the churches not only survive economically but also meet needs of their people. One need has been for new churches, but rising property and material costs have made it difficult to begin work. Venosdel devised a different solution: "We are moving into buildings for multiple congregations. We've experimented with it and it works well. More than that, it's simply a matter of economic survival to us."

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Wiley, Houston, Tex. Of the 225 churches that make up Southern Baptists' largest association, the smallest has 100 members, the largest has 1,000. Houston's diverse people need different churches and Union Association must provide that meets each church's specific needs," says Brumley, superintendent since 1972. "It's difficult to maintain fellowship in a city where 50 miles separates churches." The association's 400,000 Baptists must meet the challenge of the city's tremendous growth—including starting 80 churches by 1985. "If we're not careful, the city will outgrow us," Brumley says. "We must keep ahead or we'll be unable to exert influence. We have to help the city have a soul."

EVERETT HULLIN PHOTO

FUTURE HOME OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH (NORTH)
A SATELLITE OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH DOWNTOWN
DR. LARRY ROSE



Larry Rose, Texarkana, Tex. With the city predicted to jump 20 percent in 10 years, Rose stays busy keeping ahead of new suburbs. He's led Bowie Association's strongest church, First Texarkana, to plan a satellite ministry in a section that grew from 800 to 9,000 people in a decade. "The first building'll be a gym," Rose says. "We're emphasizing a family ministry here." But in his three years as superintendent, Rose's most significant achievement may have been helping ease racial tension. Rose spearheaded rebuilding of a bombed-out black church, St. Paul, saving the congregation \$60,000 in construction costs. In new facilities, St. Paul's attendance leaped from 125 to 500—and Rose "can never visit without being asked to preach," he laughs. "There is still prejudice," he admits, "but the resentment is gone. We'd welcome black churches in our association," he smiles. "Course we hope first'll be St. Paul."

continued

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DON BUTLER PHOTO



CHILES (RIGHT) WITH ONE OF HIS PASTORS

Henry Chiles, Pierre, S.D. Having worked for two years with his three SBC pioneer associations, Chiles—an HMB missionary superintendent of missions—has found deep fellowship and commitment to missions in the 19 churches and 12 missions that make up Big Sky, East and West River associations. But he has also found a residue of prejudice against Indians living in the area. "We constantly have racial problems," he admits, "though they're not as open as in the South. We must overcome these problems. The Indians have remained a definite minority here; in many ways, they're the most tragic group in America because they are America's native people."



John Privott, Rocky Mount, N.C. After 10 "terrific" years at North Roanoke Association's helm, Privott believes the association is "moving into our day more strongly. Our churches see the value of the association, and so does denominational leadership." Being superintendent is not just a profession for Privott. "A person has to have a sense of calling," he says, "he's an interpreter not only of the gospel, but of denominational ministry and programs. Our purpose is the same, but our role is changing; the superintendent is no longer the stereotype retired pastor. Today he has more responsibility and more opportunity in his work."

Glenn Field, Great Falls, Mont. Working with four associations that cover 100,000 miles can have its drawbacks, but for Field it only adds to his desire to spread the Southern Baptist witness. Describing himself as a "pastor's pastor," he spends the greater part of his time traveling to the 25 churches and 10 chapels in Yellowstone, Glacier, Treasure State and Triangle associations—he logged more than 50,000 miles in 1973. Field, a superintendent for three years, continues to help his associations' development. "We're moving ahead slowly because of a lack of financial support, but we haven't cut anything yet—we are just out here making do with what we've got."



John Elliff, Oklahoma City. "After we've done all we can do in traditional ministries," says Elliff, "we need to look around and see who we're not reaching, then establish a loving relationship with them by meeting a need or interest of theirs. We're committed to the idea churches ought to be committed to total ministry." Two years ago Elliff became superintendent of Capital Association, whose 121 churches hold one of every six Oklahoma Citizens. He's turned the association around in budget and church participation, but in no area has he been more effective than in community ministry. More than 200 lay volunteers have been "commissioned" for service in such programs as medical and dental clinics and inner-city centers. "We don't use any gimmicks," Elliff says, "but we take every opportunity to present the gospel. People know we care—and why. Last year 800 people were saved through Christian social ministries. That's more than in revivals."



J. J. Burdine, Bismarck, N.D. Describing his work of the past six years as "isolated," Burdine says the distance that separates "my pastors makes them want to work together." The core of his work with the 19 churches in his three associations—N.D., Eastern, Western and Hi Line—"is development," Burdine says, but he's limited because of lack of funds to work the vast territory. Burdine admits, too, he's disappointed that he's begun "no missions to Indians," but, like Field, has found that "to most whites around here, the Indian is still the enemy."



John Lyle, New York City. Reared a Methodist in his youth, Lyle became a Baptist while in the army in Alaska, later looked into home missions service on the basis of a foreign missionary. And for the past six years, he's parlayed that beginning into directing the efforts of Manhattan Baptist Association. He admits the Baptist association may seem anachronistic in the city, but adds, "The association is very necessary. No one church is going to do the job alone. We have to say to the city, 'We're not one church, but we're working together, toward a common goal.'"

Leroy Smith, Phoenix, Ariz. One of the first things Smith did when he became superintendent of Central Association in 1971 was hold a strategy planning conference in which the association isolated areas of need and drafted a five-year plan to meet them. Less than three years later, almost all needs have been met and Smith is reconvening his planners. Smith has led in establishing a Baptist center food bank, clothing center, literacy program and foster home program for mental patients. Two US-2 couples lend aid in literacy and language missions. With HMB help, he hopes to add a full-time Christian social ministries director. In 20 years of mission ministry, from a Ruston, La., pastorate to Phoenix, Smith has boiled down his philosophy of working with his churches. "You determine needs and then meet them."



Text by Kim Watson, Everett Hullum, Toby Druin.

we should be the MAINSRING that winds the churches

Loren Messenger admits with a chuckle that he set out to be a millionaire—by age 35.

He began his college career as a business major, but somewhere between the ivy-covered halls and the polished corporate conference table, the short, rotund Messenger was sidetracked.

Today, at 54, his business is missions, working as superintendent of missions for the Caddo Baptist Association in rural Oklahoma.

The walls of Messenger's office, adjoining his home in Anadarko, Okla., are decorated with five calendars and several maps of Caddo County, his area of responsibility.

The calendars and the county are, in fact, a way of life for Messenger, the circumference in time and space of his world.

Pulling out a notebook stuffed with pocket appointment calendars, Messenger proudly flips through, month by month. "You see, right here is January, February, March—all the way through 1975—in detail." Red ink marks local meetings, blue ink, state meetings, and green indicates "cancelled."

"You don't see anything red with anything blue—we don't conflict on any of them." Thumbing through another book of calendars, he nods. "See right here is the 1977 calendar. Yes ma'am. 1977 is not jelled yet—but in a couple of months, we'll jell it."

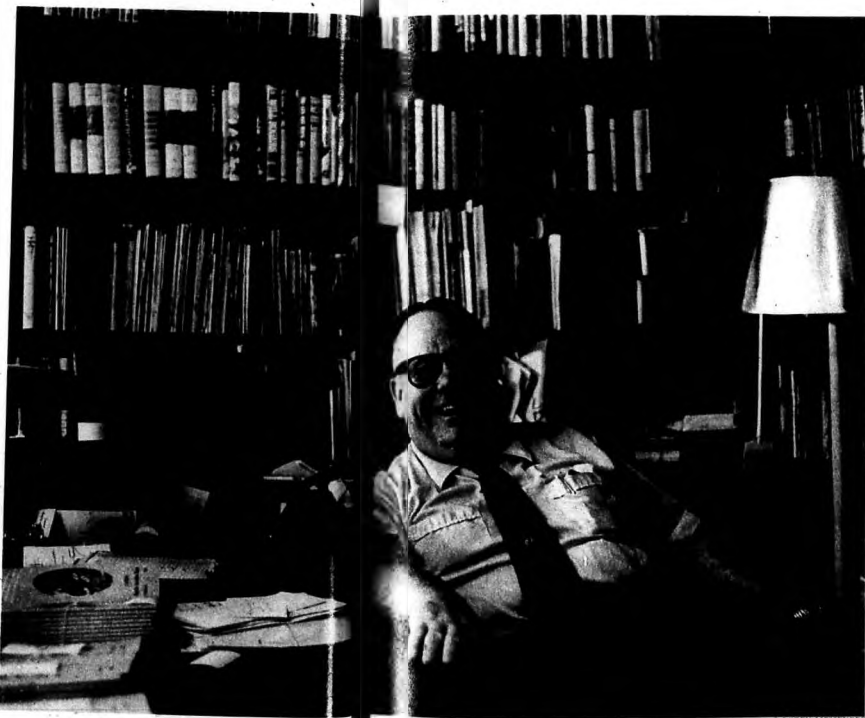
Messenger's daily routine entails frequent telephoning, mounds of paper work and constant promotion. A colleague commented that the Caddo missionary "gets \$2 out of every \$1, the quality of his work is so superior," and at times, Messenger admits, "I've used my business training more than my Bible."

"He is the best detail man I've known," says a Caddo County pastor. "He is always ahead. I don't care who you are, he's one step ahead." Messenger grins slyly. "If you plan ahead, you get ahead. If you don't plan ahead, you need a head. You work. Lots of hours, lots of details, lots of promoting."

**Unity and fellowship
mark a new day
in a rural association**

By Celeste Loucks

Photography by Everett Hullum



Perhaps the best example of Messenger's business acumen and ability to work with people is the way he's turned the association around financially.

David Forester, Caddo stewardship chairman, and pastor of First Baptist, Cyril, remembers when Messenger came 11 years ago, "he attacked a very sore spot—finances. That was the first thing he did."

The long-range goal was for each church to contribute five percent of undesignated funds to the association; now 100 percent of the churches give to the association, all but one giving five percent. It gives three percent.

The associational budget amounts to almost \$25,000 per year, Messenger says. "Of 23 churches and missions, I'd say 23 of them send their money in every week. That gives us a constant flow of money."

"When I came, they didn't have enough money to pay my salary," Messenger continues. "Now we don't have financial problems."

Some churches have offered to raise more than five percent, "but Loren says 'no,'" explains a pastor. "He says, 'If you raise it, give it to the Cooperative Program or to missions.'"

Messenger also encourages churches to upgrade the salaries of their preachers, as well as provide hospitalization and life insurance as part of their programs. And "nearly every church has built or remodeled their parsonages since I've been here," Messenger adds.

In an effort to help churches grow physically and institutionally, the association launched a special program, "Stewardship Decision Night," which rounded up pastors, "key decision-makers in the churches," state and convention leaders. "We had a fabulous number of churches represented that night—20 out of 27," reports Forester of Cyril First. "There were 84 people—not counting the cooks."

"This meeting was designed to get the churches to dream—to dream about what they might do if they had the money," says Forester. "When

you're caught up in the activities of your own communities, you don't always think of these things, and instead concentrate on meeting immediate needs, solving daily problems. We asked people to consider 'What kind of things can I do?'

"All of us wrote down our ideas for each church," he explains. "It opened some laymen's eyes to needs of their own communities and churches."

"We've had our largest jump in gifts this year," he continues. "We've been helping churches to develop budgets. One or two of the churches didn't have budgets until this year." He laughs. "PR—public relations—is the difference. We really limelight these churches who increase their percentages."

Despite involvement in the tedious "business" of missions, Messenger also preaches, filling vacant pulpits across the county, occasionally officiating a wedding or funeral, visiting churches as guest speaker.

A former chaplain of the Oklahoma State Senate, Messenger spent 23 years in pastorates of several churches, large and small.

The training, apparently, wasn't wasted. Harry Griffin, pastor of First Baptist in Hinton, compares Messenger's role to that of a pastor. "Any responsibility I take in the association, I take with the idea I am going to work with my missionary the same way I expect my membership to depend on me as pastor," Messenger adds, "I do everything the church does, but I do it 27 times, because I have 27 churches."

Experience in the pastorate increased Messenger's sensitivity to needs of pastors in his area. "I saw a lot of this associational work, and well, I didn't think it was up to par," he explains, wiggling his thick fingers and gathering his hands in.

"In the past, we've said, 'Y'all come. Get your training here.'"

"Churches pretty well existed for the association. But I want the association to exist for the churches, take whatever the churches need, to them. The association should be the mainspring that winds the church."

Instead of requiring church staff and personnel to attend area-wide clinics for training, Messenger hopes to take programs to individual churches. He also tries to offer a wide variety of materials and programs so churches can pick and choose to fit their own particular needs. "The point is, the church program has to be greater than the individual," says Griffin, "and the association has to be bigger than the local church. Especially in rural areas where the churches have difficulty implementing their own programs."

With almost 7,000 people, Anadarko, the "In-



Strong missions is good—
to a point. But our church has done missions
and neglected its own needs.

ALTON WEBB

We try to lead them rather than condemn them. We show them God's love.

FLOYD NORTON



LIND

Sharing helps, because big or little, we suffer from the same problems.

ROY LIND



FORESTER

In an agrarian society, we depend on fellowship... In the association, we get to liking each other, feeling for one another.

DAVID FORESTER

dian Capital of the Nation," is Caddo County's largest town. Along roadsides, cotton bolls lie scattered—symbols of one of the county's top economic mainstays. An occasional horse trailer slows sparse traffic along narrow roads which span mounds of rolling red earth and green fields of winter wheat, and connect town to town.

Because of its rural nature, a critical part of the association's task deals with closing the communication gap among isolated communities, tying church to church, strengthening new, often floundering pastors, fostering adult leadership and developing youthful resources.

"In an agrarian society, we depend on fellowship," comments Forester, of Cyril, located on the southeast edge of the county.

When a pastor in northern Caddo County experienced complications after major surgery, Messenger phoned the first in a chain-reaction of calls, alerting the entire associational network of the man's condition. "Man, all our churches went to prayer," Messenger remembers.

"It's a unifying force," Forester says. "In the association we all get together, get to liking each other, get to feeling for one another."

"People who think alike and feel alike can't stay away from each other," another pastor says simply.

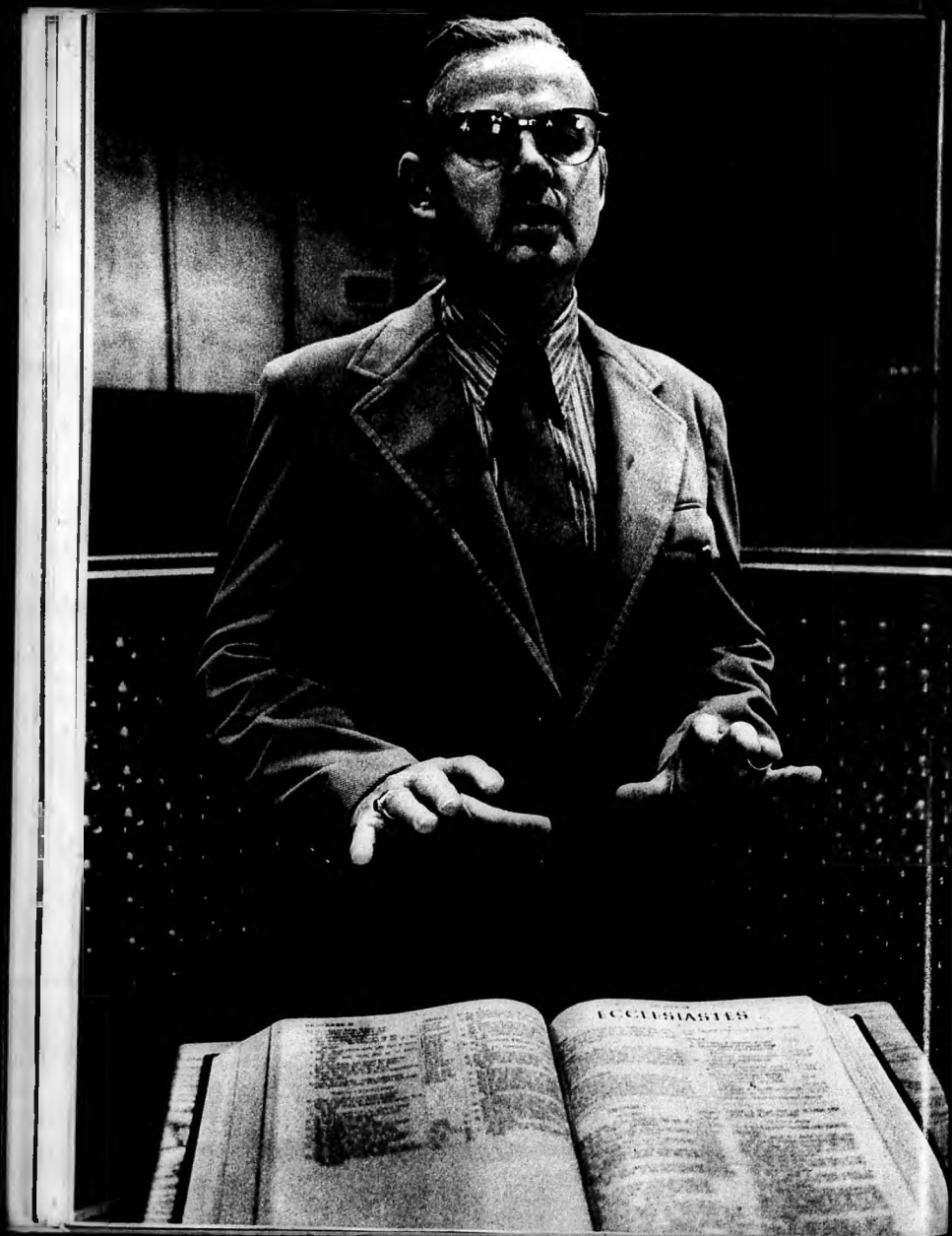
Drawn together by associational meetings, pastors—often from the only Baptist church in town—get together and compare notes on progress and problems. From Sunday School attendance to stewardship to missions. "Big and little, we're suffering from the same problems," remarks Roy Lind of First Baptist, Verden. "This sharing helps us know, man, it's not so bad as I thought it was."

Often a preacher who has dealt successfully with a situation can throw some light on possible solutions. "What helps me, helps you," Lind says.

A major criticism among pastors concerning associational involvement revolves around time. Bob Smith, father of four children and full-time soil conservationist for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, pastors First Baptist, Eakly. He supports the association, but complains, "My kids have been in basketball and I haven't had a chance to see them dribble a ball. I have to pick out what is important for me and my church. The rest—I have to let it ride."

An Anadarko preacher agrees. "I think the pastor is obligated first to his own church. The association is only as strong as the member churches."

"It's probably more of an effort to go to associational meetings," admits Lind, who heads associational Sunday School work. "Coming and going takes time. It stands to reason, if I spend half a day on associational work, I'm spending time I could be golfing or working on a sermon. But," he



Everything I've learned about WMU work has been through the association.

MRS. MARK YOUNG

concludes, "if other denominations knew what we had, I think they'd be jealous."

Lay leadership training is an important goal for the association. Each year, Caddo County sends eight to 15 church members to conferences at Clorietta; they return to train teachers and leaders within each congregation. Alton Webb, pastor of First Baptist, Anadarko, believes the experience exposes members to new ideas and methods. He recalls a woman who returned from a leadership training conference and encountered a teacher from a neighboring church who depended on the lecture method. "He cut the woman off when she talked about role playing," Webb says. "He told her that's not scriptural, that's not God's way. But she told me, 'By Friday, I think I had converted him.'" Mrs. Mark Young, president of the associational WMU, says, "Everything I've learned about WMU has been through the association."

The association also encourages lay people to "get in and get their feet wet" in missions, says Willard Looney, chairman of the associational Brotherhood program, "an old dirt farmer" who until recently "hid behind my cows" instead of getting involved. Looney now directs the association's county jail ministry, a Saturday afternoon Bible study, a time of witnessing by laymen, short prayer, invitation and distribution of candy bars. "We're trying to get the laymen to do it," Messenger emphasizes, "instead of the preachers. We send preachers as last resort."

"I was a little shy in witnessing to an individual personally, before this," admits oil field clerk Floyd Norton, a wide-eyed, soft-spoken fellow who entered the jail ministry "less than a year ago."

Cold, vertical bars separate Norton from inmates grouped in a single large cell, but, he says, "I talk as if I were on the other side—with them."

Often, the prisoners—gathered around a large table in the cell, are reticent. "I usually tell them about myself, ask them questions about their backgrounds" to break the ice. "We try to lead them rather than condemn them, to show them

God's love. They like to hear a man give his personal testimony," Norton says quietly.

If during the invitation men indicate an interest in talking further, Norton takes them out of the jail into the sheriff's office. "I've got the impression some have a searching feeling. We find this especially when we counsel with them. They need Jesus and they haven't realized it," Norton says.

But the work's not always easy—or rewarding. "Sometimes there's no visible result," he says. "You rock along for two or three weeks and wonder, 'Am I getting anywhere?'"

"They are a group you have to be awful careful with," he adds slowly. "They can turn you off so easily. A lot of times they have games on the table, and keep playing while we talk. They let you know they are turning you off."

Several prisoners have received Bibles through the ministry and about nine men have made professions of faith. During one prayer meeting "the jailer was converted," Messenger says. "Jail officials say their work is easier because we come."

Norton hopes to involve other laymen. "Jail ministry just scares people. But prisoners have a need like anyone else has," he says. "When we leave, many say, 'We'll see you next Saturday.'"

Mass scripture distribution is another project of associational people. "See those little dots?" Messenger asks, pointing to a large map of the county. "Those are houses. In one week the churches will distribute Bibles to each house in the county. It's already calendared."

Harry Griffin, former missionary to Japan and currently chairman of associational evangelism, explains plans for the association-wide effort: members in each church will undergo special training before reaching into their communities. Two thousand Bibles have been ordered to cover the county's 150-square-mile area.

"Southern Baptists are in the greatest position they've been in," Griffin feels. "The emphasis is going back to the old standards—person-to-person evangelism. It's more than meeting, eating and greeting. It's more than building a building and

Associational work—it's a matter of coming together in fellowship and worship, then going out from the church.

HARRY GRIFFIN

saying "Y'all come." It's a matter of coming together in fellowship and worship and then going out from the church."

He expects the Scripture distribution to contribute to the spiritual growth of those involved, particularly the youth. Their work will be followed up by two weeks of "simultaneous revival."

If the revivals go as well as the association's monthly youth rallies, they'll be successful indeed. The area has a bowling alley, a skating rink, and schools to keep the kids busy six days a week, says Messenger, "so we have our youth rallies on Sunday afternoon."

A recent rally at Verden First Church packed into pews and folding chairs 200 youth and sponsors for a "talent show."

"I would have brought a popcorn machine, if I'd known they were going to have a crowd like this," said an usher. Nodded another man proudly: "Who said our young people are going to the dogs?"

Caddo Association pastors don't talk much about "generation gaps." They're too busy pointing to teenagers like Debbie Lawles, Oklahoma's "Peanut Princess," the third girl from the association to wear that title; and to Harry Griffin Jr., the long, lean president of the association's youth—and a four-sport letterman in high school.

Bob Smith, the BIA conservationist who directs associational youth activities, says the rallies and similar gatherings provide "inspiration" and develop leadership among the youth. "We had some talent here—but if they'd stayed in the local church, no one would have known it." Pastor of a 63-member congregation, Smith admits, "Our church is too small" to generate a varied youth program. "We've kind of leaned on the association. Each church is an individual group, but I think we can do a lot more, working together."

The rallies, lakeside picnics and camp gatherings create a sense of community among Christian teenagers. "When kids come shopping in Anadarko, they say, 'That's the kid from Carnegie church,'" observes Lind.

Smith believes the Baptist encampment at Falls Creek retains an influence on young lives long after memories of campfires and sunrises have faded. "I'll never forget one young man who came to me after a devotion," recalls Smith. "The boy said God had called him to preach. We sat there on the side of my bed, praying and praising God."

"You come through the country and you think, this is just a bunch of farms," Hinton pastor Griffin muses. "About half the men in one of my missionary classes came from a rural setting. . . . five missionaries came from the group I grew up with in Guthrie. Guthrie is not a big town."

From the Hinton church, several youngsters have grown to fill pulpits in other churches. "The

association is a mark of infinity," Griffin continues. "When the association meets the needs of the churches, when the local church does its job to reach members, the influence of each person continues to reach out and out."

"It's an unending line."

Unfortunately, the line is sometimes bent by the death of a church. Despite Messenger's best efforts, "we've lost one church since I've been here—two before I came. They shouldn't have died—another church may die this year. There are only two or three families left."

Messenger, a usually happy man, isn't smiling at the prospect.

But he isn't resting, either. Messenger constantly looks for opportunities for new churches, watching and waiting for the moment needs, site and people come together in a fertile mission situation.

Much associational work requires long-term planning, but beginning a mission is an especially sensitive, involved project.

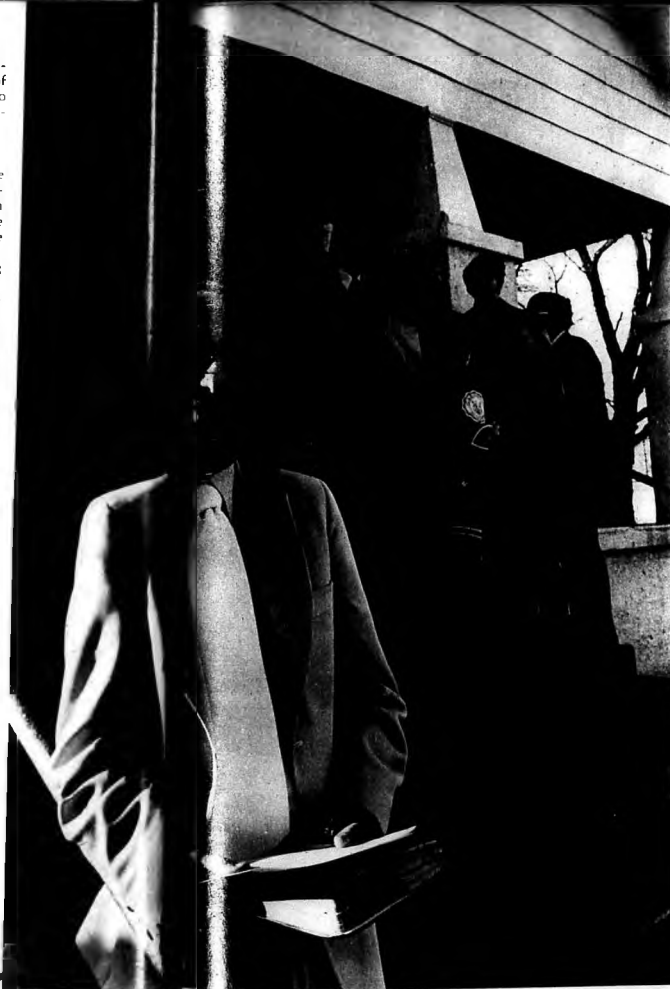
Anadarko First's pastor, Alton Webb, who leads the association's missions program, points to the site of a prospective mission. Messenger has been working toward for "four or five years"—near the Square Top addition between Anadarko and Fort Cobb, where some 100 homes have been built recently. Webb says efforts to purchase the land were halted when local churches established bus ministries to the community. But as the bus ministries dwindled, renewed work has begun to select and purchase a mission site.

After Messenger initiates the work, the association "gets a church to adopt this baby, and mother it," Messenger explains, "until it gets to be a full-time church, able to stand on its own two feet."

First Baptist Church of Anadarko "has started every church in the city," according to Messenger. "You wouldn't see grocery stores putting in four stores in competition, but essentially, this is what the Anadarko church has done."

While most Caddo pastors believe "it's a gracious thing to cut down your congregation and start a new church" (as one said), Webb confides establishing missions can also be a real strain on the mother congregation. He feels "other churches are more attractive. They are new. We can provide programming; we try to provide preaching; but we haven't provided the facility." After considerable deliberation, First Church recently has undergone a \$55,000 facelift, revamping the auditorium and building front. "It's a matter of priority. Strong missions emphasis is good—up to a point. The only thing wrong with it," Webb says, "is our church has done it to the neglect of its own needs."

Starting missions for Anglos is hard enough for



Caddo churches, but working with ethnic peoples is even more difficult.

Of three missions for Indians begun by the association, only one has become an independent church.

The others still require pastors' salary supplements, expenses for programs, and upkeep on facilities. Candidly admits the pastor of one sponsoring church, "We're paying 40 percent of their budget and it's becoming more and more a burden to us."

Webb names lack of leadership, inter-tribal squabbles, language differences, the migratory patterns of members, sporadic financial support and alcoholism as major problems of the missions becoming independent.

Messenger points to a need for absorbing the Indian segment of his association's population in established churches; he strongly wants "an open door policy toward all people" and he doesn't really favor special missions just for Indians.

"I believe the church is for everybody," he says, "not just for the Indians, not just for Negroes, not just white people. Basically, if the churches would win and baptize all the lost people, you'd have an integrated church. God said, 'Preach the gospel.'"

"I believe the church is for everybody."

Today Messenger's working to build that sort of an association—but it's not the sort of thing he'd planned. The first time he was asked to become a superintendent of missions, "I said I don't believe I would be interested," he recalls.

"But the Lord led me into this work, and now I have no desire to go back into the pastorate. And you know," he adds, "I can look at the young men as well as old who have gone out from our congregations to preach and reach others, and realize, in a sense, I am a millionaire."

Messenger is busy building up a film library "covering about everything under the sun" related to associational work. In the back of his mind he is forming plans for expansion of his office—and getting ready for a preachers' conference. "We ordained a man last Sunday. He's been a grocery man. He probably doesn't have any formal training."

Without the association, "The churches would probably go off in their own directions. They'd grow up like Topsy. Now Southern Baptist churches are pretty much going in the same direction," Messenger says, with his continually surfacing smile. "This provides power and strength. Suppose a city grew up without planning."

"What would you have?"

Loock is a reporter for the *Atlatlach Journal*, a Lubbock, Tex., newspaper.

I have to pick out what is most important to me and my church—then let the rest ride.

BOB SMITH

we're not afraid TO RISK to break rules

The central North Carolina landscape holds fertile farms and textile industries—and people often trying to escape both. It is a complex of towns caught in the thoroughfare between the Piedmont and the state capital at Raleigh, towns swept by a boom of building. One-time sleepy, rural mill-centered communities struggle to modernize, planting shopping centers in lieu of salvaging downtown areas.

And the more relaxed mind-set of the country is being driven away by the onrush of the city. In this setting work the 36 churches that form the fellowship of the Mount Zion Baptist Association, an alliance just over 100 years old. And for all its rural background, the association—under the gifted leadership of two farsighted superintendents of missions—has been sophisticated enough to acknowledge its urban ills and attempt to remedy some of them.

So far, the efforts have been successful. But many challenges remain.

As an association, says current Superintendent of Missions Charles McMillan Jr., "we don't really follow the set patterns. We're not afraid to risk, to break rules—and we're not afraid of failure."

To some extent, McMillan inherited his attitude from Frank Ingram, a layman who directed the association for seven years before moving, in 1972, to superintendence of the Broad River Association in South Carolina.

Ingram believes strongly that an effective associational ministry cannot be judged by figures "but by the changing attitudes and lives of its people."

"Our Christians recognize," he says, "that the multitude of unchurched people who need to know Christ as their savior is greater than the number within our churches. One of the greatest challenges facing Mount Zion disciples in the 1970s is to reach this populace for Christ."

McMillan, who credits much of the association's **Quality of outreach and concern gives vitality to an urban association**

By Virtie Stroup

Photography by Knolan Benfield

outlook to Ingram, agrees on the challenge. And is working on its answers.

With insistent persuasiveness, he has led churches to support new missions, even though they, too, were in major building programs; he's inspired individual congregations to lend key members to assist weaker, sister churches; and he has helped city and county leadership recognize the potential of joint efforts.

For McMillan, cooperation has been the key to successful associational programming.

"If unity is, as I suspect it to be, one of the prerequisites of God's empowering, then it behooves us to seek ways of working together to do his will," says McMillan. "We must try to do together what we cannot do apart."

That includes civic organizations, city agencies and county officials—as well as individual churches.

In a recent community survey, for example, "we became aware of special needs for youth," McMillan recalls. YMCA and city recreation programs weren't enough, he discovered, with troubled youth, one-to-one relationships were needed, "so we moved into a big brother business and called it youth and family service."

"Most of the youth we work with haven't done anything serious enough to be sent to training schools," says Travis Styles, part-time director of Mount Zion's youth and family service program.

"They just need to talk with someone who cares," he says.

Styles, who pastors Grove Park Baptist Church, Burlington, works closely with judges, law enforcement agencies and mental health clinics.

"Most of my work has turned into counseling with youth on drugs," Styles says, "which I didn't intend for it to do, but they found out I wouldn't tell their parents."

"The most frequent thing I hear these days, he adds, "is, 'I want off' or 'How do I get off?' And 'If I get off, who is going to help me with the medical part?' I'm learning to be a listener."

Styles believes high school drug problems are slowing down, but he also sees them gearing up at



CHARLES McMILLAN

lower grade levels. And he's concerned about the amount of alcohol youths are consuming. "This is a growing thing," he says.

Styles sees another reason the "big brother" emphasis is needed: "Youths are beginning to clam up. They tell me, 'I wanted to talk with someone, but no one wanted to listen. So why bother?' We need to let them know someone still cares."

"The thing that disturbs me the most," he admits, "is that we need a fulltime worker, but we cannot afford one."

McMillan also learned from the community survey of the need for a facility to handle youths, such as runaways. "13-year-olds have been held overnight in the county jail," McMillan says, "because there was no other place to put them."

"When the community decided to go toward an emergency care center and a long-term community-based group home," McMillan explains, "the association decided to start a short-term shelter care facility, which is a step beyond foster home care."

Working cooperatively with Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, Mount Zion will provide emergency care for youngsters 7-17 years old who are pre-delinquent and/or dependent, neglected and abused. First of its kind in the state, the facility—a renovated two-story brick home in the heart of downtown Burlington—opens this spring.

Paul Craig, Mount Zion's moderator and a former mayor of Burlington, says creating the shelter care facility was "just a matter of getting interested parties together. McMillan was the instrument that pulled the association and the Children's Home together to begin work."

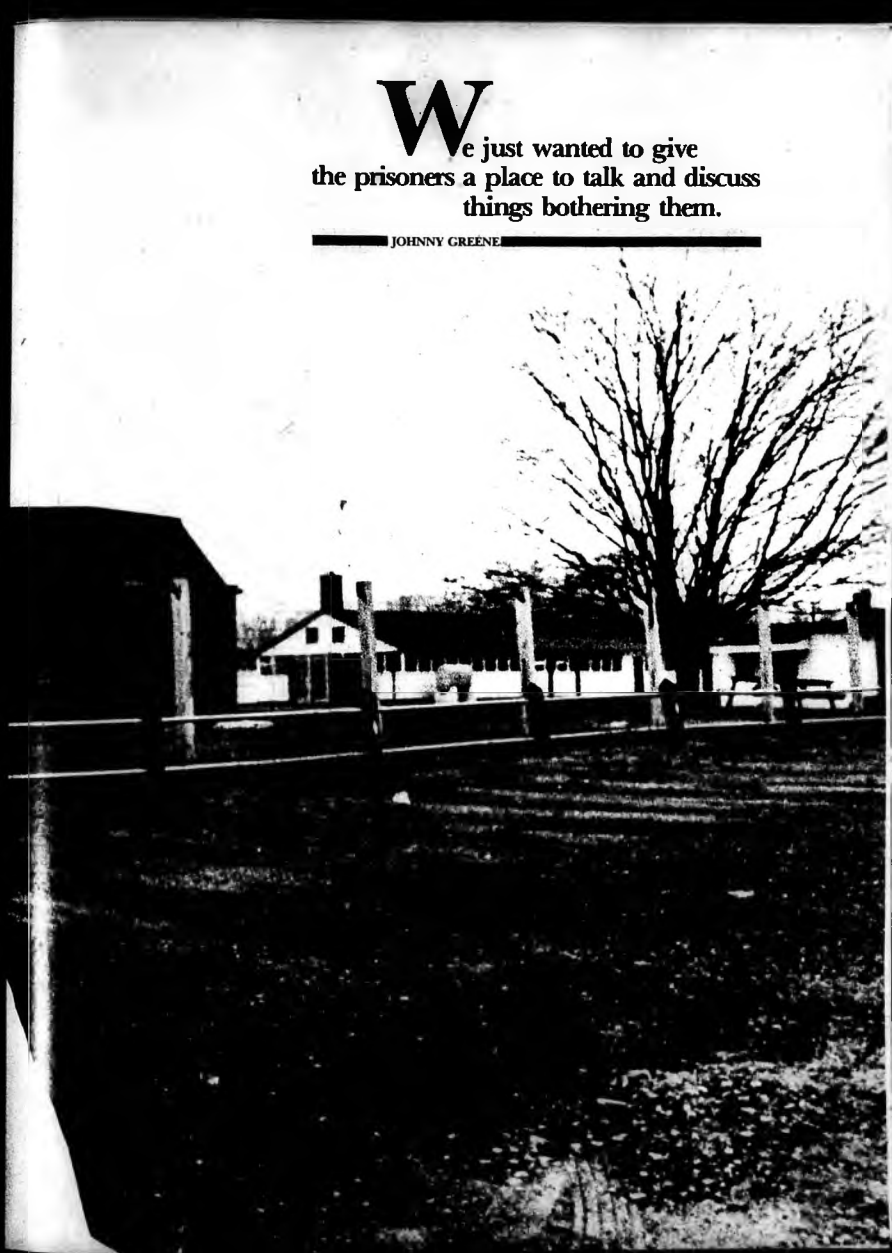
"Last year," Craig explains, "we had some 400 cases where a child was either put out of his home or had to leave because of some intolerable social situation."

"If some kind officer didn't take the child home he had to stay in jail overnight—and we just don't think that's right in an association as big-hearted as ours."



We just wanted to give
the prisoners a place to talk and discuss
things bothering them.

JOHNNY GREENE



While this project has captured the interest of the community, another Baptist-sponsored project is ensnared in the politics of the state prisons system. Several years ago, the association began a prison fellowship.

"We just wanted to give the prisoners a place to talk and discuss things bothering them," says layman Johnny Greene of Burlington, a former associational moderator.

"We talked to the N. C. Department of Corrections for a year, but they just wouldn't consider the project."

Finally Greene and other laymen received permission to meet with men at the Alamance County Prison Unit, a minimum care facility. The enterprise grew until recently, when a changeover in state prison leadership caused it to be suspended—at least Greene hopes it's only suspended. Meanwhile, he's using the time to train other laymen in the work. His biggest need is for black volunteers, because over half the inmates at the local unit are black.

"One of the things I found out working with these men—black and white," Greene says, "is that it didn't bother them if a person was prejudiced as long as he was honest about his prejudice."

"We found these men could release their feelings against us and they knew we would take it. We would bat things back and forth. In the beginning we made an ironclad agreement that we would not carry back any of their comments to the prison officials. So far as I know this agreement has never been violated," smiles Greene, an easy-going man from the North Carolina mountains who admits to being "called everything from a conservative to a modernist."

In the two years the program was active, 13 volunteers worked with about 60 men. "It gave us insight into the feelings of people in that situation," Greene says, "and it taught me empathy rather than sympathy."

But McMillan's work as superintendent of missions involves more than awareness of community needs. He must foresee needs of all churches and steer them toward cooperative ventures whenever possible and appropriate.

Working with the association's mother church—First Baptist of Burlington—McMillan and Ingram have saved one church and started another.

The church saved was Fellowship, which was dying because of its location at the end of an airport runway.

"We were at a low point," recalls charter member Bill Donaldson, "and we knew we had to do something—move or shut down. A census of the community convinced us we needed to relocate."

First Baptist—a strong mission-minded congregation—was convinced by Ingram and McMillan to give the land to Fellowship; another church—Kinnett Memorial—donated \$20,000, "even though Kinnett was in a building program itself," Donaldson remembers.

"This is God working within us," Donaldson adds. "When Christians work together, we can almost accomplish the impossible."

The relationship with Mount Zion Association has been influential in other ways, too. With other churches, Fellowship—still struggling itself—recently gave money to a sister church in financial trouble. "If it hadn't been for our past experience in the association," says Donaldson, "we'd never have done that."

"One of the most outstanding facets of our work," echoes H.D. Booth, who just stepped down after six years as chairman of the missions committee, "is the cooperation of our churches in everything we do, especially the organization of the Holly Hill mission."

The same community survey which told of needs also forecast that the Holly Hill Mall section of Burlington would be the fastest growing, most affluent in the county.

"One of the problems in starting new missions," McMillan says, "is getting the money for land and a building. So we got seven churches to help establish the Holly Hill work."

Its first two years were under the leadership of Thomas Bland, a professor at nearby Southeastern Theological Seminary. Eight months ago the first pastor, James Wayne, was called.

Organized with 21 members, it now has 150 members, a church site has been bought, a \$185,000 educational unit has been started and the congregation, now a church, hopes to be out of its interim home, a schoolhouse, by fall.

"The cooperation on the Holly Hills mission came about," Brooks explains, "because we had come to know each other better. The laymen were involved and the preachers weren't afraid to take their hands off the leadership."

"Our laymen have arrived," he continues. "They have vision. Their sights have been lifted. They seem to have their eyes open to every opportunity."

One of these every-opportunity-laymen is Elmer C. Lewis of Burlington's First, a deacon for 35 years and a retired insurance man. He has been a "loaner"—a person who leaves his home church to help establish a mission—ever since he went to help his church's first mission endeavor.

First Baptist started many missions in the pre-World War II days, but soon new work became too expensive and difficult for one church. So First joined other association churches for a stronger cooperative outreach. When it couldn't give land,

continued



One outstanding facet of our work is the cooperation of our churches in everything we do.

H.D. BOOTH



Keeping kids in jail isn't right in an association as big-hearted as ours.

PAUL CRAIG

Fellowship church was at a low point... we knew we had to do something—shut down or move.

—BILL DONALDSON



DONALDSON



THOMAS HILL

Because of their love and sacrifice, we at Holly Hill can only try to give back what they've done.

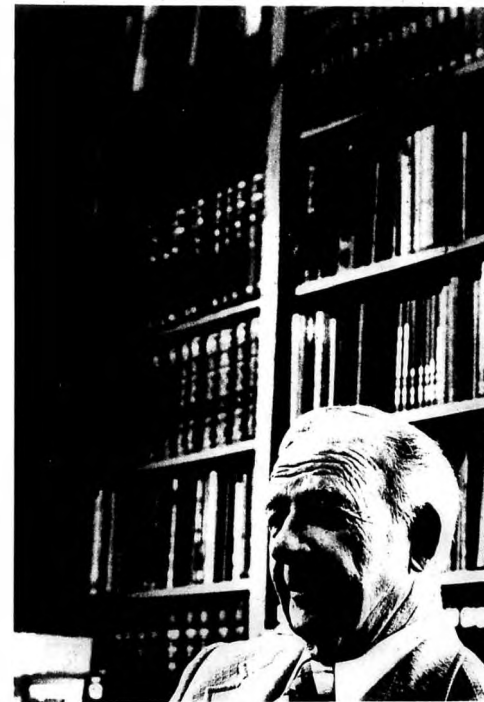
ptist gave money and loaned laymen. "It concerns the smallest church," Lewis would concern us all and it is our duty to...
...er active layman, Thomas E. Hill of Burlington, was a member of Northside Baptist Church when McMillan asked him to help start the Holly Hill Mission four years ago.
...his association," Hill says, "the interest we have has to cooperate with each other is fan-... people and churches have been willing to... themselves unselfishly—when some... actually weren't in the position to help... of their sacrifice and love, we can only... give back, in time, what they have done."
...Hill tells.
...Ada McMillan: "I'm convinced that Baptist cooperative work is a modern miracle."

The strength of any association, McMillan believes in its program of missions. Unless it is strong, the other programs will be weak. An association hinges on four metaphors, he says:
"An association has to be an observation tower, giving the vision of laymen and ministers from the local church to see the bigger things that need to be done, such as the shelter care home.
"The association is a laboratory," McMillan continues. "The Sunday School Board can't tell us a program will work. We have got to find the right program, such as our ministries to mobile home parks, in apartment complexes and during the summer Bible schools.
"The association has got to be a bridge of fellowship. In the loneliness of society, we have got to find means of touching lonely and isolated people and it is here that churches work well together."
And the association, McMillan concludes, "can be likened to a cable. One strand cannot lift a weight, but many combined strands can lift an inestimable weight."
To propose a program of activity and see it enlarged, improved and implemented as others get involved, McMillan says, "has to be one of life's most satisfying experiences."
For McMillan—a minister who never thought about going out of the pastorate—the experience will continue as long as Mount Zion remains totally unafraid to reassess. We have got to find those things which are valuable to us. This is fascinating work, and maybe there isn't any one place where everything went like we would have had it to, or as we had envisioned it would, but we have had successes.
"When you demonstrate your genuine desire to serve people," McMillan says, "people aren't going to question your theology." •

Strom, religion reporter for the Winston-Salem, N.C., Journal

We need to let our young people know someone still cares... I'm learning to listen.

—TRAVIS STYLES



STYLES

in this area, we MAJOR on missions

A few years ago, a Southern Baptist church withdrew from Capital City Baptist Association, a fellowship of churches in the Columbus, Ohio, metropolitan area.

After about 10 months the church, whose pastor had resigned, invited Capital City Association's superintendent of missions, Charles Magruder, to talk on the association.

"The church members were trying to decide whether to come back into the fellowship," remembers Magruder, a tall, young-looking man with longish hair and wire-rimmed glasses.

"I gave them all the reasons I knew why Baptist churches should belong to an association."

"I told them that the association was for churches what churches were for the people, an organization helping bring persons into a relationship with God and then putting them in an environment where they can grow into Christ likeness and work toward his kingdom."

"I said the association was for fellowship; love binds us together. Fellowship is the association; it's one local church electing to have communion with the other churches, and other churches voting to accept them."

"The individual church is the basis of Baptist life," I said, "but the association is perhaps just as basic. My church and your church and all churches working together to reach a given area."

"Missions is a valid objective of the association," Magruder continues, "and I told them that every church was created to recreate; when it doesn't do that it's dead or in stages of dying. But because of costs and other factors, it sometimes takes several churches to begin missions. That's where the association becomes important, for its work is more than just helping churches—it's the actual launching of work designed to become self-sustaining. That includes social ministries, too."

Finally, Magruder told his audience, "the association is for service; it's helping churches become more effective."

Everyone seemed impressed, Magruder recalls, "so when I got through, they voted on the motion to

**A metropolitan association
works toward keeping
up with population growth**
By Everett Hullum
Photography by Don Rutledge



CHARLES MAGRUDER

rejoin the association." A sly grin sneaks into the corners of his mouth. "And they voted not to."

After an appropriate pause, Magruder footnotes the story by admitting that at a second meeting, two months later, the church reversed its vote and reaffiliated with the association.

The incident is typical. Easy going, low-key but persistent, Magruder directs the association with a soft-sell approach that doesn't strike fire but slowly, consistently builds a fellowship in an area plagued by struggling churches and pastor turnover—26 pastorates of the 51 churches have changed in the past two years.

Says one pastor, "Chuck's made me realize the importance of the association, especially in pioneer areas like this. He gives us a sense of comradeship, an awareness we're all in this together."

Unfortunately, not everyone agrees. Magruder tells of overhearing the remark of one new pastor after his first—and last—weekly pastors' fellowship.

"The guy turned to a friend and said, 'What a waste of time,'" Magruder remembers.

Another pastor, who doesn't agree that the meetings are "a waste," says he hasn't been active because he's "too busy."

But Charles Stephens, Sunday School director, feels associational activities don't take that much time. "Course," he adds, "I pastor a small church; if I had a bigger one and was really pressed, it might be different."

Magruder recognizes the logistical problem of getting every pastor to every meeting; he's considered changing meeting times, but feels that would only create new conflicts.

Ken Allaby, a former Canadian who's been active in Capital City life for eight years, says his involvement is "a worthwhile contribution."

"We believe strongly in the association," says Allaby, who pastors Reynoldsburg church. "In it we've found openness. Some pastors have grouped together for special prayer. Quite a few have shared personal burdens. We have a close fellowship."

One reason Seaborn Daniel of North Lindon Bap-

tist Church never comes, he admits, is "because when I first came to the area, no one contacted me to welcome me or offer me help. I'd been involved in several associations before, and this reception was disappointing."

"If my case is typical, this means the pastor himself has to go looking for things; I don't think this is good."

Neither does Magruder. One of his projects is to begin a welcome program for new pastors. "We're visiting newcomers as soon as possible, to provide them with maps and associational annuals."

Because much turnover is part-time pastors with little training, Magruder hopes to increase tenure by encouraging them to take church extension courses, attend retreats that offer educational opportunities, and by providing support in emergencies.

But others in the association argue the high turnover rate will not be cured until salaries increase.

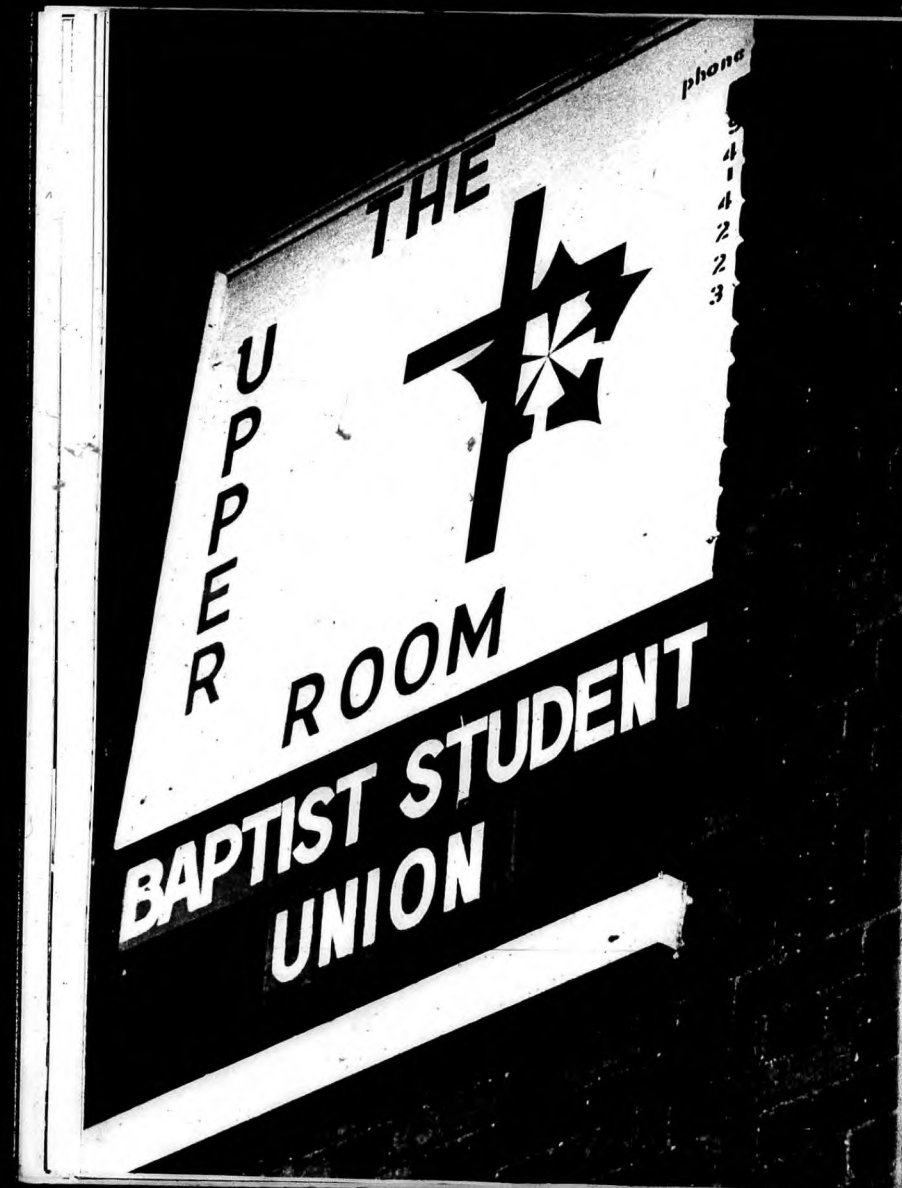
In a recent survey by Harold Brantley, the association's finance chairman and pastor of Briggs Road Church, more than half the pastors admitted "struggling most of the time to make ends meet." Sixteen of the 32 polled said their wives worked to make extra income; Brantley found the average salary for central Ohio Baptist pastors was \$6,000—below the area's poverty level for a family of four.

"I know what it's like to be in debt because of poor salary," Brantley says, "to have to work in a secular job because you can't live off what the church pays you."

"The first responsibility of the church is to keep the pastor paid adequately and on the field full-time. If a church can keep its pastor, the rest will come. We've seen it happen."

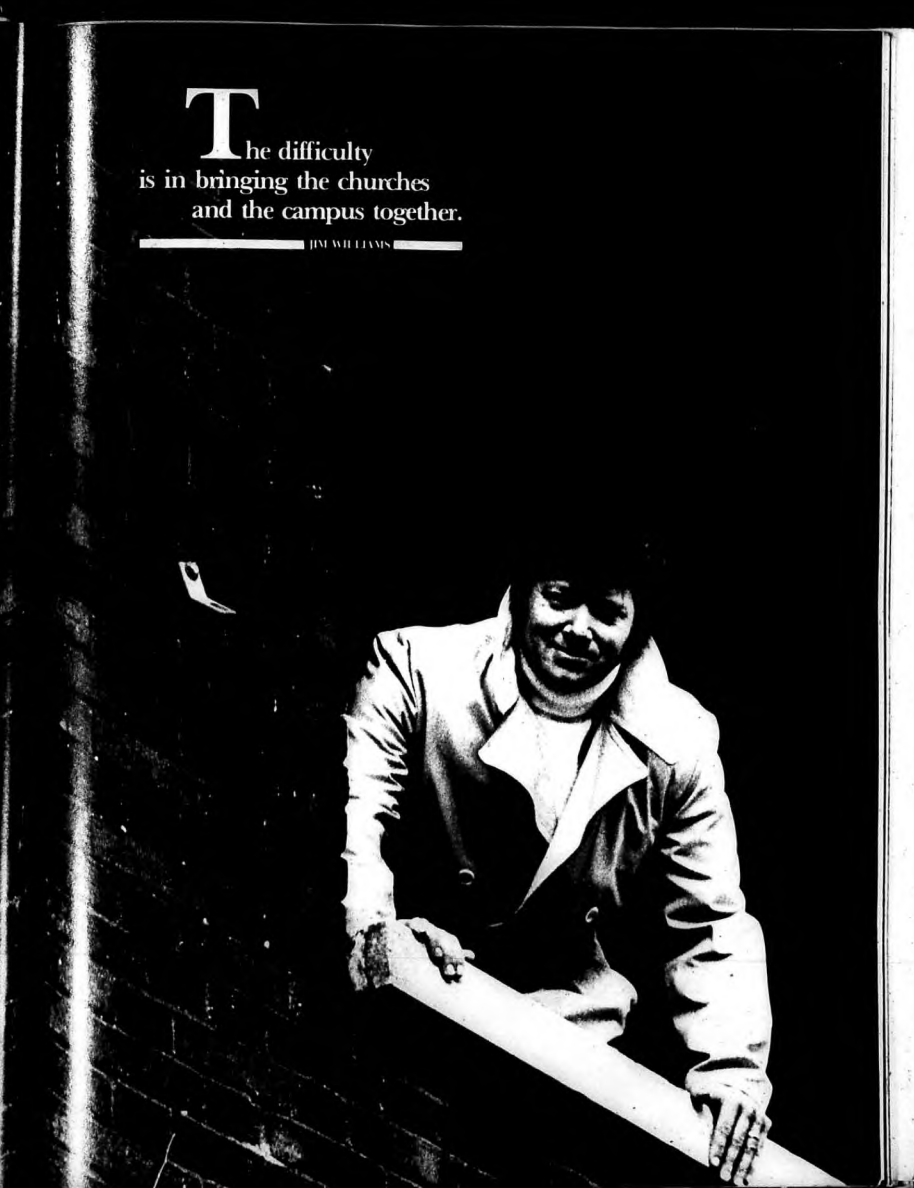
Brantley released his findings at the annual stewardship dinner—one of the association's best attended events—and found pastors and laymen nodding sympathetically.

"I've seen 'em come and I've seen 'em go," Brantley adds, pounding his words in. "I've yet to see a church grow without a pastor—especially a young church."



The difficulty
is in bringing the churches
and the campus together.

JIM WILLIAMS



The children are hungry for affection; they come up and just lean against you.

HAROLD SMITH



GOFORTH

"Doctors deal with physical things, and nobody gripes about them making \$2,000 a month. Yet some people think pastors are only out for money if they want \$600 a month—and they're dealing with spiritual things."

"People have their priorities in the wrong place."

Magruder is not one of those; he advocates a crisis fund to supplement salaries of pastors moving to the field, or who have other financial problems.

But on an annual associational budget of only \$40,000—his own salary is partly paid by the Home Mission Board—Magruder feels limited.

Meantime, he wants to create "a closer, warmer fellowship among the association's member churches."

For most, he seems to be succeeding. "I feel a real spirit of unity," says Liebert Armour, youthful pastor of one of Capital City's newest churches, Northeast Baptist Chapel.

"It's good to share in others' moments of joy," Armour continues, "because we've all been together when everyone's low. To share their excitement when they have a tremendous revival or service—it's almost like it was my work succeeding, too."

"I enjoy the work of the association," says Charles Stephens. "Whether it comes real flashy or real slow, it's rewarding."

Stephens, who's pastored Southeast Baptist for the past eight years, feels the association is the local church's link with the entire SBC network of churches.

"Our people are not really turned on by being part of this great old big Southern Baptist Convention—they say, 'Here I live and this is where I need to concentrate.'"

"When they see a church like us 20 miles away, they can understand it; they can empathize with it. They're more willing to say they're part of the SBC if they can see themselves as part of the local association."

Building that "team spirit" is another of Magruder's tasks. And one area in which he's emphasizing it is campus ministries.

"Local churches do want to become involved," he feels, "but it's been a one-way street so far. Part of the problem is a lot of the churches aren't strong, and they can't afford good youth programs."

"They seem receptive, but it'll take time to get them involved."

"The most difficult part of my task," says Jim Williams, who directs BSU work on 34 central Ohio campuses—including those in Capital City Association—"is bringing the church and campus together."

So far, the association has helped provide funds for two part-time workers, and some church members have volunteered for programs with international students, Bible fellowships and retreats.

But Williams feels the "coin will turn." Meanwhile, he practices "one-to-one, very personal approaches."

"We get away from numbers and think of people," he's found in his first six months on the job. "Campus blitzes really turn off students. We try to say, 'We're not interested in you just for the moment; we're going to love you even if you don't accept Christ.'"

Getting area churches to commit themselves to a more complete campus ministry, amid dozens of other projects and programs, will tax Williams' and Magruder's ingenuity. But another pastor feels they can do it.

"An area missionary can surely guide his association," the pastor says, "and Chuck's doing that."

Adds Liebert Armour, a former summer missionary who directs the association's training for Vacation Bible School workers, "Whatever's happening, VBS or youth rallies, you couldn't do this on your own. There's strength in numbers. Chuck's done a lot to bring us together to make us realize this."

A native Ohioan, Magruder grew up in nearby Zanesville, married while a student at Capital University in Columbus, graduated from New Orleans Theological Seminary and pastored several churches before accepting a position as superintendent of missions for Western New York State.

"I didn't want to give up my pastorate," he remembers, "but the vastness of the area challenged me; it was awesome to see all that territory with so little Southern Baptist witness."

Magruder found his years in the pastorate good training for the superintendent's job. "The purposes are the same, it only varies in degree. My roles are coordinator, inspirer, initiator."

He still misses "the closeness a pastor feels with his own people," he admits, "but there are compensations in seeing new work."

In 1970 Magruder became superintendent for Capital City Association, returning "home" after almost 20 years.

The changes he faced presented almost overwhelming challenges. Columbus metropolitan area had mushroomed to more than a million people—including almost 80,000 students, two-thirds of them on the giant campus of Ohio State University.

Areas that had been white middle and upper class 10 years ago had metamorphosed into all black—Magruder can point to several neighborhoods within a mile of his office. And older, established ethnic sections—like German Village—had been swallowed in an inner-city maw, with a corresponding slide in property values and living conditions.

Southern Baptist penetration had changed, too; the lone, struggling congregations of the early 1950s had regenerated again and again, and Columbus had more than 50 SBC churches with 10,000 resident members.

But most of the churches remained small burbs of transplanted Southerners. The largest ones in the association—First Baptist, Heath (a suburb) and Par-

We're convinced we have no right to determine who's going to hear the gospel.

JAMES GOFORTH

sons, for example—attract 400 or so each Sunday. And the smallest have 30-40 members. Average number of church members is less than 200. 56 percent of all associational churches have less than 100 in Sunday School; one-fourth have less than 50.

This is a pioneer area and the churches would likely be smaller, due to the age of the work and community acceptance factors," says a Home Mission Board statistician who's surveyed the association. His findings indicate the "churches are dispersed over the area... and most units are doing more than 'the average' in supporting the work of the association and state convention. Both of these factors suggest that small churches are a source of strength."

Others, who've watched the rapid growth—18 new churches between 1960-1971, for instance—feel the association has growing pains.

"We have a lot of weak churches," says James Efrid, chairman of Capital City's missions committee, "churches that have been here a long time and are still unable to support a pastor."

The association has a program, administered by the missions committee, that offers a struggling church monetary support for up to six months. But financial aid isn't the answer, Efrid says. "Leadership's as much of a problem. We need some means for giving better assistance to weak churches, some way of helping them find a formula for successful ministry."

Some churches are hurt, Efrid believes, by poor locations. His own church, Whitehall First Baptist—the oldest church in the association and "mother or grandmother" of two-thirds of the association's churches—has "lost Southern Baptists new to the area to the American Baptist church because it's on the main drag and easy to find, and we're south of it by three blocks."

Sharon Woods, another area SBC church, "had foresight," Efrid says. It started as a mission eight years ago, and when it was ready to build, paid \$55,000 just for property. But it's well located and it's really going strong; it'll be one of the outstanding churches in the association.

Another factor may be that the churches constituted too quickly, Efrid asserts. "The association encourages them not to," he says, "but if one does anyway, there's nothing you can do."

One church, meeting in a school—a common practice in Ohio where Sunday rental is only about \$30—constituted before it could find a site to build.

When it did move into an older building, its location and that of three other Southern Baptist churches so conflicted that associational leaders helped merge two of them.

But mergers aren't an answer to the association's ailing churches, Efrid says. "Must are spread out in areas that need churches."

In fact, he points out that the missions committee



has just purchased a \$70,000 tract of land within two miles of Whitehall.

"It's a high density residential area," he says, "where there are 40,000 people and 25,000 of them go to no church at all. Putting in a new church isn't a matter of distance; it's a matter of workers and time to get to those people. It takes person-to-person contact to win people, and there are so many, our church members can't get to them all."

Getting to them all has become the main thrust of Magruder's work. The Columbus metropolitan area has one Southern Baptist church per 24,000 people—odds Magruder and others don't like.

Counting all shades of faith under the yellow pages listing, "Churches," Columbus has more than 800 churches, or approximately one for every 2,000 Columbusites. United Methodists dominate, with almost 100 churches; Catholics have 58.

Baptists—Southern, American, Independent and National—total almost 200, partly propelled by the upsurge in black population.

But Magruder says his surveys reveal that 10 percent of the city's people have no church affiliation. "That means my main work is with the missions committee; I'm responsible for initiating most of our outreach endeavors."

"The people who head the different organizations—Sunday School, Church Training, WMU, Brotherhood—they're responsible for their own programs."

"I prod and I lend aid wherever I can, but I major on missions."

That's the way associational members want it, too.

"Is there any other way than through a missions program of the association," asks a person active in the association.

Efrid, chairman of the missions committee, believes "the ideal would be for the committee to lead in starting missions," but it's not practical because committee members are busy with their own church work.

"The superintendent usually takes this job," Efrid says, "and we work with him."

Comments Allaby of Reynoldsburg. "Busy pastors depend on the superintendent of missions to try creative things. Pastors will follow a superintendent who shows them the way to go."

Magruder's programs are well laid out, association-wide music festivals; organization clinics and training workshops; fellowships and dinners for pastors and for pastors and wives, and for black Baptist-SBC pastors; simultaneous revivals; youth rallies, skating parties and sports leagues; and—in 1974—a special push for Sunday School enrolment and growth.

All have been approved by the association council and appropriate committees.

But the direction Magruder is taking the associa-

tion is toward an increased commitment to missions. His approach is three-pronged:

- home Bible study fellowships, which are especially effective in suburban communities—where most Capital City Association churches are located;
- bus evangelism, which can dip into unchurched areas; and

- inner-city work, which entails suburban churches supporting two downtown churches' efforts to maintain a witness in dying or transitional communities.

In Bible fellowships, Magruder turns to the example of Louis McNabb, an energetic, soft-spoken Ohio State graduate student who's started six fellowships since coming to Columbus two years ago.

McNabb's fellowships run a gamut: one's at Ohio State, another in a Chevrolet dealership (meeting at 7 a.m.), another in the \$80,000 home of a Methodist woman.

"I wanted to go where the people are and share Christ with them," says McNabb. "We'd like them in our church, but that's not the important thing."

"We're getting to people no one else has ever gotten."

McNabb pastors Worthington Baptist, which grew out of Magruder's dynamic summer missions program involving area youth in Vacation Bible School activities in dozens of sites around the city. Worthington, panted for the exclusive residential area in which it meets, rents a school for Sunday services.

No pressure is put on anyone to come to our church," says McNabb. "We haven't started the Bible fellowships to get people into our church, though some do come."

Yet he worries that "they think the Bible study will take care of their church needs. They say, 'This is my dose of religion.' I don't think that's enough."

Nevertheless, his first home fellowship is now almost two years old, and as vibrant as when it began. And he could begin others, he says, if he could find time.

Another pastor setting an example for the association is James Goforth, whose Salem Road is the fastest growing among Capital City's churches—a factor he credits to large-scale bus evangelism.

"We've tripled in size since beginning our bus routes," says Goforth, who, as evangelism director, must be the best named associational worker in Southern Baptist life.

"In January of 1972, we had 101 in Sunday School; for the past 13 weeks, we've averaged 291. At least 75-80 percent of our growth is a result of bus ministry."

The buses also forced Goforth to examine his church's outlook. "We didn't say we were going to integrate," says Goforth, "but we were convinced we had no right to determine who was going to hear the gospel."

One bus captain became concerned about kids in a black section several miles from the church; she be-

Our people aren't turned on by being part of the big ol' SBC—here is where they live.

CHARLES STEPHENS



I want to go
where people are and share
Christ with them there.

LOUIS McNABB

gan bringing in dozens of them—several times, more than 100 black kids flooded the Salem Road church. Problems arose, and Goforth "didn't know what to do. The bus captain said she'd stop picking up the kids, but we said, 'No, God will never honor him.' I was prejudiced," he admits, "but it left me with a baptism service. I was going to baptize one of the black children we'd won in the bus ministry. The Lord said, 'Are you going to baptize feeling like you do?' My prejudice left me."

Tears well up in Goforth's eyes as he remembers praying for a black couple—"someone our people would accept right away"—to help "bridge the gap" to these children.

He found the people in the Ron Bells' "baptism" that big black man was one of the most moving experiences of my ministry," Goforth says.

"If you get involved, you can hardly help but have blacks coming," Goforth concludes.

That might present problems for some Capital City congregations. Only a half dozen are integrated, and a few have suffered racial tensions.

"Suburban church people need a chance to participate in the inner-city," says Magruder, "to give something to others, but also for the contact."

And, he adds, "inner-city people need the physical association with people in the suburbs."

He has tried to get associational churches involved, but response has been minimal. Magruder's wife, Eva, who trains literacy workers, points out that members of United Church Women, a Protestant organization, have been more interested in literacy programs than Baptists have.

"We get some help and a few volunteers from other churches," says Harold Smith, pastor of Westside, one of two inner-city churches given priority support by the association. "But we could use much more help. And they're not the only churches in that situation."

The children are hungry for attention," Smith continues. "They just come up and lean on you. They want you to bend down so they can whisper in your ear and they kiss you."

Among the ministries sponsored by Westside and German Village, its sister inner-city church, are clothing centers, women's fellowships, activities for children (a summer "Kool-aid house" attracts many special holiday emphases).

German Village has a growing program for mentally retarded people, many of whom have been placed in local homes after being rejected by their families.

Mike Rector, HMB missionary who pastored German Village, remembers one woman going to sleep during a sermon and falling to the floor; an older woman left water running upstairs and almost started a Sunday service.

"One church in the area requested these women don't come back," says Rector, "but we weaned them. And three have made professions of faith."

Westside and German Village, with strong support from the association, have been growing. Westside's up from 27 when Smith arrived nine years ago, to 170 today, although the transient nature of membership keeps its attendance below 70.

"We're still struggling," says Westside's Smith, who chairs the association's inner-city committee. "It's hard to get finances and leaders to keep our churches up. People won't come just because you hang a sign."

Ad Rector, "We had 287 families come through our center last year, and more than 50 percent of them had no church preference. That's 287 more than we'd have met without our free family distribution."

"The association is coming to realize," says Smith, "that inner-city work is a means whereby people who won't go to church are won to the Lord and united with a church."

It's almost a feeder station, because they soon move out and attend churches in other neighborhoods.

Smith adjusts his fur cap against the winter cold of the German Village street. An influx of new urbanites have been refurbishing some of the old, stately two-story brick homes along German Village's major arteries. But so far, the project has been mostly veneer, with the shabby cavities of human decay hidden on back streets.

And yet," Smith adds, "many people still are hurting right here, people who need our help."

Magruder agrees. And he's frustrated that the association can afford only to offer continuing financial support to two churches.

"What we do for Westside and German Village is really inadequate," he admits. "They could use much more help. And they're not the only churches in that situation."

Magruder has twice visited one SBC church groping for direction in a transitional neighborhood. The debate to stay and minister or move to the suburbs has been racking.

Magruder shakes his head. "It's a tossup if it will move," he concedes. "The pastor wants to stay if he can lead the church to minister and to accept blacks—they've already had a few in Sunday School."

"I've encouraged him that the church ought to remain in its community."

Magruder points to a spot on a giant map of Columbus that hangs outside his office.

"If they do relocate, I'd like to see them keep the present site as a mission," he taps the map. "Financially hinder this. Yet the needs still exist in that community, and a church should be there."

After all, keeping churches in all the "theres" of the city is what Chuck Magruder's job is about. •

We need some
way of helping weak churches find
a formula for success.

JAMES EFRID





our concern is CHURCHES and people

The houses stood dark and gloomy against the gray, rainfilled sky as the little yellow Pinto bumped its way down the empty street.

Stopping the car, John Fox gave two final, magical honks on the horn, and suddenly, all along the street, children appeared on front porches.

As Fox slipped from the car, engulfed by the warm smell of fresh hamburgers in the sack he carried, the children stampeded toward him, screen doors slamming behind them.

Talking, giggling and—at least, in the case of one six-year-old who'd forgotten to pull shoes over his ragged socks—hopping from foot to foot, they crowded Fox.

But when he told them to get in line for their hamburgers and vitamins, they listened. And obeyed.

To each he gave a hamburger and a packet of seven vitamins. "Now you don't forget to take these vitamins every day." As soon as they had their hamburger and vitamins, they headed back to their houses. "Take care and I'll see you next week."

Almost as quickly as he'd been surrounded, Fox was alone. Smiling, he wadded the empty bag, tossed it in the backseat, and started the little Pinto—heading toward his next neighborhood.

Fox, a Home Mission Board US-2er, was running his weekly "Mobile Mission" route, one of the projects conducted by three inner-city churches in Birmingham as part of an HMB sponsored "Community in Crisis" project.

"Community in Crisis," was created by the HMB's program of associational administration service to help churches survive in transitional areas, such as inner-city neighborhoods or rural sections on an urban fringe.

Of the six HMB-financed and sponsored Community in Crisis projects underway in the U.S., Birmingham was among the first to begin—though its efforts are only a year old, reports Bob Thompson, Birmingham Association's director of special mission ministries.

"Our association became involved because it had a concern," says Thompson, who's responsible for bringing Community in Crisis to Birmingham.

"We felt we should care about these churches we had in inner-city areas, because if a church dies, it leaves an area of the city without a Southern Baptist witness, which I frankly think is very important."

"Our concern is for those churches, the people in the area and their needs," Thompson continues. "If a church goes under, it will leave people in that area without a church home."

Birmingham's involvement began when several inner-city church pastors, aware of the death of other churches that faced declining membership and attendance with increasing needs for financial support, formed an ad hoc Inner-City Survey Committee.

With the help of Don Mabry, of the HMB's Department of Survey and Special Studies, the committee studied their neighborhoods.

Their conclusion was that without outside help, survival would be unlikely—perhaps impossible.

(The study also revealed that a surprising number of whites still live in these areas—a significant fact, Thompson says, because Southern Baptist churches couldn't remain without a nucleus of white members. "We have no wish to compete with the black churches in our neighborhoods for members," Thompson

**Working together,
associational churches can
conquer communities in crisis**
By Kim Watson

son adds. Nevertheless blacks are active in several Community in Crisis projects.) Thompson, a member of the committee, then turned to the HMB for a grant under the Community in Crisis project. It was awarded early in 1973.

"We were allocated \$7,000 initially," Thompson says, "and most of that has been used."

Now the inner-city committee that handles the project is going to have to look elsewhere for funds. Thompson believes money—and needed volunteer workers—may come from suburban churches such as Mountain Brook Baptist Church where pastor Datsun M. Nelson recognizes what a suburban church can do to help inner-city churches.

"We feel an obligation to all people—not just in our area; we're trying to be bifocal about it. Inner-city churches are our brethren and they have something we need in their input and we have something they need in personnel and finances. And as Christians, we need to share—it is part of our commission."

"One of the jobs of our committee," says Thompson, "is to sensitize suburban and fringe churches to the fact that there is a problem—that inner-city churches will die without their help."

Several suburban churches—like

Mountain Brook—already understand this. They've lent aid to inner-city churches willing to accept it," says Thompson. "But we've faced two problems in the project: finding a suburban church willing to help an inner-city church, and finding an inner-city church willing to accept that help."

Three who have accepted help are Arlington Baptist, an integrated storefront church South Park, in an old neighborhood rapidly turning black, and Parkview, another transitional area church.

The three churches, located in adjoining neighborhoods, share ideas, programs and resources. Through their involvement in the association, they cooperate in beginning and conducting ministries. For example, Fox, who's assigned to Arlington, works with a program at Parkview. And South Park has been slow to begin a youth program for neighborhood children, because Arlington has been so successful.

Arlington, which sponsors the Mobile Mission Project that provides 200 hamburgers and vitamin packets to neighborhood children suffering from malnutrition, ministers to its neighbors—black and white—in many ways.

"We have a food and clothing closet, a tutoring project and a wild Wednesday

night activity program for the same. We give vitamins to," says bearded Lou Wilhite, pastor of Arlington.

Wilhite, who chairs the association's inner-city committee, believes for inner-city to survive, sharing relationships must exist between inner-city churches and suburban churches.

"Most suburban churches don't know where we live," Wilhite says. "We must get over to these folks in suburb and they must come in and help us—very minimally."

"We inner-city churches are never going to be self-supporting; we'll always need assistance and encouragement. We are now at a point," Wilhite continues, "where we must believe missions is always in a foreign land—but in the inner-city, too."

"It will take rethinking on the part of our leadership to direct funds into the inner-city so that missions is not a one-way street, so that ministry and a witness will be there for years to come."

At Parkview Baptist Church, a large aging collection of red-brick buildings, the Community in Crisis project enables Leslie Palmer, director of special ministries, to be hired.

Parkview's membership is largely made of elderly and young with a sprin-

g young marrieds, divorcees and widows. The church's young pastor, Gary Carver, is one year out of seminary, yet he has to come to this church in a

hood very much like the one long Parkview; it was a neighborhood where 90 percent of the youth live in broken homes, where their parents rule its streets and its inhabitants.

Palmer arrived a program for the called the Good-For-Something

Club, was begun. In this program the church teaches crafts such as decoupage, takes them on shopping and field trips. Palmer also coordinates the church's large number of youth activities.

"We're trying to do pioneer work here," Carver said. "And we're trying to connect inner-city churches with suburban churches. They have the money and we have the needs."

"Church is almost an escape for some of our people—a very different world than they live in—that's why this church has to be here—we have people crying

out for help here; they need the ministry of the gospel."

South Park Baptist is another church which has seen the need to enter into other ministries but was unable to do so until it received funding from the Community in Crisis project.

Originally, the church wanted to enter into a day-care ministry but a survey revealed there were not enough pre-school age children in its area to warrant it. But the survey did show that a large number of elderly people do live nearby.

With project funds, the church hired Larry Jones to direct weekday and youth ministries. The Golden Agers Club, started about three months ago, now attracts about 25 people to its monthly meetings.

"We saw a specific need in our community to minister to the elderly," says Richard Coff, South Park's pastor. "We hope that we will be able to extend our program to the people in our neighborhood who don't have any church contact, this will be a effort to minister to someone who isn't getting that ministry."

The church has also extended its youth activities and is now looking for building in another area for the neighborhood where its youth can conduct Vacation Bible School. The building will also provide a Christian activities center for the neighborhood youth.

South Park's Coff, like Wilhite and Carver, believes that eventually the aid it now receives from the Community in Crisis project will come from other sources—state, convention, association or direct "partnerships" linking inner-city churches and suburban churches.

"The idea is catching on," Coff says. "And too, those people who left the inner-city to become suburban know what they left behind and they are interested in helping."

Coff has no doubt that his church's new ministries will continue if they prove valuable.

And that's the key to the Community in Crisis project: to begin new, needed ministries in a declining neighborhood.

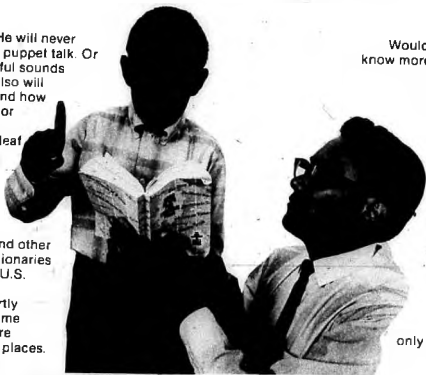
Whether a project like this will be successful, whether any churches can be saved over a long term, cannot be determined yet. Not enough evidence is in to make such a decision.

But the people closest to the project say there is a chance for it to succeed if suburban churches recognize the important contributions they can make to the life of inner-city churches.

"There are suburban churches who couldn't care less about our ministries," Wilhite says. "But, like Bernard Shaw said, 'The rich can avoid living with the poor but they can't avoid dying with the poor.'" Wilhite slowly smiled. "They must understand if the inner-city churches crack, so will they."

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BROADMAN



COMMENT by Walker L. Knight Rifles or shotguns?

Southern Baptists are working through a significant shift in how they communicate, especially apparent in mission information. They are learning to select their weapons better, using a rifle for a well-defined target and a scatter gun for a dispersed covey.

The shift hit the denomination a few years later than it did society, and underlying the change is the introduction of television and the adjustments modern man makes to new ways of perception and new channels of receiving information.

The recent concern expressed by the Executive Committee's Committee of Fifteen over the decline in circulation of magazines of missionary agencies highlights the adjustments in progress and does not come as a surprise to us.

Questions other than how large is the circulation need to be asked concerning publications. How well does the publication communicate to its intended audience is a better question than how many people receive it.

That question forces a publication to define its audience and to sharpen its objectives. Circulation should be judged on how well it is reaching the target audience. Some publications today restrict their circulation lists by charging more to those other than their intended audience, or even by refusing to add the names to their list.

Effective communications must be viewed also within the context of all the channels through which we are sending our messages. No printed item is produced within a vacuum isolated from all other publications.

Readers of HOME MISSIONS participated last year in a survey to determine where the gaps existed in our communications. In the process of conducting the survey we experimented with different

formats. A strong split developed among the readership for an issue-oriented, in-depth magazine and for a spot news, feature-oriented publication. We found only two publications could meet the need—since no one magazine could serve both. The answer came through cooperation with the Brotherhood Commission. Its new and very effective *World Mission Journal* carries spot news and features written for a broad, general church membership audience; HM continues as a leadership, issue-oriented publication.

The magazine is only one part of the larger communications effort of the Home Mission Board (see the January issue for a listing), and it is only part of the Department of Editorial Services. We also are responsible for a news service which includes features and photographs, and for the publication of both the graded series of mission study books and for other books needed in the work of missions.

Within the department we seek to define the purpose and audience of each of these special print media. This aids in the assignment to each one a unique role compatible with the whole, in keeping with the objectives of the agency.

The temptation faced by most communicators is to turn every effort toward the broadest group possible, touching the greatest number but doing it only superficially.

Through the magazine we seek to reach a leadership group, including missionaries, pastors, and church mission leaders. This audience is defined as a mature, educated and concerned group. Therefore, the subjects, treated in depth, relate both to what is happening within society and how Baptists are or should be expressing their faith in this context. We strive to provide these leaders with information they need to be effective opin-

ion leaders and decision makers. No other publication fills this need. Southern Baptists in national mission for the HMB overall, the news service provides the means of reaching the greatest number of Southern Baptists, as well as the non-Baptist, and doing so quickly. The papers of our state conventions are one of the most effective mass communications media of any denomination, with a combined circulation of more than 10 million.

However, the papers are limited by the space they can give to any one article and stories must fight for that space with all others released at that time. The reader expects to be informed only of the most important events, with little interpretation, and seldom with the background of relationship to society.

Each year hundreds of thousands read the mission study books (or hear them taught under the sponsorship of Western's Missionary Union and the Brotherhood Commission). Through these and depth presentation can be made of designated areas of work. Thomas S. Arkes, director of Interfaith Witness, said the study last year of his area advanced his work five years ahead of where it would have been without the effort. This year the study featured evangelists and next year the study will be on missions with ethnic persons.

Thus one can see the uniqueness of each channel, and consequently expect each to do that for which it is best suited. We measure the effectiveness of how well we utilize each channel to reach the intended audience with the intended message. We continue to strive to make each a more effective instrument to accomplish the objective of Southern Baptists in home missions: to make disciples for Christ of all persons in the homeland. ■

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EXECUTIVE'S WORD by Arthur B. Rutledge

A time for advance

As this is written, the U.S. Congress has before it a bill calling for a National Day of Confession and Prayer on April 30, 1974. Such a day can surely do nothing but good. We have come to a time when we must take seriously the spiritual and moral needs of our beloved country.

Developments of the past few years have driven thoughtful Americans to take a hard and questioning look at our national character. We have been concerned by the way in which crime, drugs, alcohol and moral permissiveness have eaten away at our national foundations. In some ways the disclosures of moral breakdown at top levels of government have been the most devastating of all.

Such difficulties have been compounded by problems in the national economy—unchecked inflation and an energy crisis.

For too long we have taken prosperity and conveniences for granted. More than half of our people are too young to have ever known shortages on a national level.

The confluence of these distressing problems could well be the current we need for a great spiritual advance. Our human nature is such that we are most sensitive to God in times of trouble, and, I believe, more Americans now recognize the need of divine help than have in decades.

This is not, therefore, a time for retreat. It is a time for advance.

The place to start, it seems to me, is within the churches. There is a broad and growing hunger on the part of adults and youth for deeper and more meaningful spiritual experiences.

This is expressed in many ways, but especially in the rise of small groups for

Bible study, sharing and prayer; adults gathered in a home on a week night; high school youth meeting for a devotional period before the day's classes begin; college youth zealously seeking to represent Christ in all walks of life.

As the spirit of God works in such groups, regardless of whether they are directly sponsored by a church, we make progress toward the renewal desperately needed within churches.

Most denominations in this country went through a period of rapid church growth in the 1950s and early '60s. There was a "surge of piety," as one analyst called it. Now much of that growth seems shallow, and hosts of church members seem half-committed—or less. It was as if we had developed a "folk religion," based on the idea that because one is an American he should belong to a church—it's "respectable."

Now we face the urgent challenge to help "church people" find vitality in a real and continuing experience with Christ.

Whatever shape renewal may take, as we go deeper with God we shall be able to go farther in persuading others to join us on our journey.

The Home Mission Board functions as an arm of the churches. It reaches out to people beyond the normal reach of churches. It crosses such barriers as distance and culture and race and economics to share Christ with people of many circumstances.

Churches on fire for Christ will produce the missionary volunteers needed. Churches on fire for Christ will supply the funds required to enter hundreds of challenging fields in the "pioneer" areas of our Convention, in ghettos of human

need throughout South and North, East and West.

The theme for this year's Week of Prayer for Home Missions points the way to the needed revival. The theme—"Him Is Life"—challenges each of us to draw near the one whom the Apostle John described: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men (John 1:4)."

It is my hope and prayer that all across the convention our churches will experience a time of spiritual excitement during the Week of Prayer.

God has chosen to do his work in the world through human instruments, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. When we are and what we do in the name of Christ, therefore, is of great consequence. We have the opportunity of being God's tools for carving out a new face for our nation—a face of faith and love and commitment to Christ.

And what happens in America has the great influence on the rest of the world—in the Christian movement as well as in politics and economics.

Our present concern for America must become the prelude to a great Christian advance in this nation and the nations of the world. A deepening of our spiritual vitality will equip us for a more effective witness through our SBC churches, an expanded support of missions in America and a strengthened missionary effort among the nations of the earth.

May God so work among the American people that we shall be moved to turn to him in repentance and to follow him in faith. And may God be pleased to use his servants, as instruments of love to accomplish his gracious purposes for mankind. •

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Anyone looking for information on Baptist associations is almost immediately struck by the fact that there is very little up-to-date, comprehensive reading matter on this vital segment of Baptist cooperation. Several years ago the Home Mission Board sponsored a conference on Associational Missions at the Gulf Shores Assembly in Mississippi, and this meeting resulted in a number of important reports. That, however, was over a decade ago. Another meeting is scheduled this year. The National Convocation on the Southern Baptist Association, to be held at the Ridgecrest Assembly in May. Hopefully this meeting will result in other valuable (and updated) contributions.

Aside from a few scattered committee reports and denominational manuals, however, an in-depth study of the Baptist Association is relatively rare. The only new work on the horizon is Russell Bennett's *The Fellowship of Kindred Minds*, soon to be published by the Home Mission Board. Bennett, assistant director of the Division of Associational Services, has sought to remedy a part of this need. His book discusses the theological, biblical, and historical character of the association. In this statement the author lays out for an evaluation of present associations both as they relate to the local churches and as they play a role in the broader fellowship of state and national conventions.

Other Baptists (even those who enthusiastically support cooperative ventures) have viewed associations as a sort of ecclesiastical convenience, an afterthought in the missionary enterprise. Bennett points out that associations are more than an organizational expedient; they are, in fact, an essential expression of the Baptist concept of the church. This is true from both historical and theological points of view. Historical churches have existed with a fellowship of associations from the beginning (this notwithstanding the emphasis upon local church autonomy). Theologically Baptists see

their local churches as a part of the larger fellowship of all Christians in the body of Christ; associations, then, are an essential expression of this unity.

The Fellowship of Kindred Minds doesn't minimize the importance of the organizational aspect. Instead—and this is an important contribution—the organization is lifted to a new level, one in which it becomes not simply entities bound by the necessity of work to be done, but a redeeming fellowship joined by their love of God and their need to serve.

The Fellowship of Kindred Minds, F. Russell Bennett Jr. (Home Mission Board, 1974).

Renewal and the laity

The idea of renewal reflects the mysterious balance in which the church exists. The church's reality is both physical and spiritual, it is in the world but not of the world, its problems are concrete and their solutions ideal. Renewal, then, embraces both realities: it discovers the ideal in concrete terms, and it responds to theoretical questions with practical answers. David Haney has lived with this precarious balance, and his book, *The Idea of the Laity*, presents a rather fine insight into the problems as well as the promise of renewal.

Haney never strays far from what he considers to be the over-all purposes of the church. He begins with basic questions: What is the church? What is its aim? Who is involved in its ministry? The answers to these questions form his broad theological perspective. They are what he calls "ideas that have used me." The church he says, exists to demonstrate and to spread the Kingdom of God. The ministry of the church belongs to the people—not just to a professional class of "ministers." Each member is involved in his own ministry, to which God has called him, aided by his peculiar

talents, inclinations and concerns.

The pastor also is involved, although not in the manner we have often come to expect. He is not simply involved in "the ministry," but in a particular ministry. His role is to support the ministry of the church. He equips the laity for service—and they serve. Ralph Neighbor, in his foreword to the book, expresses this idea by saying that the pastor now becomes the "player-coach" and no longer the "star quarterback."

Having dealt with these basic matters, Haney turns to the major burden of the book: practical ideas that have encouraged renewal, or "ideas that I have used." Here he deals with such subjects as the effective use of small groups, the purpose of Christian education, how ministry enters into the daily work, and the ministry of encouragement. In a final chapter he catalogs some newer ideas that, like the others, are stimulating, but unlike the others, are yet untried.

In contrast to many recent authors who have written in a similar vein, Haney can speak of practical matters without losing a sense of the essential mystery in any church renewal. Central to his concept of renewal is the realization that the inward Christian experience of the laity is the only lasting motivation for service. Encounter with God has always been the source of renewal. And just as surely as this happens the result will be a serving laity. Here, then is the idea behind *The Idea of the Laity*. Haney writes that renewal has occurred when "the laity become ministers and the pastors become equipagers of the ministers."

The Idea of the Laity, David Haney (Zondervan, 188 pp., 1973), \$1.95.

Books, film and tapes

Handbook of Denominations in the United States, Frank S. Mead (Abingdon Press, 265 pp., 1970) \$3.95. This is the fifth edition of a popular handbook on denominations in this country. The articles are concise and deal largely with doctrinal distinctions. The

handbook includes helpful information on the varieties of organizational structure and church polity.

"This is Missions, U.S.A." (B&W film, 9:32 min.) Home Mission Board production, 1973. This short feature uses music and still photography to portray the human face of Home Missions. It can be an excellent means of stimulating thought for discussion groups on the varieties of Home Mission work and the needs they seek to answer.

Poor People and Churchgoers. William H. Jennings. (The Seaburg Press, 128 pp., 1972). \$2.95. The emphasis is on churchgoers rather than poor people. Jennings asks Christians to step outside the walls that often bar them from seeing the needs outside, and to take a look at the way they have related to the poor. Most Christians, he points out, are aligned with the one-third of mankind that is well off. If our ministry reaches further, it will be inevitably—among the poor.

Arousing the Sleeping Giant. Robert K. Hudnut. (Harper and Row, 186 pp., 1973). \$3.95. Subtitled "How to Organize your Church for Action," Hudnut's book is intended to be a manual for effective change in the local church. The concept of the church presented here is heavy on organizational potential and light on *koinonia*. The

author sees the pastor as "chief executive officer," as opposed to the "equipper" and "player-coach" concept presented in Haney's *The Idea of the Lily*.

Rural Ministry and the Changing Community. Rockwell C. Smith (Abingdon, 206 pp., 1971). \$4.75. Rural ministry is unique, and yet not in quite the same way as 30 years ago. In this book Smith analyzes the changes in rural life and how these changes can affect, and be affected by, the church's ministry. Sociological know-how, he argues, is a powerful aid to the rural minister's work.

Democratization of the Church. Alois Muller,

editor (Herder and Herder, 160 pp., 1973). \$3.95. This series of essays deals with the basic ideas of democracy, the New Testament foundation for democratic church order, and problems of church government. It is written, to a great extent, to the Roman Catholic situation; but the manner in which these topics are treated make it informative reading for anyone interested in the democratic basis of his own church polity.

Conyers, a graduate of Southeastern Seminary, is a pastor, Ill. Baptist Church, Ill. Ca. As H. 1 m. editor, his column will appear monthly.

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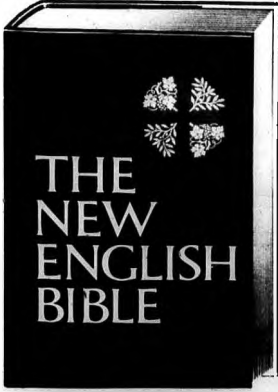
"Any new translation designed for the widest possible use should 1) be based on the best Hebrew and Greek texts presently available, 2) incorporate all the new information about Hebrew and Greek vocabulary and structure, 3) be written, at least in the New Testament, in the language of the common man, 4) reflect the insights of descriptive linguistics so that it is an accurate meaning for meaning translation, 5) be a committee translation with all the checks and balances that accompany this kind of group interaction, 6) be tested for comprehension by the man on the street, and 7) be acceptable for use in the liturgy of the church.

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*Reprints of Dr. Hawthorne's article are available at \$1.50 each from *Eternity Magazine*, 1716 Spruce St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.

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PRAYER CALENDAR

A quarterly listing of chaplains' birthdays

APRIL

April 2: John L. Sharp, Tenn. Army; S. Jack Payne, Ga., Air Force; Paul L. Stanley, Va., Air Force; April 3: David James Farmer, Ga., institutional; James L. Fox, Tex., Air Force; William L. Cady, Tex., Navy; John J. Wilson, Ga., Navy; April 4: Dale L. Rowley, Ill., institutional; April 5: James A. Nichols, Miss., Army; Rutland M. Tipton, Ill., Navy; April 6: Joe H. Parker, Tenn., Navy; James M. Pilgrim, S.C., institutional; April 7: Elbert N. Carpenter, Ky., Navy; April 10: Fred A. Duckett, W. Va., VA; Maurice Eugene Turner, Tex., Navy; April 12: G.C. Dennis, La., hospital; Billy R. Nix, Ala., Army; Charles F. Pitts, Tex., VA; Charles F. Jordan, S.C., Navy; April 14: Marvin V. Enquist, Ga., institutional; April 15: Richard M. Christian, Tex., institutional; April 16: Robert H. Burton, Ga., institutional; James O. Dorriety, Ala., industrial; April 17: James R. Brown, Ky., Air Force; Paul D. Foxworthy, Mo., Air Force; Homer Thomas Hiers Jr., S.C., Navy; April 18: Dennis Barnes, Tex., hospital; Richard G. Cook, Va., Army; Thomas N. Pettus, Ky., VA; Jack Orville Farnell, Tenn., Navy; April 19: George W. Fuller, Tex., Navy; John E. Green, Tex., Army; Jerry M. Foteet, Tex., Army; Buddy Michael Reeves, Okla., Navy; John L. Clough, Fla., Navy; April 20: Isaac M. Copeland Jr., Va., Air Force; James H. Eastland, Kan., Air Force; April 21: Kenneth R. Thompson, La., Air Force; Aubrey T. Quakenbush, N.C., Va., April 22: Huel E. May, N.C., hospital; April 23: Gordon J. Biston, Okla., industrial; April 25: Joe P. Self Jr., Tex., institutional; April 26: Clyde E. Brazeal, Ala., hospital; William James Clark, Wis., Army; B. Lynn Self, Tex., institutional; April 27: Dillius William Barnett, Ala., Army; Leroy A. Sisk, N.C., Army; Thomas W. Haygood Jr., Ga., hospital; April 28: Carl H. Burton, Miss., Army; Thomas L. Jones, Fla., hospital; Merrill C. Leonard, Tenn., Navy; Robert Carter, S.C., hospital; April 29: Alfred J. Alberethy, N.C., Air Force; John H. Carnes, Ga., Navy; William H. Heard, Ark., hospital; Roy C. Wood, Va., Navy; Richard Allen Headley, D.C., Air Force; April 30: William M. Cuthrell Jr., Va., Air Force; Melvin Brown Jr., Tex., institutional.

MAY

May 1: Charles B. Prewitt, Okla., Air Force; Malcolm H. Roberts, Mo., Navy; May 3: Wil-

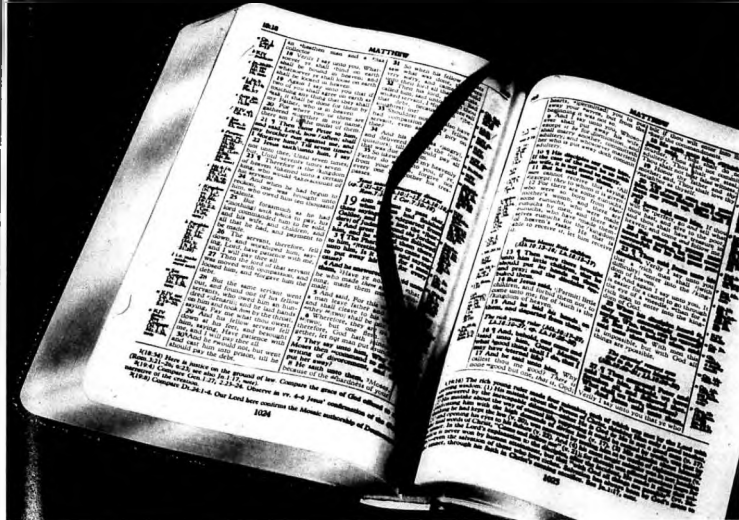
liam M. McCraw Jr., Ala., Air Force; Harold W. Runnels, Tex., Army; May 4: George E. Ormsbee, Mo., Army; May 5: Joseph H. Cogins, N.C., Air Force; A.J. Thiessen, Ore., hospital; Franklin LeRoy Dittmar, Okla., institutional; Edward F. Lovill, N.C., hospital; May 6: James L. Burck, Ky., institutional; James H. McKinney, Ga., Army; May 7: Clarence H. Roland, Ga., Army; Carl J. Pearson, Ark., Navy; May 8: James E. Sams, Va., VA; May 9: John B. Hunter, Ark., hospital; May 10: James D. Bruno, Mo., Army; George W. Miller, Fla., hospital; May 11: George R. McHorse, Tex., Navy; Stafford C. Rogers, La., hospital; May 12: William C. Fuller, N.C., Navy; May 14: Donald H. Cabaniss, Ga., hospital; Richard M. Graham, Va., institutional; May 15: James P. Lockhart, Mo., hospital; Lawrence E. Saul, Miss., Air Force; Joseph E. Wilson, La., Army; Bradford L. Riza, Tex., Air Force; May 16: Clark O. Hitt, Tex., hospital; May 17: Jack R. Milligan, Tex., Army; J.T. Shipman, Tex., Navy; May 18: Jack Wendell Roberts, Fla., Navy; May 19: James F. Kirstein, N.C., Navy; Thomas M. Richardson, Ala., Army; William R. Swenson, Minn., Navy; May 20: James Alfred Stanford, N.C., Army; James M. Rigler, Mo., Navy; Harrell Rex Lewis, Tex., hospital; Daniel O. Davis Jr., N.Y., Army; Alvin L. Wilson, Mo., Army; May 21: John David House, Ga., Navy; May 22: Walter E. Sanders, N.C., hospital; Lawrence E. Johnston, Colo., hospital; May 23: Bruce D. Anderson, N.Y., Army; Joseph R. Frazier, N.Y., Navy; Howard Parsnall, La., hospital; William A. Massey Jr., La., institutional; Felix J. Williams, La., hospital; May 24: Colon Stonewall Jackson Jr., N.C., Navy; May 25: Mark W. Fairless, Tenn., Air Force; Albert V. Clark, Miss., Army; James L. Juhan, Ga., Army; May 26: James L. Hays, Ark., Air Force; May 27: Delbert Gene Payne, Tenn., Army; Wilton E. Sloan, Ga., Army; Bennie H. Clayton, Tex., Air Force; May 28: Kevin L. Anderson, Tex., Navy; Hubert Garrell, N.C., Army; Joe F. Luck, Tex., hospital; Larry H. Ellis, Tenn., Navy; Robert May, Ala., Navy; Marjorie L. Bailey, Va., institutional; May 29: William H. Griffith, Ohio, Air Force; May 30: John L. Hall, Va., Navy; Richmond H. Hilton, S.C., Army; May 31: Carl Jefferson Hedrick Jr., N.C., Army; Robert A. Long, N.C., Navy.

JUNE

June 1: Harry D. Morgan, Okla., Army;

Frederick A. Taylor, Mo., Army; Pete Sharber, Ga., Army; Riley Eubank Jr., Tex., hospital; June 2: Jack A. Hanberry, Ga., institutional; Daniel P. Jenkins, La., Army; June 3: Al Hollis Jr., Ga., hospital; James W. Jones, Ark., Navy; June 4: Johnie B. Dellinger, Ala., hospital; Oliver C. Wilson Jr., Ga., hospital; June 5: Ray W. Fullilove, Miss., Navy; Ray J. Fullilove, Miss., Army; June 6: Floyd Sims, Tex., Navy; June 8: James R. Berlin, Mo., Army; June 9: Marvin L. Gold, N.C., hospital; June 10: Elwyn G. Edwards, Fla., Army; Claude Marshall, N.C., Navy; Charles A. Shaw, Ga., Navy; Lee Butler, Tex., hospital; Charles H. Shaw, N.C., hospital; June 11: Sudderth H. Harnes, Tex., Air Force; Louis B. Parks, Tex., hospital; Justus F. Selph, Tenn., Army; June 12: Ernest R. Barnes Jr., N.Y., Navy; John L. Gaines, Fla., hospital; June 13: Harry McCarney, Fla., hospital; June 14: Arthur P. Graham, Va., institutional; William O. Graham, Fla., hospital; Ian S. Marks, Ark., Army; June 15: Jack E. Brown, D.C., Army; Cecil R. Threadgill, Ala., Navy; T.D. Whitehorn, Ark., hospital; June 17: Eli Campbell Jr., Ga., Navy; Lawrence B. Cobb, Ariz., hospital; Blake J. Greer, W. Va., Army; Francis M. Marks, Okla., Army; W. Bryce Spivey, S.C., hospital; Jared A. Walker, Ark., hospital; Robert H. Lloyd, Tex., hospital; Samuel L.M.C. Young, Va., hospital; June 19: George P. Bowers, N.Y., Air Force; C.D. Salee, Tenn., hospital; Robert E. Sanders, Tenn., Army; June 20: James N. Brink, Miss., hospital; William E. Dodson, Ala., Navy; Glenn D. Mae, Tex., Army; June 22: Fred L. Reid Jr., N.C., hospital; June 23: Asa W. Jones, Va., Navy; Walter L. Howell, N.C., hospital; William Deamuth Blanton, N.C., hospital; June 24: Donald C. Beeson, Mo., Army; Jasper I. Dean, Ala., Army; Donald L. Degett, Tenn., Army; Ed F. McDonald, La., hospital; June 25: Jack S. Parham, Ga., Army; June 26: James E. Leath, Tex., Air Force; James Odell Nations, Miss., Navy; June 27: Robert E. Ballard, Ga., hospital; John M. Smith, S.C., hospital; June 28: Donald H. Dillard, Ind., Navy; Donald W. Grover, Tex., Army; Larry L. Slaughter, Mont., institutional; June 29: P. Everett, Kan., Army; Donald W. Swain, N.C., Army; Roy E. Prager, Ala., hospital; Harold W. Stubblefield, Tenn., hospital; Henry G. Wade, Calif., Army; June 30: R. Smith, Ga., Air Force.

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BROADMAN

READERS' REACTION

Thanks for a poignant Christmas issue

CUP runneth over

We enjoy reading the HOME MISSIONS magazine each month. The articles are well written and the pictures most interesting.

The November issue which carried an article pertaining to the Christian Union Program certainly brought us great joy. May God continue to bless you in the great work you are doing.

George M. Allen
New Haven, Conn.

Pluses...

I think HOME MISSIONS is getting better all the time, and our denomination can be justly proud of it.

Mrs. Hilda Wilson
Kansas City, Kan.

• Congratulations on HM November, "Update on Race Relations."
L.E. Burgess
APO San Francisco

...and minuses

HOME MISSIONS has some interesting articles but as a whole it is weak.

Martha Ann Anderson
Waco, Tex.

Fearless reading?

We appreciate the consistently good quality of HOME MISSIONS as a whole. We have used a few issues as required reading in courses here.

Paul H. Miller
Ogbomoso, Nigeria

• I felt the November issue was a superb treatment of the race issue. Thanks again for giving us a fearless treatment of "where we're at" on the great burning spiritual issues of our day.

Norris W. Fuller
La Puente, Calif.

Christmas present

• "The Meaning of Christmas" in your December issue is most appropriate.

W.F. Askins
Bulmer, N.C.

• "When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and we would not help you?"

In the December issue of HOME MISSIONS!

Thank you for that poignant Christmas issue.

Elizabeth Swadley
Springfield, Mo.

• The December issue was magnificent. It took me back to my childhood days around Crofton, Ky. Somehow the memories are always better than the reality. God has granted us the wonderful ability to retain the pleasant and to miss the difficult.

My congratulations to Ed Seabough and Don Rutledge (the dynamic duo!) for the excellent poetry and photography. As usual, they did a splendid work.

Larry L. Adams
Enfauite, Okla.

Thank you so much for the lovely December issue of the magazine. It is perfect.

Josephine Hair
Columbia, S.C.

• During these many years I've been reading HOME MISSIONS I do not remember a December issue just like this one. Just want to say I do especially like the cover and every word inside the Christmas issue.

I've never received a copy I did so like—but this one at Christmas is just so "Christmasy." I always look forward to receiving each month's issue.

Mrs. E.J. Merryman
Texarkana, Ark.

• Just finished December's HM, a delightful reading. Arthur Rutledge's words on "The Meaning of Christmas" are approaching the close of the Southern Baptists' most exciting year. I thought I had just finished looking at your most exciting magazine of the year. What tremendous photography by Don Rutledge and poetry by Ed Seabough.

Picture is worth a thousand words—and it reached me—and I trust many others.

A.J. Kenemer Jr.
Littlefield, Tex.

This Christmas issue held me to being a subscriber—it is a wonderful presentation of Christmas in our times.

Mrs. Allgood
Brookhaven, Ma.

Thanks for another tremendous issue (Dec.). The issue on the meaning of Christmas is superb. It sparkles with its concise message, with warmth, inspiration and challenge.

Thanks, too, for the openness you expressed in your note on page three regarding the difficulties encountered by Nicholas and Mabry. Thanks for sharing the humanness and quiet determination to get on with the task without being dogmatic. Your humor and consciousness show well.

John C. Burnham
Prairie Village, Kan.

Thank you for your special Christmas issue. The poetry by Ed Seabough and the photography by Don Rutledge most meaningful.

Gary Cook
Louisville, Ky.

HOME MISSIONS first became a force in my life when I was a member of the Southern Seminary. Your issue higher with the October, and December, 1973, issues. I thank you for the perspective that you give us to greater work, the wisdom to become an isolated minority, the courage to be honest in the face of vocal critics who want the please our prejudices. Keep edge alive.

David E. Roberts
Parkton, N.C.

January feedback

The January issue of HM is exactly what I need for a class I teach on Public Relations. Thanks for a splendid issue.

Cliff Ingle
Kansas City, Mo.

• A refreshing magazine with sharp insights and current challenges. Of all Southern Baptist periodicals, HM has been upgraded most. Keep up the good work, and I'll argue with you in the margins when and if I think you are wrong.

James H. Butler
Santiago, Chile

• I just read the Jan. HOME MISSIONS and would like to respond to the two gentlemen, Mr. Nunnery and Mr. Clements (Readers' Reaction, Dec. HM).

If Baptists like these two men continue to broaden the gap between the black and white, how can we as Baptists effectively minister to all people of the world? These men and people like them are still fighting the Civil War or at least their thinking and reasoning seems to be at least that dated.

HM is great and as another reader put it, "Keep on doing the best that our denomination will tolerate" and through this maybe we can fully understand the Great Commission.

Chet Bramley
Dallas, Tex.

• January HOME MISSIONS is the very top of the line. Of course most of us have come to expect the crisp, concise reporting from you and your staff in each issue, but this must be one of the best. I wish it could be made required reading for every Southern Baptist. I am going to add this issue to the required reading list for my Christian Communications class this spring (at Baylor University).

Thank you for a very practical and communicative magazine.

Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.
Waco, Tex.

FORECAST

Proper support?

Recently a Home Mission Board staffer resigned, commenting, among other things, that he longed "for the day when our Convention will show proper priority for evangelism by giving this division the status of a commission. I feel this will result in more support and the freedom necessary for evangelizing our nation." His words echo those commonly heard in the halls at annual Southern Baptist Conventions. The movement doesn't die. Why? Are there reasons Southern Baptists should have a separate (but more than equal) evangelism commission? Does the division now get adequate financial support? Does it have the freedom it needs to do the work it feels necessary? And is that one division the only one at the HMB engaged in "evangelizing our nation"? Answers in May HOME MISSIONS along with a photo essay on "Hope" and an article on a new trend in Christian social ministries.

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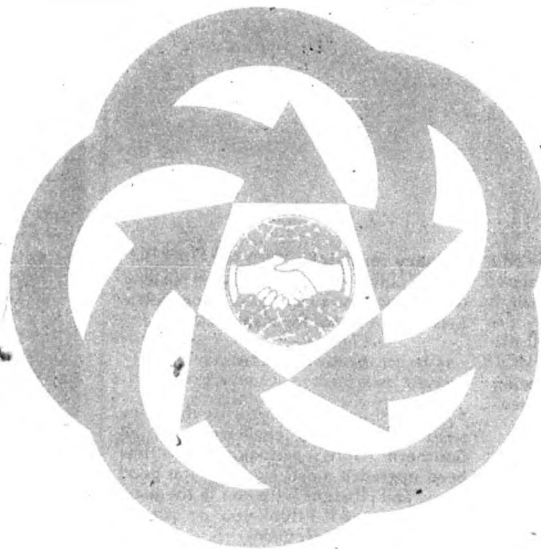
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