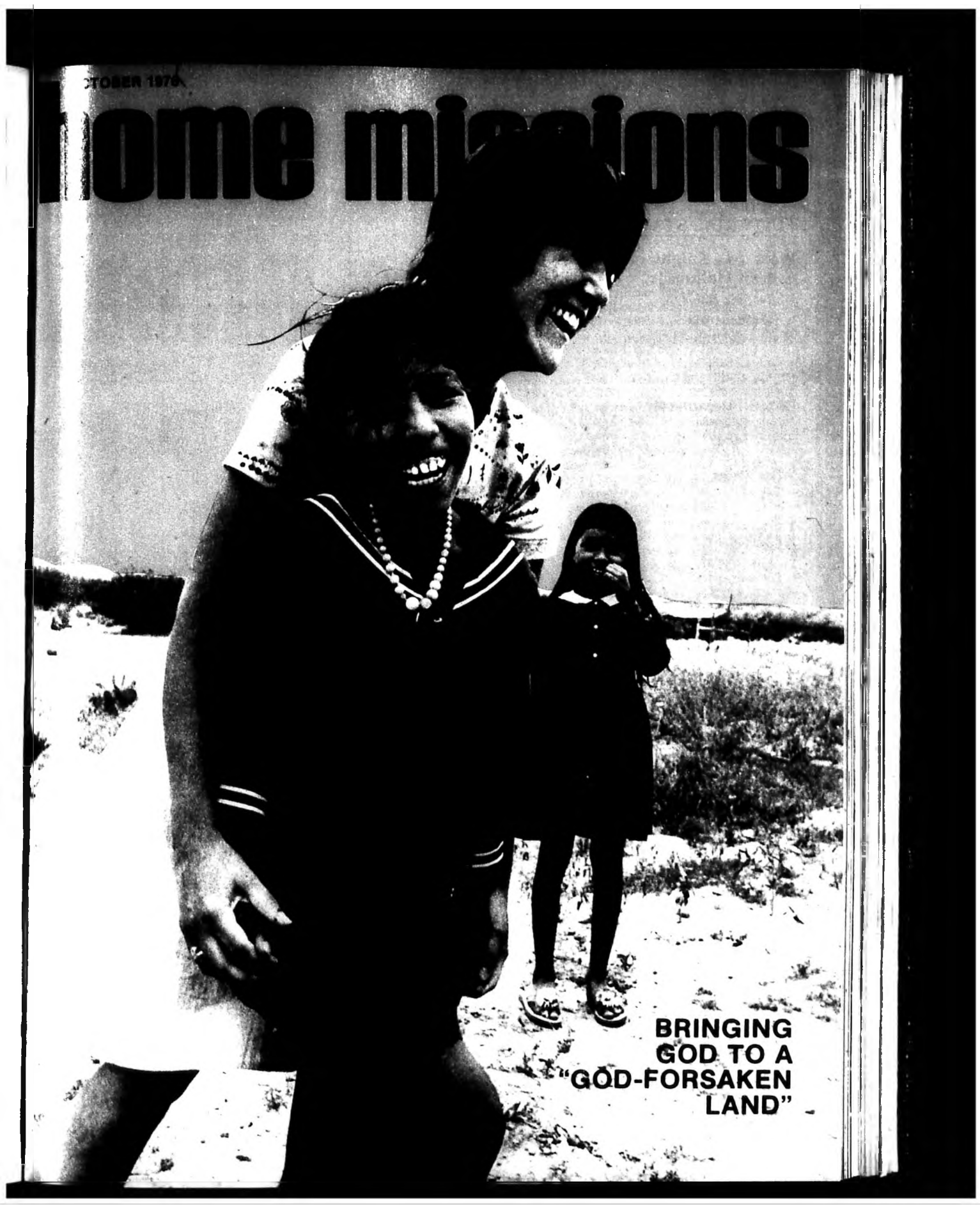
home missions
BRINGING
GOD TO A
"GOD-FORSAKEN
LAND"

home missions
Volume 47 October 1976 No. 9

Cover: Susie Frazier, a summer volunteer, plays with children from the tiny, isolated community of Boquillas near the Big Bend area of the Rio Grande. Frazier, a nine-year veteran of Texas Baptist River Ministry, led a team of seven women in one of the program's most ambitious—and exciting—ministries.
DON RUTLEDGE PHOTO

Opposite: Claudio Iglesias, HMB missionary in Albuquerque, talks to a student at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, where many come to learn skills to equip them for city life. The transition from reservation to metropolis is difficult, as HM's story on the urban Indian points out.
EVERETT HULLUM PHOTO

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OCTOBER PREVIEW

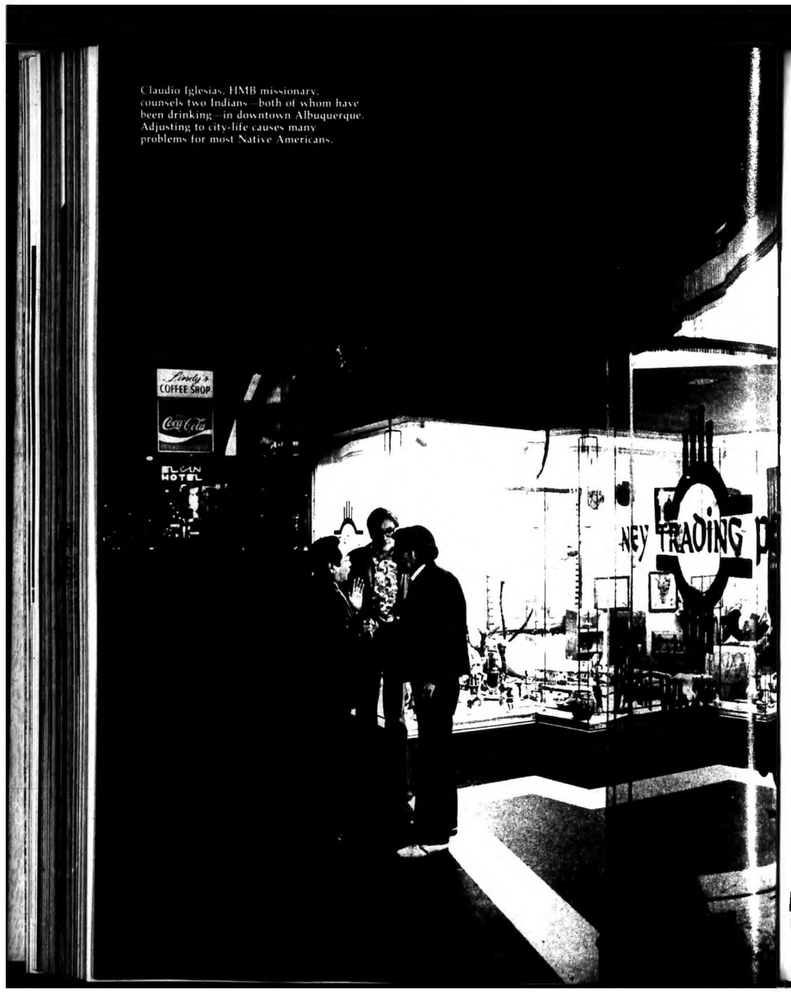
Moving in many directions

On the brink of the 21st century, urban America bears little resemblance to the parched villages squatting along the tortuous Rio Grande. Unchanged by time and technology, most have no telephones, no electricity, no running water. Writer Everett Hullum and photographer Don Rutledge drove almost 3,000 miles along both sides of the Rio Grande and—often following a hand drawn map—documented the needs of her people. Working 18-hour days in stifling 115° heat, the two discovered an "exciting, ambitious, varied program of missions and ministry," says Hullum. To this primitive area, obscured by time, have come Baptist doctors, truck drivers, nurses, electricians, teachers, engineers, ranchers, bankers, farmers, carpenters, bricklayers and retirees—all physical evidence, says Hullum, "that Christ's love is at work along the Rio Grande."

* * *

Moving the other direction in time are the Indians who have left their reservations for the bright lights of urban civilization. The complexity of city life, with its rapid transits and asphalt corridors, often leaves America's native dweller lost—or at least uncomfortable.

A couple of things combined to send us tracking—if you'll pardon the expression—the urban Indian. A TV newsclip awakened our interest; then, on a California trip, we examined Southern Baptist work—or lack of it—among Indian peoples in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Still, the subject seemed remote to the South-concentrated SBC. But the urban Indian's condition came close to home when David Benham of the HMB's Language Missions Department showed us a letter from Mobile, Ala. It requested tracts in the Apache language, because large numbers of Apaches were moving into Mobile and the association wanted to witness to them. Several months and several thousand miles later, HM writer Celeste Loucks turned in her report. "A lot of things disturbed me," Loucks says, "but some impressed me, too. One was the way Indians have worked together in Dallas to create a self-supporting inter-tribal center. Baptist lay people were active in that—and they could help Indians in other areas the same way." Another impressive thing was the articulation and openness of Indian people, from Baptist Russell Begaye to North Dakotan Terry Phelan, 23, who came to the city because "you can find a job here." Along with work, he found loneliness. His comment describes many urban Indians' plight: "I can't make myself an Indian in the city." Loucks' story explains why.



Claudio Iglesias, HMB missionary, counsels two Indians—both of whom have been drinking—in downtown Albuquerque. Adjusting to city-life causes many problems for most Native Americans.

by Celeste Loucks

JOURNEY'S END

For the urban Indian, the beginning is another broken promise . . . on a trail leading nowhere

As the bus from Shiprock, N.M., rolled into Los Angeles, Russell Begaye peered out the window. He had examined the city on postcards, but had no concept of its size. The largest town he'd ever driven through was Albuquerque, N.M. "I thought Farmington (N.M.) was pretty big," he recalls. Surveying a skyline punctuated with palm trees and glazed with gray haze, Begaye compared it with his reservation home: a log cabin plastered with mud and roofed with corn husks—standing alone under an endless stretch of stark blue.

When he climbed off the bus in L.A., the young Navaho faced his first disappointment. "I went to Los Angeles—a city of hope," he recalls. "I got out of the bus on 7th and Maine Street. My whole dream of Los Angeles as a beautiful city disappeared—like that."

Smog burned his eyes. He was overwhelmed by the size of the city and the crush of humanity. "There were so many different people," he says, "with long hair, short hair, black skin, brown skin. The clothing was all different. Man, it was something else."

Begaye, a lanky young man with a thatch of coarse, black hair, boarded the bus with $25, two suitcases and a one-way ticket to L.A. His goal was to study law at UCLA and return to the reservation to establish a practice benefitting his tribe. Through law, he hoped to meet white men on their own terms, to "mend the heartaches" of his people.

Although his goals may not have been typical, Begaye isn't alone in making the transition from reservation to city. According to one researcher, more Indians now live in Los Angeles than on most reservations. Begaye is one of an estimated half-million Indians who have left their close-knit tribal homes on reservations and in small towns in search of the bright lights, the education, the jobs of the city—in search of a chance to be independent, to determine their own destinies.

The migration began in the 1950s. About 100,000 Indians were lured to cities—including Los Angeles, Dallas, Denver and Chicago—through a relocation program begun by the U.S. government. Relocation offered job training and job placement.

David Benham, a Kiowa working in the HMB language missions department, says generally the Indians who move to the cities are the younger, more aggressive, better-educated. Yet relocation has been described by one Indian leader as a "one-way ticket to skid row."

Indians move to the city to escape 40 to 60 percent unemployment, inadequate housing, unsafe water supplies and lack of sanitation on the reservation—and find the city generates horrors of its own.

Often unequipped with marketable job skills, the urban Indian renews the struggle against unemployment. Education is expensive. Housing is more expensive. Suddenly the Indian must battle the complexities of filling out tax forms, waiting in long employment lines, opening bank accounts. "Historically, the Indian has never had money to manage," remarks Belva Cottier, an Indian in San Francisco.

Sometimes the Indian is isolated by the language and discovers he has ventured into a noisy, pulsating industrial environment, void of personal contact, a forest of foreboding skyscrapers haunted by the clock and a baffling onrush of cars and rapid transit systems. Noka Ricord, coordinator of the Dallas Inter-Tribal Center health project, says after counseling a newcomer she gave him money to catch a bus. He thanked her. Then after a long, embarrassed silence, admitted, "Ma'am, I don't know *how* to catch the bus."

Because newcomers seldom have transportation, they are trapped into obtaining lower-paying jobs along bus lines. They live in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco, the aging apartments of East Dallas, the poorer sections of towns and cities across the country.

Russell Begaye went from Navaho reservation to Los Angeles. Now he is a student at Southwestern seminary in Fort Worth.

Young men, particularly, become a part of the skid row culture, sleeping in cheap hotels and congregating in bars.

Although tribal differences exist among reservation Indians, the city fosters a pan-Indian attitude. When he arrives, the outnumbered Indian is on the lookout for other Indians regardless of tribe. His first stop may be the nearest phone booth, where he scans the white pages for Indian surnames. Or, says a Choctaw in San Francisco, "If you walk downtown a couple of hours, you will see an Indian." Anglos may confuse Indians with Mexican-Americans. But the Choctaw claims, "You can always tell an Indian—he has a feather. If he doesn't have a feather, he's got a vest. If he doesn't have a vest, he has a poncho."

Because of strong tribal ties, the Indian often is caught awkwardly straddling two cultures, clinging to the Indian ways, yet being torn by demands of urban life.

"I remember the first day at school," recalls Jonathan Wilson, who moved from an Oklahoma-Indian school to San Francisco. "The guys were wearing slacks that had creases. The girls wore nylons. It was such a big school, it scared the daylights out of me."

Wilson wound up joining a street gang. "I started lights. Got drunk. Did all the things city boys do. But the whole time I was trying to show I was Indian."

Complains Terry Dale Phelan, 23, after six weeks in Los Angeles, "Indians get lonesome. At home, we go out fishing, we go horseback riding. We go out dancing. You can't do it in town."

"Here," he continues, "the air is bad. Cigarettes harm your body. Drinking is harm. But if you want friends, you have to drink and smoke pot."

Wearing his favorite braid-trimmed white cowboy hat as he walked along an L.A. sidewalk, Phelan drew jeers from passersby. "If you dress the way you want, people make fun of you. When I wore my hat, people called me names—bad names."

"I didn't feel too good," he admits about his reaction, but "I just looked at them."

Frowning darkly at the city traffic, Phelan hopelessly concludes the worst thing about urban living: "I can't make myself an Indian."

Eventually, many Indians who can't make the transition shun the city. According to estimates, half the reservation Indians return home after two years of city life.

Occasionally, however, the Indian sheds his tribal ties and makes the complete transition, becoming an "apple"—red on the outside, white on the inside.

But usually, the Indian finds himself somewhere between the extremes. On weekends, the Chicago businessman exchanges his double-knit suit for a feather bustle and headdress and travels hundreds of miles to dance in powwows. The Oklahoma City Indian drives to his old, rural church for weekend worship. The Albuquerque medical student may wear long, dark hair in braids.

Or unable to cope with the city pressures, yet too proud to return to the reservation, the Indian sometimes escapes through drugs, alcohol or suicide.

Suicide rates among Indians are twice that of the general population. Alcohol-related deaths among Indians are high.

According to one researcher, however, "Many Indians are basically socializers, not compulsive drinkers."

To combat the loneliness that drives the Indian to pubs and taverns, Native American centers are located in several major cities.

Also, a few urban Indians have found fellowship in churches. Baptist Indian churches and missions are located in Los Angeles; San Francisco; Albuquerque, N.M.; Fort Worth, Tex.; Rapid City, S.D.; Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Cleveland, Ohio; Tulsa and Oklahoma City; Portland, Ore.; and Tucson, Ariz. But, for the most part, Southern Baptist work is negligible among Indians in cities.

Remarks HMB's Benham, "A great deal of missions support is based on romanticism. You go to the city and Indians are almost like anyone else."

"That's not very romantic, is it?"

Beyond that, Benham says, "The church is fleeing the inner city, where most Indians live. It's a difficult area to work. Cities are dusty, dirty—and scary."

When Russell Begaye stepped off the bus before noon the day he arrived in LA, his intention was to walk quickly from the bus station to the campus. He walked and walked. He reached his destination by nightfall.

But problems of his move loomed wider than smog and city boundaries.

He had been warned by teachers in Indian school that his education prepared him more for technical occupations than higher education. Yet, he reasoned, "You get a man out there herding sheep who doesn't know how—he may fail. I believed at any level, any person is smart in his own way."

"I don't know why, but I had the idea of going to a big school and showing these white men a Navaho can make it."

Like his disintegrating dream of the city, Begaye's illusions of "making it" were punctured by the first day of classes. With a drying throat he listened to the assignments. "It hit me: I couldn't read the words fast enough. I couldn't write term papers. I didn't know how to take tests. My first thought was, 'The teachers were right. I can't succeed.'"

His next thought was I had to make up for all the lost time. His resolve drove him to studying every day until 2 or 3 a.m. during weekdays and through the weekend. "Monday," he says, "the whole thing started all over again."

Wandering through a concrete and asphalt forest without language or job skills, the Indian has a "one-way ticket to skid row."

On the reservation, people were homogenous and supportive. Begaye, a Baptist youth leader, had experienced little rejection. In the city, he was refused service at restaurants. He received only slightly more hospitality in the Baptist church he attended—where he was the only Indian. "People," says Begaye, "see you as a dumb Indian or a person who walks through the forest very quietly or as a man who herds sheep." He was singled out as different in his neighborhood. One day on his way to the grocery, an elderly woman approached him. "Are you an Indian?" she questioned. He said yes.

"I am fascinated by Indians," she continued. "I always wanted to know how Indian's skin felt. Can I feel your skin?"

Begaye was stunned. "I just stood there for awhile," he recounts. "Finally, I told her, 'One thing you should know is I still practice the art of scalping.'" Backing off in confusion, the woman headed down the sidewalk.

Twinges of hurt and bitterness gave way to hatred. "I began slowly backing away from the church," Begaye says. "I took my eyes off Jesus and put them on people."

"I lost my Bible. In three months, I turned against the white race."

Begaye organized or led several Indian groups, including the American Indian Student Association, the Navaho Club and the Black Mesa Defense. He testified before the Los Angeles city council, spoke at rallies and planned occupations of city buildings. "I organized demonstrations, including media coverage, participants, the whole thing."

"If we were going to take over a building, I decided who would rush in and when." He notified radio and television stations: "We will storm the building. Just be there at 3 o'clock."

He became acquainted with several Indian leaders, including Vine Deloria. American Indian Movement leaders asked him to become their national fund raiser.

Begaye was principal speaker for gatherings of 6,000 to 7,000 in Los Angeles; 4,000 in San Francisco; 2,000 on the UCLA campus. "We went full-blast, to hit the white man from every side. I rapped every man on the street that was white. When there is bitterness in your heart . . . you act against the thing you don't like."

Despite his immersion in dissent and demonstrations, Begaye admits returning to his room, often after hours of haranguing whites, and suffering pangs of conscience. "When I finally got in bed—sometimes at 3 a.m.—I'd lay there and think of scriptures. 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"They were scriptures I had preached from on the reservation. All this stuff was burning in my head. I had to walk around to get these thoughts out of my mind."

A "half-breed girl" invited Begaye to Campus Crusade for Christ. At first he balked. "I almost led her away from the Lord," he says. But one night he attended the meeting, seated at the back of the room. "It was real. It was down to earth. It was person-to-person evangelism."

On his own initiative, Begaye attended several more meetings. Late one night, he crawled out of bed, got on his knees and talked to God a long time.

"Hatred grows and grows and grows and grows and grows and grows and grows," he continues. "You cannot suppress it. You can only stop it from the inside—like I did."

He went to sleep that night, knowing he was "forgiven and cleansed."

"The next morning," says Begaye, "I loved everybody."

Begaye continued to make speeches, but without the racial slurs and hatred. Despite broken treaties and stolen oil, water and mineral rights, he emphasized, "The one thing they can never take away from us is Jesus Christ."

That's about all.

Pushed onto unproductive lands, reservation Indians live hand-to-mouth. A bumper-sticker on the back of a battered pickup in Albuquerque, N.M., reads: "Want to lose weight? Move to a reservation."

Slick brochures advertise Indian-owned campgrounds and resorts scattered along reservation lands; a few tribes are developing their natural resources. But most people eke out an existence, coaxing corn from parched fields, herding straggling bands of sheep, handling menial jobs, depending on welfare.

Gracelia Esau, an urban Omaha from Nebraska, remarks, "On the reservation there are no jobs. You have to go too far for groceries. The hospitals are far away."

Continued

"I don't know how Indians survive out there."

In 1970, former President Nixon called the first Americans the "most deprived and most isolated minority in the nation. On virtually every scale of measurement—employment, income, education, health—the condition of the Indian people ranks at the bottom."

A survey published in 1973 names the Indian the country's most impoverished American; he ranks below the Spanish-speaking and blacks. The 1970 census reports 40 percent of the Indian families live on incomes below poverty level, compared to 32 percent of the blacks. Per capita, the Indian makes less than $2,000 per year, according to the census. Unemployment on the reservations ranges anywhere from 40 to 60 percent. One-third of all adult Indians are illiterate.

Generally, the health status of Indians lags 20 to 25 years behind the general U.S. population. Since 1955, tuberculosis death rates have declined 75 percent; infant death rates are down 51 percent; and influenza and pneumonia death rates have dropped 36 percent.

But life expectancy is 10 years less than the national average.

Dental health is poor; nutritional deficiency common; poor mental health is among the most serious problems among these people caught in the conflict of traditional culture values and demands of a progressive society.

"I drank to be with Indians," admits one LA man. Indian deaths due to alcoholism outstrip the national average six to one.

Connected with mental and emotional health is a problem Indians themselves often name number one: alcoholism. Bob Haskins, Oklahoma language missions leader, tells of walking through cemeteries in the western part of the state. "In grave after grave, this Indian died from alcohol—that one died from alcohol," he says. "Indians are drinking themselves to death." Nationally, drunkenness alone accounts for 71 percent of all Indian arrests. A survey by the Indian Health Service, which serves 538,000 Indians in 25 states (more than half the total Indian population) indicates alcohol-related death rates for Indians are 6.5 times the number for the general U.S. population. Indian deaths due to alcoholism increased 23 percent in 1973, alone.

Statistician Gaile Maller of the IHS says alcoholism-related deaths in 1974 were 52.8 per 100,000 Indians, compared to a national average of 8.4 per 100,000.

Alcohol dependence often develops at an early age. Beverage accessibility in the city, compounded by the need for companionship and the struggle of transition, increase the Indian's susceptibility.

Moving from a small town in Oklahoma, a Baptist welder says, "When I came to Los Angeles, I had a feeling of being out of place—and uncomfortable. The only way I could get comfortable was to—" he falters, "I don't know—to drink, I think. "I used to drink and be with Indians."

Comments Luke Yeahquo, also of Los Angeles, "When you come to a strange place you want to get the feeling of being back home. The first thing you do is seek out other Indians. In an urban area, Indians usually have a special place where they congregate. Most generally, it's a bar."

Too, Indians come from homes ravaged by alcoholism. Cordell Camp, 32, a deacon in an Indian Baptist church in suburban Los Angeles, says, "My dad was an alcoholic. My mom was an alcoholic. I was an alcoholic at a young age. I would never admit it when I was drinking. But I ca look back and see I was."

Camp, brother of AIM leader Carter Camp, says ex- plored every avenue of recovery. "There wasn't any ng I wouldn't try. No book I wouldn't read. But I never coul- actu- ally quit."

His wife encouraged him to visit church. Despite hi ncili- nations, he attended. "I was always against the urch, against God or Jesus Christ or anything that was ass- iated with churches. I didn't see the reality of it." Howev- the church surrounded him with a circle of Indian frie- ls. "I didn't know what was going on," he admits, "but the people and the pastor taught me. I learned to revere God. I ju t be- lieved that Jesus Christ could save me.

"The scripture says his grace is sufficient. And has proven to be, for me.

"I can't say that liquor has been taken away from me. Or that the taste of it has been taken away from me. But Christ just fulfills everything.

"It's a funny feeling. I feel secure in Christ."

Concludes Camp, "I thank God for this Indian church."

Not all Indians feel that way.

In 1975, an AIM convention speaker identified the Indians' major enemies as the organized Christian church, anti-Indian education and the U.S. government. "The continued practice of spiritual ethnicide must stop," declared Vernon Bellecourt. "The Christian church must not be allowed to enslave the minds of our children."

"The white man's religion has destroyed our unity," echoes Edward McGaa, a Sioux.

Before white men came, the Indians had a concept of a creator God and of maintaining harmony with creation. As expressed in an ancient chant:

You see, I am alive.
You see, I stand in good relation to the earth.
You see, I stand in good relation to the gods.
You see, I stand in good relation to all that is beautiful.
You see, I stand in good relation to you.

Each tribe had its own religion, explains Roger Shupla, a graying member of the Albuquerque Baptist Indian Mission. "To the Indian, everything has life. The trees, the birds, the mountain, the moon, the stars."

Son of the chief Hopi snake dancer, Shupla explains tradition and folkways are binding. "These things they teach you when you are little," he says, "it's hard to get away from."

In 1975, AIM identified its enemies: the government, anti-Indian education, church. "White man's religion destroyed our unity."

Not only has religion been an integral p -t of daily living for the traditional tribal em- bers, the young seem to be returning old ways. Anna, a Pima student at South est- ern Indian Polytechnic Institute, sa "I think we are learning too many white ays. We used to worship the Great Spirit. I ink it would be nice if we could go back it." Beyond being a religion that is at va- ance with tradition, "The (Christian) churci is in competition with the Native Indian Church," says B ptist Indian pastor Billy Saumty Jones of Oklahoma City.

Incorporated in Oklahoma City in 1918, the Native I- dian

Russell Begaye watches his young church members astride a circus elephant. The clown quips, "Real Indians are riding for a change."

Church combines worship of traditional spirits with Christian deity, using the hallucinogenic peyote cactus to induce "visions" and meditative states. Services begin at 8 p.m. on Saturday as members gather around the "sacred" fire. They smoke tobacco and chew the peyote button. The rituals last until 8 a.m. Sunday.

"They call it worshiping," says Jones. "They say they are praying to God. But the Bible says you pray to God through Jesus. This religion doesn't accept Christ."

Indians have looked askance at Christian religious groups which espouse acculturation with salvation, and which maintain a double standard. Says critic Nate Hernasy, instructor at Albuquerque's SIPI, "When I went to church, I had to put on white man's clothes. White Christians told me not to go to the powwow.

"I often wondered why they wanted me to break away from my people."

At the same time, he points out, "They preach brotherhood. They preach decency: don't drink, don't steal, don't fool around with the neighbor's wife. Then, during the week, they break these commands. 'Do what I say—don't do what I do.'"

John Edwards, a SIPI administrator, explains the double standard is particularly difficult for the Indian to resolve. "The Indian cannot play roles." When the Indian witnesses hypocrisy in religion, business and day-to-day living, "It hurts him," says Edwards. "The next thing you know, he heads back to the reservation."

Claudio Iglesias conducts a student counseling ministry at SIPI, maintaining a low profile in the midst of a student body dominated by AIM activity and students who avoid Christianity as "white man's religion."

Several times a week, Iglesias, also pastor of the Albuquerque Baptist Indian Mission, wanders across the cottonwood-landscaped campus, making conversation with students and eventually inviting them to church.

One day, after Iglesias had sat down in the student center and ordered a meal of stew and Indian fry bread, the tall, brusque Hernasy called above the din of the jukebox and student conversation, "Hey kids. Has he changed you yet?" Nodding toward Iglesias, "He'll change your religion. He's a preacher."

"I don't have 'religion,'" the little pastor shot back.

"What do you have, then?" Hernasy asked, as the students watched the parley.

"I have *Jesus*."

Iglesias, who is not a North American Indian, but a Cuna from the San Blas islands near Panama, is particularly sensitive to the strain of acculturation facing urban Indians, and to the adjustment of Indians who eventually become Christians. The son of a witch doctor, Iglesias made the tra- -ition from primitive island to urban life while a young per- -s.

"In Oklahoma," he says, "after you become a Ch -stian you're an apple."

Iglesias works to ease the transition. He encourage tribal identity. "What tribe are you from?" he questions as orm ally as others might inquire, "Where do you live?" o- How do you do?"

Christianity, he believes, should transcend cultur "For many years, we have tried to get our people to fit into outh ern Baptist programs." Now programs must fit the pe ple

Cordell Camp of LA says, "Thank God for this Indian church."

Indians feel dejected and unloved, says Billy Jones. "At our church, we say there is someone who loves you. *We* love you."

Although powwows have been an important part of Indian expression for urban transplants, too often, according to Iglesias, "We tell them, 'Because you become a Christian powwow is out of your life.'" Other Indian pastors object to the drinking and immoral atmosphere created by some powwows. But Iglesias has taken a soft line. "I've finally decided we must accept people the way they are." Quoting Emile Garson of the Soto tribe, he continues, "Missionaries have often preached their culture as part and parcel of the message of Christ. It is the culturized Christianity that Indians have continually rejected."

Iglesias believes "we are so enthusiastic when we have new converts that we try to cram into them a mountain of Christian ethics and teachings while overlooking the problem of cross-cultural communication.

"Many Anglo Christians don't realize Indians go through an identity crisis when they become Christians." Often, he explains, the Indian Christian is rejected by his people as a result of his spiritual commitment. This is compounded by the problems of urban Indians who "already have an identity crisis—so they are going through a second.

"They are not accepted in their own culture," explains Iglesias, "or the Anglo culture. They are torn."

He believes the church should provide a comforting, supportive environment. He encourages his people to show acceptance when Christians falter or when those outside the fellowship do not behave in a worshipful manner. "If you see an individual come in, intoxicated, let's not chase him out of the church. Later," he instructs, "one of you fellows who have been through this, talk with him."

He advocates patience: "I feel Indian Christians should have the chance to prove themselves before being thrown out of church.

"Our Christian maturing process might be slower."

Usually, the Indian churches and missions minister - Indians from a conglomeration of tribes; some inner -city churches include members of various races.

In Iglesias' church, located in downtown Albuqu- -que, the Kiowa and Hopi hum along as Navahos lead out in na- -tive hymn. In San Francisco, Allen Morris, a tall, Okla oma Indian, sees his congregation as ministering to peopl "involving all races," including Italian and Filipino. "Othe cul- tures would rather associate with a cultural group, wh ther they are from that culture or not." Bob Haskins, head o lan- guage missions for Oklahoma, says Little Springs B ptist Church has a "vision to reach not only Indian people—, few whites are coming."

With a few exceptions, Indian congregations are strug- -ling

A place to turn

Su- vival in the city.

-rced by joblessness to leave his home, the Indian comes without tools or experience to carve a place—an identity—in America's urban wilderness.

Intimidated by snarling traffic, the unending snake of asphalt and towering forests of cement and steel, the Indian quietly bears the pain of his transition.

Where do you start to look for a job?" ,asks Helen Begaye, former missionary to Indians in Albuquerque, N.M. "What do you do when your child gets sick?"

"Some people," she continues, "spend the night in the park. They have never been on a bus—or read a street map."

Indians in the city. For Dallas Baptists, used to cheering Cowboys' football on Sunday afternoons, the idea of Indians in the area probably seems as remote as their grammar school history books.

Yet, a survey taken in 1974-75 indicates 15,000 to 16,000 Indians living in Dallas—making their homes in the rundown apartments of East Dallas and in the homes of Oak Cliff.

Although Baptist association and state leaders have failed to reach this population, a handful of Baptist and former-Baptist volunteers are working to meet some needs through the Dallas Inter-tribal Center (DIC).

The center reaches a gamut of needs, -om health and recreation to job -nning and placement, to alcoholism -habilitation.

Currently, the center receives federal funding. But because federal -onies may run out, the center is becoming self-supporting through sale Indian articles produced by its -ndcraft center.

Dr. James Smith, a former Kenucky Baptist-turned-Methodist, was -nong the first volunteers to help -ith the clinic—the first phase of the -ter-tribal Center. Jane Hendrix, a -allas Baptist and registered nurse, -orks in the clinic daily. The Center's -terim director is Oklahoma Baptist -ndian, Mike Mahsetky. A Baptist lay- reacher directs the job training in pholstery and electronics. Southern -aptist Bernice Johnson, former executive director of the center, now runs the arts and crafts shop.

At the clinic, physicians examine an average of 22 patients twice weekly. Since its beginning five years ago, 2,600 Indians representing 56 tribes, have been assisted.

Jones and others believe the response has been good. Explains Bill Koweno, Manpower director, when Indians visit other city health clinics, "they end up in line with 50 others. They sit and wait and never say a thing—and boil.

"And they never come back." At the DIC clinic, the people receive individual attention and followup. Also, Indians helped build the center, and Indians are in positions of responsibility.

Noka Ricord, who assists families needing food, clothing and social services, explains DIC philosophy. "When you're dealing with personal lives, you can't say you work from 8:30 to 5—that's it." Her own hours often stretch past 6 or 7 p.m.

Ralph Wermy, director of alcohol work, tells of Indian kids sniffing spray paint and families broken by alcoholism. But frequently, he says, Indians are reluctant to express their needs to strangers. And, he continues, "When you come to the city, you don't know where to go for help." His office locates alcoholics, counsels them, provides alternatives to early drinking problems and makes referrals.

While other agencies may not have the time, "We take time to hear what Indians have to say," Wermy explains. When one Indian man with a drinking problem said he was lonely for his Indian wife, the agency located the particular woman and "gave her a hint," Wermy says with a chuckle.

"We want to help," he emphasizes. "Anyway, what is a community supposed to do? Turn its face the other way?"

From obtaining teachers for weaving, pottery and jewelry-making and leather work, to finding equipment for the clinic, "we've had to hustle," admits Koweno.

Echoes Mrs. Hendrix, "We hustle *everybody* and *everything*," welcoming church tours and volunteers.

"I suggest if Baptists want to put money where it will do the most good for Indians, they could help an already-established, struggling program.

"If we had the money, you know, we could start a dental clinic in no time flat," she points out. According to a survey, 40 percent of the native Americans living in Dallas have never been to a dentist.

Jane Hendrix suggests Baptists help more.

The center provides a clothing closet and canned goods to tide over the newcomers and the down-and-outers.

"An Indian man came to DIC for help because he could not read or speak English. After literacy training he returned. The biggest thrill for him was to come in and write his name for us," recalls Mrs. Ricord.

Koweno says, "We have some who come to us penniless, just begging us for jobs."

"Some are lonely," adds Mrs. Ricord. "They are undergoing a terrible transition. They just need a person to talk to."

Volunteers and staff at the center work to meet needs of Dallas Indians, but they are limited by time, facilities and funds.

And, as Mrs. Ricord explains, they are limited by the number of Indians willing to seek help. Many undergo the confusion, the loneliness, the trauma of transition, too proud to seek aid.

"If an Indian can tolerate pain," she says, "he will." •

congregations. The members want Indian pastors, "but they're not able or willing to pay for them," says Jones.

Jones, whose own father was a pastor in Oklahoma, raised a family of 10 on "almost nothing."

Sitting in his cramped Little Springs Baptist Church office at the foot of the baptistry stairs, Jones admits, "I never wanted to be a preacher, let alone a missionary. I felt I could bargain with the Lord. I said, 'I'll teach, I'll do anything but preach.'"

In Oklahoma, where Indian ministries and indigenous missions are common, Jones' congregation has experienced rapid growth. In 1974-75, Jones was named pastor of the year—Little Springs, church of the year. In three years time, "We have doubled everything in size," reports Jones. "Our target is to become self-supporting in two years."

The church completed an $11,000 addition recently, and Jones reports his people give "above and beyond their tithe." They contribute almost $500 a month salary; the HMB and Oklahoma Baptists provide $225 monthly.

Outside their own congregation, Little Springs reaches transients through Grace Rescue Mission. "We preach one night a month, take clothes, food, anything that is a necessity," says Jones.

The key to dealing with Indians, he believes, is attitude. "Love has got to be shown first.

"Indians have the feeling of hatred that the white man took the buffalo away. They are dejected and feel nobody loves them. Here, we say there is someone who loves you. We love you. It's the love of God going forward."

One Baptist observes lack of work among urban Indians is due not to discrimination as much as a glaring case of "bad neglect."

While many Indian churches are dependent on financial help from their "smother" churches—the larger, established mother congregations in the cities—a few, like Little Springs and Central Baptist in Oklahoma City, have mission projects of their own. Borrowing $50,000, Central Baptist built an "American Indian New Life Center." An upper-deck game area, meeting rooms, offices, kitchen and large gymnasium that doubles as a skating rink, are housed next to the church facility. Members of the church had done extensive ministries with alcoholics, but "we built this building so we could salvage some folks *before* they become alcoholics," says Anglo pastor Frank Venable.

Venable, whose Kiowa-given name is "Rainy Mountain," says his congregation pulls together on projects. A group worked with the Utes in the Colorado mountains for several summers, conducting Bible schools and preaching services. Now, they take members to Jimmy Creek, 20 miles north of Lawton. "We go there, camp in tents, cook on open fires, get water from the creek. We hold Vacation Bible School out under the trees." The kids are rounded up in cars and a bus on a pre-established route. "We stay from Saturday to Saturday," says Venable.

On Saturday afternoons, some members volunteer at the federal reformatory in El Reno. On Christmas, home-cooked Indian food was taken to the institution. After establishing rapport with Indian inmates, sometimes the church helps prisoners after release.

"If people have trouble and need help, we come," [illegible] says. "We don't ask questions."

Alvin Williams, a Caddo member of Central and [illegible] national Golden Gloves champ, sponsors a boxing [illegible] Indian youngsters. He trains them, then hauls them [illegible] naments throughout the state. He plans to take six [illegible] the Junior Olympics. "Boxing is my love life," adm[illegible] liams, also a former alcoholic.

But, he adds, "We had four boys who became Ch[illegible] This is my main purpose."

Venable says he has worked to develop leadership [illegible] the church. During Bible school, "I am here, if s[illegible] needs a box of pins or something else. But," Venab[illegible] "the *people* lead it."

The two Oklahoma City churches are exceptions. HMB-Benham says one reason Baptist work is slow among Indians is many are wary of exploitation by missions groups. I. Tulsa City a "mission" mailed out Indian trinkets and requ[illegible] contributions. Navahos finally investigating the "mission" traced its only headquarters to a single post office box on the reservation. They learned the organization had raised in ex[illegible] cess of $3 million as an Indian mission, Benham says.

Another problem is Indian populations fluctuate drastically in the city, as the people move back and forth between urban and reservation life, and from the inner-city to suburban homes.

The resounding phrase, "lack of Indian leadership," echoes among Indian and Anglo pastors, alike.

And a few admit, there has been neglect.

An example can be found in Fort Worth. When Russell Begaye entered seminary at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he sought fellowship with an Indian mission there. He found a handful of Baptist Indians, who had struggled to maintain a mission in a transitional neighborhood. "They had not had a pastor since 1972," he explains.

Between seminary study and a parttime job, Begaye and his wife, Helen, have tried to revive the dwindling congregation.

The dilemma: open spaces or apartment parking lot playgrounds?

ANCLAN-BENFIELD PHOTO

Although he is not officially the pastor, Begaye preaches regularly. On Saturday afternoons, when he isn't waiting on customers at The Indian Way, a jewelry store, he makes telephone contacts for the church and prepares sermons.

What little free time he has may be used in visitation or providing recreation for church young people. "We expect that church to come out of the ground and grow," Begaye says.

And when the church needs a spokesman in the community, Begaye has accepted the responsibility.

To spur lagging urban Indian missions, seminary student Russell Begaye calls for "fired up" Indian religious leadership

For awhile, the mission had its own facility. But vandalism forced a move to the fellowship hall of their sponsoring church, James Avenue Baptist. James Avenue agreed to sponsorship about five years ago, recalls pastor Frankie Rainey. But he admits the church has offered only "the encouragement of another church—endorsement." There was never "financial responsibility," Rainey recalls. Rainey expresses regret that his congregation has not done more to help its Indian mission; yet he has tried to be sensitive to the mission's strong sense of independence. "James Avenue members are compassionate, godly people," he says, but admits, "there has been some neglect on our part."

The Anglo church first "investigated all kinds of possibilities. One of them," Rainey says, "was for the Indians to join us in our services. But they never have been content to do that.

"One thing we have learned about Indians, is they want to maintain their own identity. And we respect their feelings."

The church has had joint fellowships with the mission and provided some workers for a Vacation Bible School. "Individually, some of our members have tried to help, from time to time, financially," Rainey continues. "But the church wasn't prepared to help financially. We feel terrible. But it has just been one of those things."

Rainey tried to obtain help from the association, state convention and Home Mission Board, but without success. "I don't know where the problem lies," says Rainey.

"I don't think it's discrimination, but bad neglect."

A disgruntled Baptist Indian in Fort Worth agrees. "The sad thing about Texas is they have a lot of missionaries to Mexicans, but Texas doesn't recognize Indians as language missions.

"I don't think Texas Baptists are aware. Or they don't have time."

The story in Fort Worth is the same in Dallas, in Chicago, in Los Angeles.

A missionary who explored work among Chicago Indians several years ago, says, "There was some opposition from the Indian center; those people tended to be antagonistic. Few Indians had a Southern Baptist background.

"To begin a mission would have taken some good, indigenous work."

Nothing was done.

The tragedy of neglect in urban Indian missions is compounded by the fact that when Indians come to the city, they are seeking Indian ties. They often respond well to concern. According to a study done on Indians relocating in Los Angeles, more Indians went to church when they came to the city (70 percent) than on the reservation (53 percent).

The Indian population also is considered the "fastest growing ethnic or racial population" in the United States. Says Begaye: "I wish we had some Indian religious leaders—the fired up ones.

"Most Indians have been in contact with Christianity. All they need is a place to be." •

Urban Indians try to recapture their colorful past at a powwow. Their sound equipment is a concession to their new life.

Baptists are "walking a wide path down the Rio Grande" to prove that this God-forsaken land is not God-forsaken at all.

by Everett Hullum / photography by Don Rutledge

EL RIO Y DIOS

Weak and tired, her strength dissipated by a series of upriver dams and canals, the Rio Grande dumps into the Gulf of Mexico. Summer flood rains may raise her youthful, coursing spirit; the twin metropolises of Juarez/El Paso may trap her between concrete banks; canals may dry her into a chain of disjointed puddles; Big Bend's sharp, sheer cliffs may pinch her into a narrow channel; international Falcon Dam may bloat her; citrus groves and palm trees of the lower valley may sap her.

But she survives them all.

Then struggles, without a whimper, to her old age at Boca Chica Beach; there, her journey over, dies.

Seldom more than a few hundred yards wide, often a wadable trickle, the Rio Grande divides Mexico and the United States, Mexico and Texas. But can she be a boundary at all, this sacrificial mother who suckles the two-and-a-half million people living along her winding, tortuous course?

For the 900-mile Rio Grande offers her breasts to a barren, starved, parched land of oven-heat and unending winds. Her life-gifts are Laredo's carrots and cantaloupes and onions; Brownsville's orchards of oranges and grapefruit; El Paso's cotton and maize fields; Big Bend's cottonwoods and Mexican wheat.

"It's hard to realize," says Texas pastor Floyd Conner, "that little thread of water makes such a difference."

It is also hard to realize that such an insignificant copper-tinted strip, ablaze in the late afternoon sunlight, could be a symbol of ministry for the Baptists of Texas—and beyond.

For as nothing has ever done, the Rio Grande has become a rallying point for dozens of talented, determined Southern Baptists who are giving of themselves to make Texas Baptist River Ministry the most ambitious, varied—and exciting—missions effort ever conducted by a state convention.

Continued

Hurricane Beulah a d a WMU focus opened Ba ptist eyes to needs of mil ons living along a lonely str tch of muddy water and separ ted from the rest of T xas by "200 miles of noth ng."

Elmin Howell tells of crusty old R.G. Van Royen, an HMB missionary to Panama who in retirement moved to Presidio, in Texas' hell-hot Big Bend area. Van Royen had pastored there 30 years before; he was shocked to find nothing had been done since. His planned stay of a few months stretched into years.

Finally Texas Baptists, worried the old man was overtaxing himself, sent someone to ask him to re-retire.

Van Royen never gave him a chance: "I know why you've come; but you didn't send me here; the Lord did. And I'm not leaving until he tells me to. Furthermore, you don't have to send me the salary supplement, because all I use it for is to feed these starving Mexicans."

The man returned to inform his boss: "If you want Brother Van to retire, *you* tell him. And you can't stop his salary or a lot of Mexicans will starve to death!"

Elmin Howell, river ministry coordinator

The story may not be exact, but its essence is true enough to make Howell's point: river ministries inspire a special sort of dedication and demand a special sort of commitment.

Dozens of teeth-clenched, gritty Van Royens can be found in the cities and villages, working in a people movement that Larry Jerden in *World Mission Journal* describes as "ordinary people doing extraordinary things with such regularity it has become deceivingly commonplace."

"How do you relate all the miracles that have happened?" asks Howell.

The initial miracle may be that Texas Baptists are there in the first place. For years, they considered the border "a colony of Texas separated by 200 miles of nothing," says a valley resident.

An El Paso Baptist leader, upon hearing of early river ministry plans, was so skeptical he refused to believe help could come from upstate churches. When it did, he was so moved, he cried.

Jerry Johnson, Valley Baptist Association worker, recalls a visit by an upstate pastor, who said, "I didn't know you had this many Baptist churches down here." Replied Johnson, "I didn't know you even knew we were here."

In fact, the river is 300-500 miles from the centers of Baptist concentration, and getting across the message of Rio Grande needs was difficult. It began in the early 1960s.

Joe Lee, an itinerant Baptist missionary, established nucleus congregations of Mexicans in the El Paso area; churches in Big Bend reached "wetbacks," who carried their new faith to their homes across the border; Van Royen's work drew attention; a statewide crusade had results.

Then two important events occurred: in summer 1967, Hurricane Beulah devastated the Brownsville-Matamoros, Mexico area. Upstate churches sent teams to help in repairs. These workers brought home word of the extreme needs along the border: horrible poverty, high illiteracy, rampant disease.

That fall, the state WMU focused its annual offering on the river; the largest receipts in its history poured in: $600,000.

"We finally began to realize we had one of the greatest mission fields in the world right here," says Howell, who was appointed director of river ministries in 1968.

In a region where Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny speak Spanish, it was, in fact, very much a foreign mission field: four of five valley residents are Hispanic; moving west to El Paso, the Hispanic to Anglo ratio grows to nine of ten in some areas. Baptists, too, are a minority: one of every six Texans is Baptist. But along the 25-30-kilometer-wide Rio Grande corridor, only one in 25 is. In some north Texas counties, 40 percent of the population is Baptist. Yet a survey of valley Christians found only 8.5 percent were Baptist; 76 percent Catholic. In other river sections, the percentage decreases to less than 5 percent Baptist.

Those are not statistics to thrill Texas Baptists. Along that stretch of muddy water live 2½-3 million people; about one-third of them are in the Brownsville/Matamoros area; another third straddle the border at El Paso/Juarez. The final third are splattered along the remaining 850 miles.

Geography and living conditions give each area its own personality—and its own needs. And once aware of them, Southern Baptists, working in coordination with the Texas convention, the HMB, the Foreign Mission Board and the National Baptist Convention of Mexico, have moved with surprising adeptness, to begin ministries tailored to each. Money and resources have poured in. But the most significant infusion has been in massive volunteer labor.

The height of activity comes in the broiling 100 plus degree days of summer. So it was in June that photographer Don Rutledge and I flew to Texas to see the difference an eight-year concentration of time, energy and talent had made in the lives of Rio Grande people. For two weeks we traveled the Brownsville-El Paso route. Our report follows.

Brownsville pastor Bob Clements (third from right) talks over orphanage problems with workers

Volunteers paint and repair orphanage building

Fredi Yandow (left) translates Dr. Bill Wilkerson's prescription

Mansfield, Tex., volunteers drill postholes for an orphanage fence

One of the most active churches along the river is Brownsville First, pastored by maverick Bob Clements. When Clements came 10 years ago, the church had a comfortable budget, one mission and few ministries. Now the 250-member First gives a third of its resources to missions, yet still needs outside income of $5[illegible]00 a month just to keep afloat its 10 missions—eight in Mexico—six Mexican pastors, a medical/dental clinic and an orphanage for 33 Mexican children.

"We operate on faith," Clements says.

Clements was among the first persons to work in river ministries. After Beulah, he started going to ravaged Matamoros "giving frijoles (beans) and makings for tortillas." Shocked to see "kids sleeping in gutters and eating out of trash cans," he started praying about an orphanage.

A few months later Bernie and Freda Yandow visited Texas with experience in orphanage work in the Mexican interior, they told Clements, "We feel like the Lord wants us here, but we don't know doing what." Said Clements, "You know."

Sixty percent of the people living in Matamoros' crowded streets do not have indoor plumbing or electricity in their homes; dirt floors and open windows are common. The average income—inflated because many work on the Texas side of the border—may be $75 a month. Clements says a major need has been health care; a clinic on the orphanage grounds often has 350 patients a week—when Clements can get volunteer doctors to man it. The assignment isn't easy; the work often lasts until 10 p.m. and more than once weary doctors have tumbled into bed, clothes and all.

A former African missionary told Clements, "I've seen as much physical misery and pain here as in Africa."

Another aspect of First's ministries are the 75 plus vacation Bible schools it coordinates each summer; 20 upstate church groups corral about 7,000 kids in both Texas and Mexico. Clements says, "We've had 8,500 professions of faith in 10 years," despite no "open invitations. If we had them, all these kids would come down just to get a snow cone."

He credits outside churches with much of Brownsville First's success; their gifts and their volunteer work—from VBSs to repairing the orphanage—are of immeasurable help. But Clements also believes river ministries give something in return:

"We feel we influence a lot of lives about missions. You get out of this what you should; you'll be doing missions at home, too."

Echoes Clyde Morgan, pastor of New Hope Baptist in Mansfield, one of the churches that has done construction around the orphanage: "We believe our people gain an awareness of what can be done with a group effort—how God can use people; we expect our people to see they can do things here, but also where we live."

Continued

Summer workers erect VBS tent

As Brownsville First demonstrates, success in river-ministries depends on the summer influx of workers and funds from upstate and out-of-state churches.

Each year the 52 churches and 42 missions of the Rio Grande association are rejuvenated by some 2,000-2,500 people in 90-100 church groups who come to the valley to work in two main projects, construction and church outreach.

The association helps sponsor 20 missions in Mexico, and much of the construction on them has been done by volunteer labor with funds from upstate churches.

Church growth centers around vacation Bible school activities.

"We'll enroll 30,000 kids, counting both sides of the river," says Gordon Vestal, another association worker. "For many of them, it will be all the Bible study they'll get this year."

The youngsters who come on these mission tours take their responsibility seriously. Susi Carver of San Antonio's Trinity church, back for her second summer, finds it a "beautiful" experience. "The first day's crazy, the last days are best, 'cause you know the kids."

The goal, she says, "is to show them Jesus is not just a name– he's got something to give them."

Adds Danny Murray, Trinity's director of music: "Every time our kids go out they have to confront themselves, and their relationship to Christ. If they don't have this, they're lost.

"This is a tremendous growth experience for the summer workers."

Some grow in unexpected ways.

A valley Baptist leader recalls briefing one group on the problems of serving in Mexico. "I was telling them, 'Don't worry if you get the Mexican two-step. Everybody who works in Mexico gets dysentery at some time. You'll be sick, but we've got medicines and it'll be only temporary.'

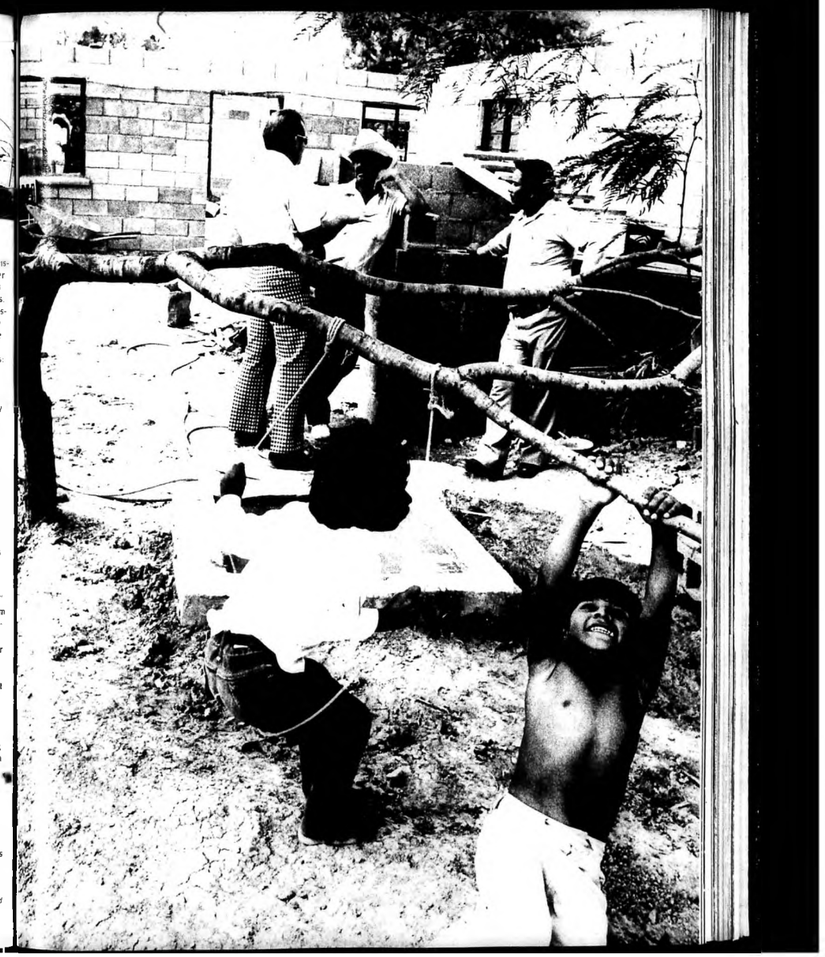
"One college student raised his hand. He asked, 'Can you tell us the symptoms of dysentery?'"

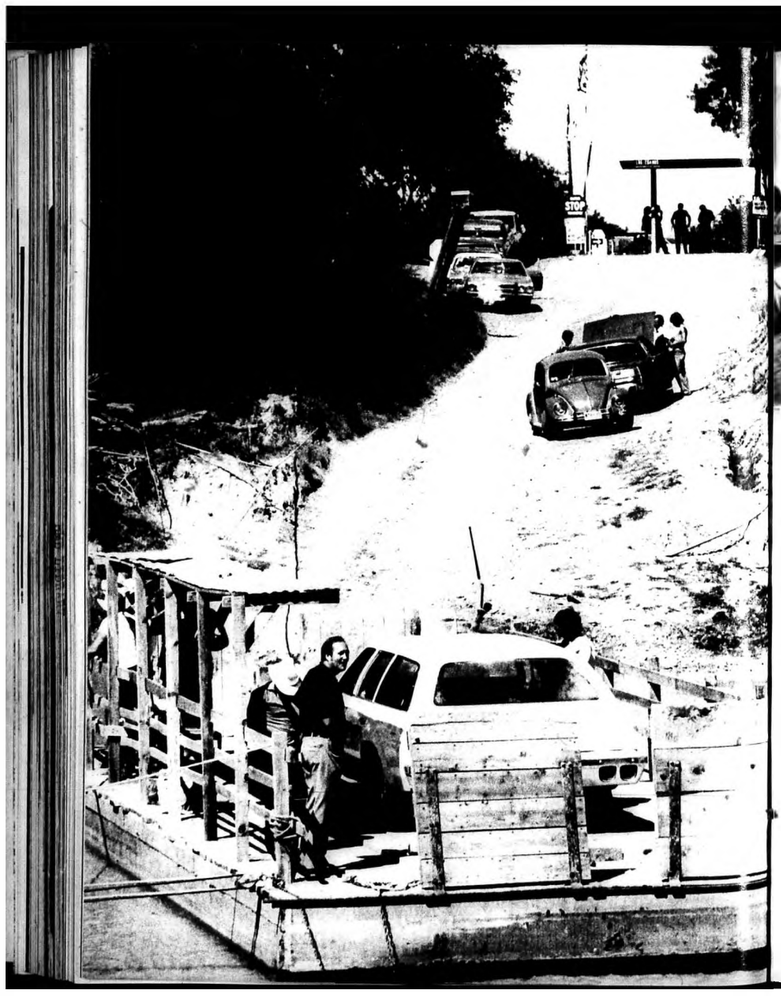
The man chuckles. "He found out pretty soon."

Continued

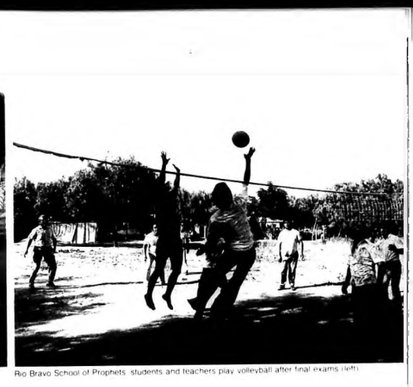
ABOVE: John Bunch of San Antonio's Trinity BC reads a VBS in a Brownsville subdivision.
RIGHT: Jerry Johnson of Valley association talks to workmen building a church in Control, Mex.

Each year about 2,500 volunteers from many states rejuvenate Rio Grande valley churches by showing Jesus is not "just a name—he's got something to give."





Johnson crosses the Rio Grande on the last hand-drawn ferry."



Rio Bravo School of Prophets students and teachers play volleyball after final exams (left).

Things along the river are changing—and as Jerry Johnson crosses the last hand-drawn ferry on it, he realizes Southern Baptists have been part of the change. "Sometimes I worry that we're doing too much," he admits. "We're spread thin. We may need to draw in. But opportunities come and we don't want to pass them up, so we just keep on doing," adds Johnson, a Valley association worker.

Among the opportunities association churches have seized are kindergarten work, Christian social ministries such as teaching women to sew, and beginning a business training school for young people who need job placement skills such as shorthand, math and typing. They've also helped Mexican Baptists begin a "semi-seminary" for young people needing religious training. "One of our biggest problems is lack of discipleship training," Elmin Howell says. "We can't skimp on winning them to Christ if we're not going to train them. It causes mammoth problems for missionaries and pastors unless we follow up with good training. The only place that's happening is at the School of Prophets." This concept of pastor-training near their homes was begun by Robert Smith, Valley association's director of missions.

This year, its fourth, the school graduated its first class. Afterwards, Octavio Resendez, pastor of First Baptist of Rio Bravo, Mex., was elated. "I'm convinced," he says, "this school is a tremendous benefit for these men and this whole area."

All the association's work in Mexico—in fact, all of Baptist River Ministry work in Mexico—is coordinated through Mexican Baptist associations, which relate to the Foreign Mission Board's work in the country.

The stress is on involving nationals in every phase. "We want to relate to existing work because one day we'll be gone, and if we don't tie what we do into local churches or organizations, they'll disappear," Johnson believes.

He tells groups coming in that "we're trying to grow missions into churches and make them as strong as possible. It's their job, he says, to involve local people, and do as much as possible to give them strength.

Johnson screens groups that go into Mexico for the difference in customs and culture which can lead to dangers. Twice Johnson, who grew up in the valley and has spent 12 years in Baptist work there, has been arrested in Mexico: once for preaching a revival; it's technically illegal for a foreigner to preach in Mexico, though most officials wink at the law. Johnson got off with a warning.

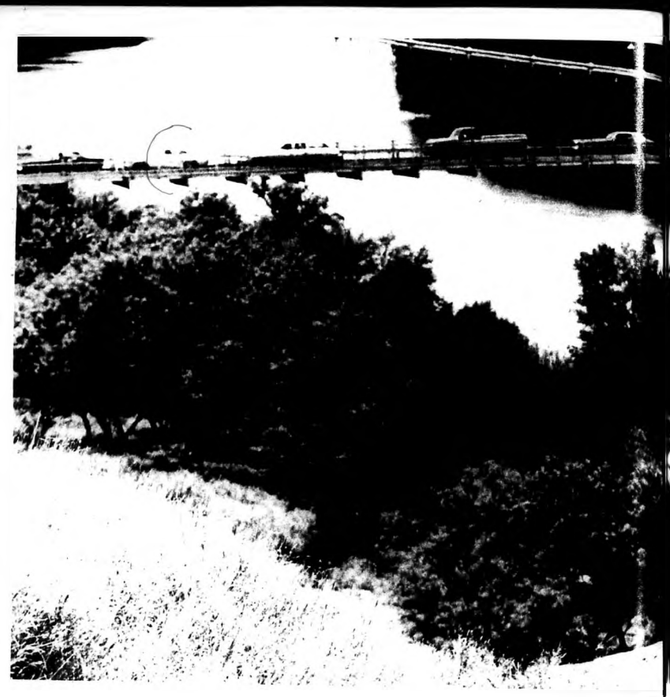
The most serious offense came when he took a bus load of students into Mexico. One was from India—and Mexico and India had severed diplomatic relations. Johnson was charged with smuggling an alien into the country. After a harrowing, solitary 24 hours in jail, Johnson was released.

But those bad memories are outweighed by the progress he's seen in the valley.

There's still much to do, he says, but "we've come a long way since the first year, when only three groups came down to work."

Continued

From kindergarten to business school to semi-seminary and church training, ministries aim at involving nationals on every level, in order to strengthen the churches.



Sunday afternoon cars cross the river at Roma. W.A. Park points to a mission site in Mexico.

Lucas Cabrera leads Sunday morning worship in Spanish.

Tony Berrera studies his SS lesson at Falcon Heights BC.

W. A. Park gave up rodeo riding to push an Anglo-deserted mission out of its "no-win" rut; now the mission is a church with two missions of its own.

Several years ago, W.A. Park visited Falcon Lake, formed b the damming of the Rio Gran near Roma, Tex. He wasn't in pressed with the sparse landscape "Lord help the person who pastors here," he recalls saying.

In 1971, that person became Park himself.

The first thing he set about was changing the Roma-Falcon Heights Baptist Mission's "no-win philosophy After the dam's completion in the m 1950s, most Anglos moved away. Th

dful left believed that "this is just outpost struggling to hold its own," k says. "I've preached against that tude for four years."

le's also seen the membership more n double—to about 200—and con- ute into a church that sponsors missions.

he missions have had "funny in- ruptions" now and then, "like a nk stumbling in and a Catholic priest ing by to count heads." But both growing, too.

ervices are in English and Spanish, and the church's other activities include children's programs and sewing classes for women.

Park, a former rodeo bareback rider, also has built good relations with the Catholic-dominated community leadership. And he's attracted other workers, from "winter Texans"—retired people who come into the area in the winter months—to young men like Lucas Cabrera.

Cabrera came to Roma from Dallas specifically to work in river ministries; he teaches Sunday School, visits in homes, drives the church bus, plays guitar and leads singing for the Spanish services.

Like Park himself, who calls Cabrera "my right hand," he felt called to this area. To support himself, Cabrera teaches school, but his real job, says Park, "is working for the Lord."

"All of us here do a little bit of everything," says Cabrera. "That's why I like it."

Roma may seem remote and lonely, admits Park, "but I've never been happier. This is where God wants me to be."

Continued

With scraps of fabric, faith and ingenuity, women fashioned a new business.

Loraine Shores (left) and Carmen Lopez check puppet production as Soledad Gonzales finishes the largest model.

For Loraine Shores, all the pieces fit together one afternoon on the way back from Waxahachie. In her car trunk were 500 pounds of cloth scraps. "I didn't know what I was going to do with it," Mrs. Shores recalls, "but Elmin Howell had told me that one rule of river ministries was never to turn down anything." On the way back to her home in Zapata, Mrs. Shores saw an article on patchwork pillows. "There it was, I thought," she says, "scraps—women who wanted local work to earn money—an outlet for their products in the winter Texans who wanted souvenirs to take back with them . . ."

So began Mighty River Handcrafts.

Mrs. Shores, a school teacher whose husband pastors First Baptist Church of Zapata, had been teaching sewing to four Mexican women in the small, nearby community of Lopena. She had become concerned about the local people's inability to earn money in the area, forcing them into a migrant life disliked by many of her school children.

Perhaps the patchwork pillows would allow them a future in Zapata, she suggested to her sewing class that week.

"Do you think anyone will buy anything made in Lopena?" asked one woman doubtfully.

"If we make them right, they will," Mrs. Shores assured her.

In three months, the work had mushroomed so much the women couldn't keep up with demand. Soon they were forced to move out of Mrs. Shores' living room into rented quarters, with the women working on assignment in their own homes.

The first month's income of $37.50 for seven women today has soared to $4,000 a month for 100 women.

"We started on scraps and faith," Mrs. Shores says.

The decision to go with Mighty River Handcrafts full time was especially difficult, since Mrs. Shores' income was important to the family finances. Not until a recent $20,000 contract to make puppets for the Sunday School Board did Handcrafts reach a point where Mrs. Shores could salary herself.

Mrs. Shores has had to learn business procedures—she kept the original records in shoeboxes in a closet—and the differences in cacti.

When MRH expanded to make pottery, she dug small cacti and potted them to sell. Luckily, she'd only given away a few to WMU visitors when a friend looked at her "beautifully prepared" pots and exclaimed: "Loraine, you can't sell them; that's peyote cactus—it's a drug and illegal to own or sell."

Mrs. Shores dumped her pots and today, one of the few things Mighty River Handcrafts doesn't sell is live plants.

Racial unrest simmers below the surface along much of the Rio Grande corridor, as Anglos control the power structures, while Mexican-Americans compose a huge percentage of the population. This was evidenced in Crystal City until a Mexican-American-led school boycott in 1971 erupted into fierce conflict. Harassed Anglo teachers quit, parents began pulling their minority status Anglo children out of the schools. In local elections, Mexican-Americans wrested government control from Anglos.

The strong First Baptist Church lost 100 families, as Anglos evacuated the small community. The few Mexican-Americans who didn't join "La Raza Unida" became known as "cocos"—short for coconuts: brown outside but white inside.

Into this tense atmosphere Norman Steinig came to pastor First in 1973.

"The church *was* racist," Steinig admits. He emphasizes the "was" for much has changed in Crystal City. First church now is integrated, with about one-third of its attendance Mexican-American. And Steinig feels the townspeople are "open to evangelism." He points to crowds at revivals and VBS.

"When we first got here," says Steinig, a former airlines pilot, "my kids got beat up every day. Now they can go anywhere. No problem. Anglos are still only about four percent of the population. But I believe God has worked in this town to heal its wounds."

Perhaps that's best illustrated in an incident that happened during the height of the crisis. A Catholic priest walked into First's gym; he said, "This place is going to be a community youth center," meaning the Mexican-Americans would run out the Anglos.

Today the gym is an active, daily youth center with such programs as basketball, pool, ping-pong, teen clubs, jogging, tennis and Bible study. It became the community youth center, not by force, but at the choice of First Baptist.

Yet Steinig still feels the church has far to go. "We need a Mexican-American pastor," he says, "to convince them it's not tokenism—we love them and we care."

Elmin Howell (second from right) brings a shipment of shoes to Steinig (right) for needy people.

BELOW: Harold Loomis relaxes between chores.

Without the winter Texans, who came and saw our need, we'd never been able to accomplish this much," says Loraine Shores. She estimates about half the help comes from the 7,000-plus retired people who migrate to the Zapata area each winter.

One of these is Harold Loomis, for 40 years a Clair, Mich., barber, who now calls Zapata his home.

Loomis, a trustee of Mighty River Handcrafts, admits he made a mistake. "I said to Mrs. Shores, 'We're here and we'll try to help.' That was wrong to say. I've been working ever since."

Loomis' involvement in the river ministries finally led him to settle in Zapata, but the river ministries also capture the short-term commitment of many others. Says "Mom" White, a member of First, Lubbock, who travels with her retired builder husband to work in church construction: "All my life I've worked in Sunday School and WMU. I've been mission-minded. But I've found you can read books and teach books, but you don't know anything until you get out on the field and see the needs and wants and how you can help."

Ronnie Ferguson of Chapel Hill's Bethel church, came to Zapata with a group of 34 to help build a parsonage for a Mexican associate to Loraine Shores' husband, Dub.

Ferguson works a shift that allows him to attend church only every third Sunday. "The river work is the only way I know I'm working directly for my Lord," he says. "It's a blessing."

For Harold Loomis, too, there is fulfillment. "Our being here is the Lord's doing, not ours," he says. "When you're doing what the Lord wants, you don't have too many problems. You're just naturally satisfied."

Continued

A student team from Samford cooks outside, draws water from the well and "suffers" with Big Bend residents.

A glow in the morning light, Boquillas sits on a hill top near the Rio Grande

Where the Rio Grande cups to form the Big Bend, the earth is most barren—awesome in lonely isolation. Cactus and mesquite trees cling stubbornly to life, the few people who eke out livings in this stark land must work in a cauldron of 120-plus degree temperatures, little rainfall—dust, dust, dust.

There works a medical/literacy team of seven women summer missionaries, led by Susie Frazier, 23, a nine-year veteran of river ministries.

The team spends a week in each village, then moves to another.... Jaboncillos, Las Norias, Boquillas, San Vicente....all in Mexico.

Four—all students from Samford University in Birmingham—teach the new Alfalit system of Spanish language literacy training.

Barbara Feucht, a nursing student in Texas, gives health care lectures and inoculates all in need. Nancy Arista, a Peruvian attending Southwestern seminary, translates for Feucht, plus helps the team with daily chores and nightly entertainment: in areas without electricity the whole village turns out for the puppet show, songs, Bible stories, cartoons and religious movies shown on projectors run by the team's portable generators.

"It's the only entertainment."

Fraz... e first time a student team ...the villages. "We live like ...ys Frazier, "cooking ...wing water from the ...g wherever we go. ...er with them."

...e are the women that ...ls "no foreign missionary ...ncounter the problems ... they cannot drink the ...at the food, the team carries ...rything needed to subsist. But they ...nothing cold—and nothing fresh. The first thing I want when we ...back is ice," says Glenda Jones. ...e second thing is a steak."

Continued

Guadalupe Luna raises rabbits.

Vickie Welch teaches Alfalit to Maria de Luna.

For the first time, Boquillas women learn anatomy in a river ministries health class.

In a game invented by Susie Frazier to teach cooperation and coordination, children play with a giant parach

BELOW: The river has changed Jerry Davenport's life

Larry Sharp and Susan Inman practice for the night's program at Boquillas

While getting water from the well, summer workers Doug Sullivan and Sharp talk to Jesse Flores

Explains one. "There is no way you can do what we do on your own power. You learn to trust God."

Perhaps as much as ice and steak, the women miss privacy. They are seldom alone. "They watch us," says Frazier. "They see our lifestyle, from brushing our teeth to reading our Bibles."

Children follow them constantly. Sleeping on the floor of schoolhouses, or, as in Boquillas, on the pews of the Baptist church, the women go to bed and wake up under the curious eyes of children.

But with music and games, the women entertain them. And they find satisfaction in the children's adulation.

The team's goal was to train one person to teach Alfalit after the team had gone, and to begin an Alfalit class of illiterates. The team has accomplished this, but Vicki Welch feels "more follow up is needed—and more time."

Adds D.L. Kite, the local supervisor who is responsible for the team, "These kids make it here, they'll never fail down the road. If they can hack it here, they can hack it anywhere."

Other Americans are hacking it in the Big Bend, too. Jerry Davenport, a Texas rancher, has moved his family for three months to Las Norias, a village of about 100 people some 90 minutes of jolting ride into the Mexico interior.

With Davenport are two summer missionaries. Together they work on numerous projects.

They're building an airstrip. Las Norias will be the fourth village to get one. Airstrips allow quick access in emergencies, something that's impossible on the potholed roads.

Baptists hope some day to use the strips, too, to fly in ministers who will serve several churches. It's a service much needed, says Davenport, since the only religious expression offered most villages is an occasional mass by a visiting priest.

Adds another river ministries worker: "Until we came, the people were forgotten about; even the Catholics only came twice a year."

Davenport has helped increase the capacity of the village well and introduced fresh vegetables to the people's diets. He taught them to plant gardens and, to protect the gardens from burros and dogs, scrounged (from land being cleared for a Texas freeway) barbed-wire to fence them.

In his years in the river ministries, Davenport has worked as a pilot, translator, medical aide, agricultural specialist, builder. But all have been on weekend/vacation time. This summer "tour" culminates a three-year interest that started on a cold winter morning in Boquillas. Almost against his will, Davenport had come with a friend who was passing out medicines.

"We worked all day," Davenport recalls. "There was so much sickness. I had never realized the need of these people. Ever since, it's been a continuing process of growth for me. I feel being here is the Lord's will for my life."

Whatever their shortcomings, the team members have found "there's no way you do what we do on your own power," says Frazier. "You learn quickly to trust God. He protects you and gives you strength to get from day to day."

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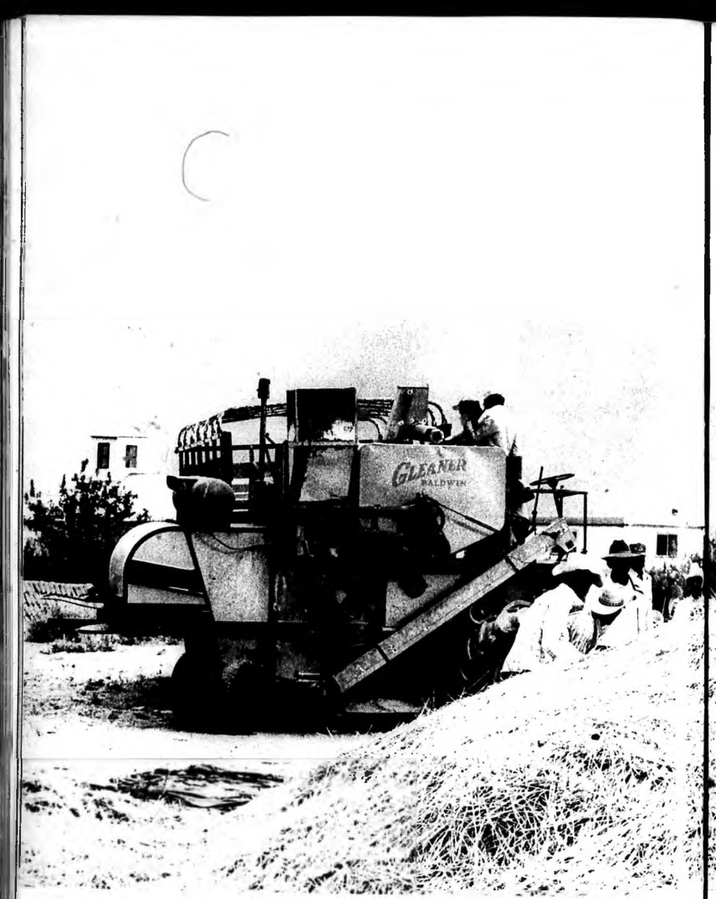


Fighting a "live for today only" philosophy, Baptists foster hope for a healthier future with improved farming, regular health care and a cheap source of protein.

Buck Davis (right) discusses Porvenir's improved wheat growing and threshing.

Most river ministries successes have come from a reservoir of volunteer labor. "We can call up many professions—dentists, doctors, carpenters, agricultural people, teachers, veterinarians," says one worker. "And they're willing to do their thing. Or if that doesn't fit with what's needed, they'll cook, wash dishes or drill for water."

They come because they hear the same call that captured Davenport—and that led another Texan to sell his land and move his family permanently to the river.

Buck Davis, a leathery rancher, decided after several years of part-time river work to "give it my full time." To support the family, Davis' wife, a registered nurse, works.

It's tough at times, Davis admits, "but I ain't got no regrets. I've grown far greater in my knowledge of how the Lord can and does operate than I believe I would have otherwise.

"The river ministry causes a lot of heartache, but also causes you to call on the Lord for things maybe in the past you didn't believe he could do.

"He's become a lot greater God than he was before I came."

Davis works with villagers who have "a poor man's mentality," says Davis. "They can't see ahead. They live for today only. If they wake up tomorrow, they live for that day."

D.L. Kite, the river ministry economics/agricultural consultant, plans projects that are future-oriented: raising rabbits and chickens to provide cheap, needed protein for diets; introducing mohair goats for milk and for the money their hair can earn; new crops to better balance the diets; better methods of growing the staple wheat—now up to 10 bushels an acre. Davis works directly with villagers.

The gleaner Davis brought to Porvenir, Mex., gave farmers their first mechanical way to thresh grain, for example. With production increased, they "pay" by giving 10 percent of their yield to the river ministries. "Our idea is no handouts, but a lot of help," says Davis.

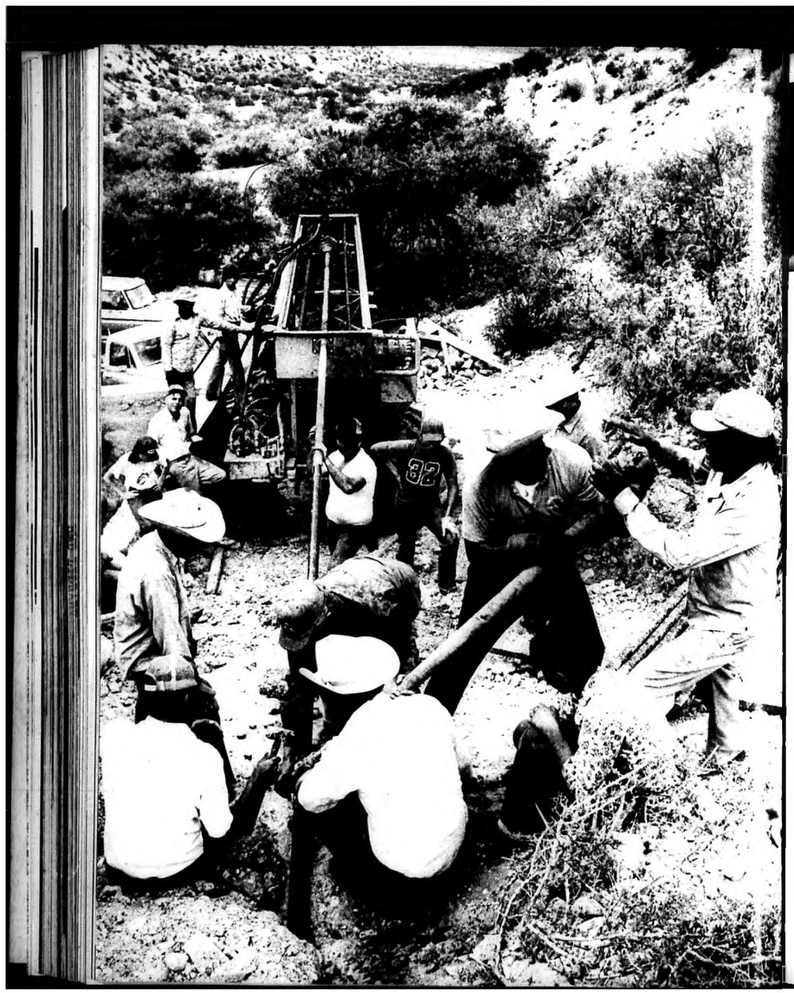
And that help comes wherever it's needed.

With some 30 plus church groups a year, coming from as far away as Alabama, Mississippi and Arkansas, Kite has directed a far-reaching program that includes medical/dental aid.

"We've inoculated almost everyone in this area," says Kite. Some estimate the infant mortality rate has dropped from 65 to 10 percent. Adds Joann Goatcher, a former FMB doctor now working in Van Horn while serving as medical consultant for the river ministry: "We've seen tremendous health care changes in the past four years.

"We've literally stopped epidemics. A lot of people are living much longer. There's a tremendous difference in the general nutrition of the people."

But as important as are better diets and medical care, perhaps the most vital service Baptists have offered these small villages is to drill for water. And it is here that D.L. Kite has used his own special gift to greatest advantage. *Continued*



Jesse Pedroza (above) watches the drilling for water—left. The well quadrupled Porvenir's supply.

As D.L. Kite (beside pipe) and Dub Ferguson (second from left) watch, Don Impson checks the flow.

Water. The word means life in this simple culture. A good, clean, plentiful source of water can proffer peace to these people, says Jesse Pedroza, associate pastor of Van Horn First church and missionary to three Mexican villages. "Without the water, the people squabble. There is sickness. With water, they have better sanitation, gardens can be planted—there is more life."

Without us bringing in water," says Buck Davis, "these people drink slop. Water's the first step in upgrading their living conditions."

The water-man for these remote villages is D.L. Kite. Eleven times straight Kite has brought in water where he has said "drill," there has come bubbling water. Once he found water in a village in which the Mexican government had spent thousands of dollars drilling without success.

It's a gift of God," Kite says simply. He has never charged for it, though it costs him time and energy.

In Porvenir, a tiny village south of Van Horn, Kite exhibited his skills. A team from Central Baptist Church, Magnolia, Ark., had come to drill, bringing a home-made rig.

The rig itself was a miracle; Kite believed the water to be best reached by drilling horizontally into the side of a mountain. Horizontal drilling was unheard of, but Dub Ferguson, an engineer in Magnolia, was challenged by the prospect.

A year ago he and the Central team had tried everything to get at the water—including "shooting" with dynamite—when the hand drill failed. Ferguson's efforts earned him the label "gringo loco" from the local Mexicans. But little else. He vowed not to come back until he'd solved the problem of getting the water.

For a year, Ferguson and Don Impson, a veterinarian, studied drilling rigs, which often cost $100,000 and up. Finally Ferguson designed his own, and, in a sleepless month of 20-hour days, Ferguson led the men of Central in building the rig at a cost of $10,000—much of it borrowed by Ferguson and Impson.

A trucking line that often transports river ministry equipment free, brought the rig, and Ferguson, Impson and Central's crew came to Porvenir.

For a week the crew of Central and the people of Porvenir worked. An hour after sunset on a Friday night—after more than 10 hours without food or rest—they hit water. It came at 130 feet into the mountain. Just as Kite had predicted.

"Everything he said we'd hit, we hit," says Ferguson.

Grinned Impson: "D.L. told us before we came, 'Christ will walk a wide path down the Rio Grande if you can bring in water with a rig like this.'

"We proved it could be done, that equipment of this type would work. The rig is being donated to the river ministries work, adds Ferguson.

Ferguson and Impson's Central church isn't the only one to manufacture equipment, especially for the river ministries. For five years, McDowell Road in Jackson, Miss., has been holding dental/medical clinics in the area. Their mobile clinic, built by the church, remains with the river ministries.

The sacrifice of these churches and individuals is typical of the river volunteers, says Kite.

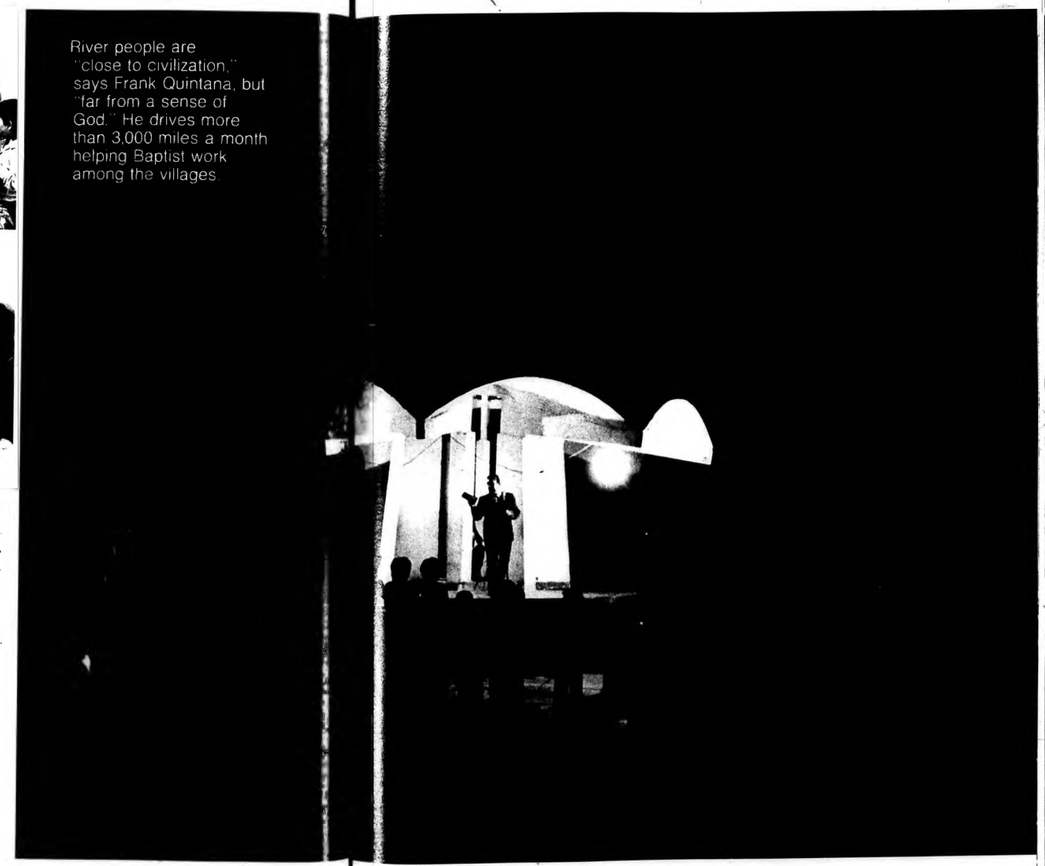
"But that's what the river ministries are about: laypersons doing their thing. Everything is just given by people who got concerned."

Drilling for water—horizontally—and blasting with dynamite, Dub Ferguson is called "loco gringo" by residents in tiny Porvenir, Mexico.

Snow cones draw children to VBS led by First Baptist of Rule, Tex.

Frank Quintana talks to a boy at a VBS held at El Sauser.
RIGHT: Rule pastor Daniel Hernandez leads a revival in El Sauser plaza.

River people are "close to civilization," says Frank Quintana, but "far from a sense of God." He drives more than 3,000 miles a month helping Baptist work among the villages.



Frank Quintana's only been on the job a few months. But he's already decided he needs a telephone in his office. That may be difficult. Quintana's "office" is his pick-up truck. As rural ministries coordinator, he drives more than 3,000 miles a month visiting and encouraging Baptist work in villages along the south stretch of El Paso Baptist Association.

Quintana coordinates El Paso church volunteers—there are 38 churches in the association—and the activities of the 20-25 upstate church groups that come each year. Together, they conduct revivals; do construction; hold medical/dental clinics; have VBSes, complete with ubiquitous snow-cone machine.

Some revivals are held in plazas, often attracting as many as half the village's people. Quintana has been able to get approval for the open-air services from local authorities—most of whom are Catholic—because they recognize the contribution of the river ministries.

That's evident, Quintana says, by "how happy the people are to see us; they're willing to do anything to show us they appreciate what's being done."

Yet, Quintana also feels frustrations that "we have so much to do but so little we can give the people. . . ."

Especially desperate, he admits, is the shortage of pastors for the villages that are near, yet so remote because of bad roads and difficult terrain.

"They are so close to civilization," he says, "yet so far from even a sense of God, that he exists there." *Continued.*

Vaughn Manning, director of the association, agrees with Quintana. But he feels the area is "very open to the gospel." To reach the people, the association has numerous programs, including a mobile clinic, built by a group of laypersons led by Manning. Retired nurse Amie Hawkins coordinates a team of the 10-13 doctors, nurses and translators who make twice-monthly forays into the villages.

"Our big program is immunization for measles, rubella, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough," says Hawkins. Like other medical workers along the river, she's seen a marked decrease in the number of children with these illnesses.

The clinic also treats the sick—and its patients run from those with severe heart trouble to arthritis to "a pain in my brain"—what they call a headache, says Hawkins.

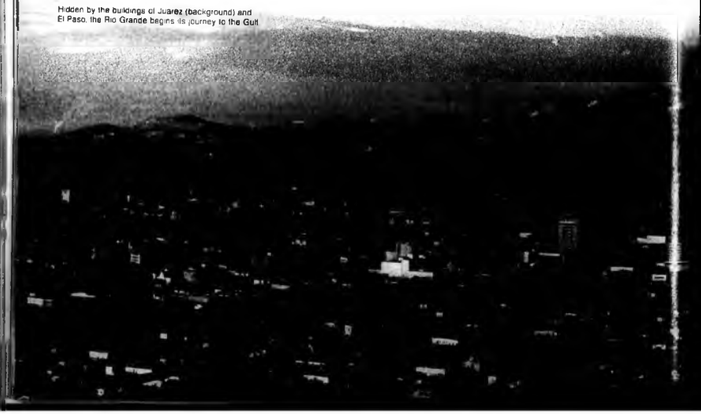
To avoid later headaches, Manning is motivating association churches to "develop strong Spanish ministries, because the churches can't survive as Anglo congregations in areas that are 92-95 percent Spanish." He points to Lakeside Baptist, where pastor Wayne Allmon has created a Spanish emphasis as the neighborhood shifted from Anglo to Mexican. And, even though struggling itself, the congregation sponsors a mission in Mexico: Allmon says, "Our people have really sacrificed."

Lakeside's mission is one of 24 counted by the association; 14 are in Mexico, mostly in the 600,000-population Juarez. The five full-time Mexican pastors, some of whom serve two congregations, are supported by upstate churches, without whom, says Manning, "we couldn't do the work."

Yet Manning thinks the work must be done—and quickly. "There is an emptiness in the people," he argues, "a vacuum. If we don't fill it with the gospel, the Communists will fill it. They're already trying."

Laymen of El Faro make bricks for their new church building.

More than a half million dollars worth of assistance in education, health and agriculture has accrued spiritual dividends both for Baptists and Rio residents.



Hidden by the buildings of Juarez (background) and El Paso, the Rio Grande begins its journey to the Gulf.

That sentiment echoes all along the river.

Yet assessing the spiritual impact of the river ministries is difficult. Physical dimensions are easy to gauge: water in a village means hope, life, a future; immunization means no polio, no measles, no diphtheria—longer life; an income—as that created by Mighty River Handcrafts—means a better standard of living and more stable family situations; business training means a chance for a job; an orphanage means a clean home for gutter-sleeping children....

But spiritual successes are not so easily measured.

Tom Ratcliff, director of missions for Coastal Bend Association, says the work is slow, discouraging and as "difficult as anything I experienced as a foreign missionary. When I served in the Dominican Republic, I felt we could go anywhere and build a church. That's not true here. We've been working here many years and still not seen significant progress in many places.

"For Southern Baptists, this is as much a pioneer field as Washington state."

Yet another worker points out that when he began eight years ago, no village presidents were Christians; today, about half are. And a valley Baptist [illegible] says, "We've ten [illegible] at the

resources has been astounding: "Conservatively, we estimate between a half and three-quarter million dollars are given to river ministries projects each year," says Elmin Howell, whose own budget as coordinator is less than $200,000 a year. And his funds are concentrated on promotion, training volunteers and coordinating activities.

Since 1968, more than 120,000 volunteers have come to labor along the river; 12-15,000 a year represent more than 400 churches in 16 states.

They are like Joe Robinson, a Mississippi electrician who gave up a vacation to "wire these churches. I just felt the Lord telling me to come." Dusty, sweating in the heat, he smiles: "And the Lord tells me I'll be back next year."

"There is no way to count what these people mean to the river ministries," says D.L. Kite.

Clearly, the volunteers have benefitted from their efforts. Adds Kite, "Many of the people who come don't seem to be active in their local churches. But they come down here and grow. They find themselves. They get active.

"They've been where the action is; they find the action back home."

Nevertheless, says Valley association's Coordinator Crystal, "we

cent of benefits than the groups do. We have 30,000 kids a year in VBS. Think back over the past eight years at the number we've had. That's bound to bear fruit."

Other evidences of what Manning described as "emptiness of the people" exist: Crystal City's Steinig reports more than 100 conversions in one revival; 125 came during a crusade in an El Paso area village; Jack Calk, director of missions for Del Rio-Uvalde Association, had 365 professions of faith in one VBS.

But translating those numbers into Baptist church members has been difficult. Few who make commitments—perhaps five percent estimates one worker—become baptized members of Baptist churches.

Yet Baptist churches are growing; the numbers of missions are increasing. And the work has changed so drastically one old-timer told Loraine Shores it was like going from "covered wagons to Cadillacs."

Even in cases where workers have found the people are unable to break with their Catholic heritage, their VBS or revival commitments have remained.

"We're strengthening a lot of Catholic churches," says one worker. "But I think that is a valid ministry, too. After all, we're not here to hold up Baptists; we're here to hold up Christ."

Perhaps, if anything, it

the bond that D.L. Kite describes: "All river ministries people feel a close kinship, no matter where they're working," he says. "We're all the same mind, to glorify Christ; we just see different methods to get there."

In river ministries, Texas Baptists have found a challenge, an opportunity, an excitement. Howell says that if Texas is different, it is because the state has found a "priority that needs to be met. But every state has its 'river ministry.'"

In fact, the river ministries are more than a program, more than an organization. They are a state of mind.

They are the experience Buck Davis knows when he says, "The river touches people; it makes you realize the true love the Bible speaks of."

They are the hope of a young woman trained by Mighty River Handcrafts, who told Loraine Shores, "I want to thank you for giving me trust in myself."

They are the action of David Riddlespurger, an ophthalmologist working in a Big Bend clinic. He was so moved by an old man who walked barefooted eight miles for an eye exam and glasses, that Riddlespurger took off his own shoes and gave them to the old man.

The land of the river ministries is often called "God-forsaken."

[illegible]

LIA-er Larry Jones hugs one of the children in the Love in Action program he conducts in Appalachia.

The LIA bus navigates bad roads to pick up children living in remote sections.

College student volunteers help Jones with the LIA children's activities, like group singing.

LOVE IN ACTION

Cumberland College students, led by the Home Mission Board's Larry Jones, are proving they have a name that "really fits" ● *by Tim Nicholas / photography by Knolan Benfield*

Somebody gives a hoot for the "holl rs."

The hollers—hollows—are narrow al-leys in the Appalachians; snuggle in them are tiny isolated mountain com-nu-nities: 30 houses, a church building nd a 40-mile trip to the market along w nd-ing dirt roads.

Their names—Canadatown, Chevr le, Catliff, Mulberry, Gum Fork—are r ely noted on the road atlases.

These communities, most deper ng for life on coal mining and loggin in-dustries, are the targets of a min try quartered at Cumberland College in vil-liamsburg, Ky., a city institution ne led in a mountain-rural environment.

"Some of these people are extre ely isolated," says Larry Jones, head of L ve

ction (LIA), a program of the school a its Baptist Student Union. The pro-g m's purpose is "primarily to share the g pel," says Jones, a two-year mission v nteer appointed by the Home Mis-s n Board.

We're also here to give college stu-d its a chance to become involved in a w rthwhile mission project designed to m et the needs of the people," he adds.

he program takes a recreational ap-p ach to evangelistic outreach. Student t ms drop into Kentucky and Tennes-S communities on Saturdays; they play g nes with kids, hold musical sing-a ngs, and often tell Bible stories.

We'll use any type of activity to help us get to know the people. Through that relationship, we share with them about how we found Christ and how they might do the same," says Jones, a 1974 graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

"We return regularly on weekdays to visit families' homes," says Jones, 23, who enjoys this aspect of the work. His idea of a good time is to talk with friends over coffee.

A couple of months ago, Jones and a group of students spent four hours visiting only three homes.

"One woman was on her front porch sewing a feather bed when we drove up," Jones recalls. "She ran inside to get her baby to show him off. Then her kids came out with their new school pictures. Finally we were given a tour of the chicken coop. We really felt welcome."

But not all communities have opened up to the LIA group. They haven't established themselves in every community they've visited. And once, they may have been shot at.

One reason for suspicion is that "fly-by-night groups have come in before," acknowledges Jones. "The people haven't seen consistency and don't expect this to continue.

"Another reason for failure is that some communities are not so isolated and not so dependent on what we offer.

"But for the most part, people—espe-

Continued

cially children—have been very receptive," says Jones.

Love in Action included 65 college students on its active rolls in the spring semester. Each gave two Saturdays a month and one weekday afternoon every two weeks. "We signed up everybody who showed an interest; consequently we were walking all over each other," says Jones, who plans to screen future volunteers. "We can just get so many people in our van."

The 12-passenger van was purchased with money from a combination of sources, including a student "rockathon"—some rocked in rocking chairs 26 hours with sponsors donating for each hour—money from the college and sale of "some junk cars."

Jones wants student volunteers to get local churches to carry on ministries begun by Love in Action. "So far one church has asked to take over our summer program in one community," says Jones, who feels that is quick progress. An estimated 85 Baptist churches are in Whitley County, which has a population of only 20,000.

A LIA boys' team plays basketball

Begun two years ago by a concerned student, LIA was first designed to meet needs of children, and ultimately to introduce them to Christianity. "We tried tutoring, but space and students with a lot of free time were difficult to find," says Jones.

"So far, we feel we've met the needs of the children, but the teenagers don't want to play Red Rover. They want something more meaty," he says. Jones plans some overnight campouts for the teenagers.

Adult ministries include sewing classes, plus some Bible study. "The only church in one community meets only once a month—when the weather is good." Jones estimates the weather is not good six months of the year.

Bad weather includes the results of a good rain—mud. "We've had mud on our doorhandles and have been bogged up to the axles of our van," says Jones.

Despite the weather, student volunteer participation in LIA remains high; their reasons vary:

Loria Hollis says, "I really feel needed out here."

Herbie Murray, a student from New York City, says, "I've involved my life in something I've never done before."

"You just see the kids growing while you're working with them," adds Debbie McNeil. "At Christmas we gave the kids crayons and paper and asked them to draw what Christmas was about. They didn't just have Christmas trees and presents—some drew crosses and some even drew pictures of Jesus and of God. It was beautiful. I've grown to love the kids and to feel their love for us."

The children enjoy it, too. "I come here a lot and I feel different. I think I learn more in Bible school than I do in school," says one 10-year-old active in Love in Action.

During the summer activity stepped-up for LIA: eight day camps were held, with Cumberland College providing finances for four students to work full-time on the program.

Funds for refreshments and equipment were augmented by a bike hike by Jones and eight LIA volunteers who cycled from Nashville to Williamsburg—225 miles—with seven speaking engagements along the way. "We raised about $1,000 and the trip molded the group together as a team," says Jones.

John Broume, a history professor and coordinator of freshman counseling, believes LIA helps Cumberland College's recruiting. "Many high school students have come in the summer to help with LIA and become interested and involved in the college.

"A large percentage of our students come from within 150 miles of here. Even they don't know just how deprived some people are until they visit the hollers. These communities can be only 10 miles from here, but 100 years away.

"I know some kids who have made college attendance an attainable goal as a result of meeting students in LIA," says Broome.

After a fire gutted a mobile home in the community, Jones and some students took food, clothing, beds and a dresser to the family who was staying in a schoolroom. After their visit, the mother walked the students back to their van. "I've never seen people act like this," she told them.

Pointing to the Love in Action insignia on the van—she added, "Your name really fits." •

COMMENT by Walker L. Knight

Discovering a New Lifestyle

Two new books remind me that Christian emphases flow through society like streams. Some, beginning as trickles, steadily gather volume and speed through the years, then may subside once again to mere trickles.

These books—one on prayer and the other on gifts—pick up emphases found in the Jesus Movement and in the renewal movement of the 1960s, although neither author traces these thought patterns.

John Killinger, in *Bread for the Wilderness, Wine for the Journey* (Word Books, $5.95), writes about the deeper meaning of prayer and the inner life. Lynn P. Clayton, in a booklet titled *No Second-Class Christianity* (Broadman, 95¢), writes about the discovery and the use of gifts given to each Christian by God.

These books are but examples of many being written today on each of these subjects. The trickle becomes a stream, illustrating important trends now at new strength within Christianity.

Back when we were first reporting on the Jesus Movement, the note of mystery was strongly sounded, partly in reaction to a society that had made technology king, providing answers for many of the unknowns in life. But man does not live without mystery. God is never fully known or comprehended, and man does not have all the answers.

Five years ago, youth searched through drugs and eastern religions, then finally turned to Christianity for meaning and mystery. Today that search continues, and John Killinger explains some of these experiences in his own search. At one point, he wrote, "I saw the walls dropping between all of these heretofore separated areas of life and thought—surrealism, Zen meditation, ESP, PK, mind-body interaction. Man is a wall-building creature, I thought. What if God is trying to get us to tear them down and start over again?"

Killinger was not part of the Jesus Movement. He was more in the stream of the renewal effort to bring vitality to dying churches through his own experiences and teaching. Like many others today, however, he writes, "I have found in recent years that I am a much more belief-ful person than I thought I was."

"It is unfortunate," he writes, "for Christian history, that meditative prayer was a part of their oral tradition but was not enshrined in the Scriptures with the same clarity and precision as the model prayer and other clues to liturgical prayer ing in the early church."

One of his students, after rereading the Book of Acts, told him, "We're so busy that we have to interrupt what we're doing in order to pray. But God was always having to interrupt the Christians at their prayer in order to get them to do things!"

The stress on prayer and meditation is but part of a new emphasis on the contemplative life, a search for a new lifestyle that combines the active life with the meditative, that seeks to live in touch with God and in touch with man, aligning one's life with God's priorities.

A part of such a new lifestyle is the realization by many, such as Clayton, that "God has given every saved person a special gift to perform some certain ministry extremely well in the name and power of Christ."

Actually this is the important next step in the emphasis upon the discovery of authentic roles for laity and clergy—the universal priesthood of the believers.

Too often the layman's role has been seen as a helper to the pastor and his Christian work as a churchly effort within the institution. Now the pastor is seen as the equipper, the one who enables the layman to discover his gifts and to use them for God's glory wherever he functions.

Clayton says, "This shared ministry with Christ makes every believer a first-class citizen with first-class privileges in God's kingdom."

He also feels that God meets the needs of the church in ministry by empowering and gifting its members. "If a great need to perform a ministry arises, God has provided one or more of his children to perform that ministry. This doesn't mean the gift will be realized the minute the ministry need is discovered; sometimes God's timetable is a little more extended so he can get things lined up."

In a way, both of these books point us inward, make us more concerned with our relationship with God and with the person God has created. This can be a time unhealthy if we do not use the strength we gain in prayer and the gifts God has given to each of us to help others. ●

EXECUTIVE'S WORD by Arthur B. Rutledge

A national—cooperative—missions program

It pleases me when someone asks a question aimed at better understanding how home missions work is done. Two questions that I am asked from time to time are, "What is the difference between a home missionary and a state missionary?" And, "Why doesn't the Home Mission Board provide full support for its missionaries like the Foreign Mission Board does?"

In answer to the first question, in many instances there is no difference between a home and state missionary.

The difference, if it exists, is determined primarily by the source of support. There are state missionaries, such as directors of associational missions in the older states, who are supported by the association and the state convention, but who receive no support from the Home Mission Board. Persons in pioneer-area work are considered both home and state missionaries when they are supported jointly by the state convention and (usually in a major way) by the HMB.

As state missionaries, these pioneer missionaries are part of the state convention's strategy for ministering to that state. As home missionaries, they are part of home missions strategy for ministering and witnessing to the nation.

About two-thirds of the 2,172 home missionaries have joint appointments, and sometimes they receive further support from an association and/or a local congregation. From the viewpoints of both the state convention and the HMB, they are considered home missionaries.

The remaining one-third are appointed by the HMB, alone, and include home missionaries who serve in New England, Iowa and Puerto Rico, plus missionaries in Christian social ministries-related institutions in New Orleans and a limited number of appointees to other ministries. In addition, there are various missionaries whose assignments touch several states or a region, thus relating to several state conventions. It is impracticable for state conventions to share support of these, which include workers in migrant ministries, deaf ministries and interfaith witness. Some employed solely by the HMB, including all of those serving as pastors, receive some support also from a congregation and/or an association.

Answering the second question, the HMB *does* provide full support for many of its appointed missionaries (about one-third, as referred to above), and in all cases the Board has a salary range as a target, whether the salary comes from one source or several. Even in cases where a state convention does not participate in the missionary's support, the Board encourages a local association or church to share in the support, if available and feasible.

The question is, why does the Board do this? The HMB has long been committed to the principle that a mission project or a missionary should be related as closely as possible to Baptists in their locality: the churches, associations and state conventions. We believe this remains a valid posture.

Language missions work in Texas furnishes an example of alternative approaches. For almost 30 years prior to 1958, the HMB appointed missionaries and provided full or partial support for various missionaries to Mexican-Americans in Texas, without regard to similar efforts by the Texas convention. The state convention did the same. As a result, certain Spanish language congregations looked to Dallas for direction and financial support and certain other congregations looked to Atlanta. These were parallel programs, which had the same objectives, but operated independently and sometimes hindered each other.

Various attempts were made to correlate all the Spanish language work in Texas. Consultations between Loyd Corder of the HMB and J. Woodrow Fuller and L.D. Wood, then of the Texas convention staff, led to a new approach. The state mission board and the HMB would combine their programs and their resources, and employ the missionaries jointly. There would be joint planning of the work, including the development of the joint budget, subject to review and adjustment each year. The state convention's missions office would give day-to-day direction of the work in keeping with the plans agreed upon by representatives of both agencies.

The HMB provides a perspective of national needs and opportunities as a backdrop for state convention planning. The HMB serves as an organizing center for a national missions program, yet recognizes the autonomy of the state conventions.

This approach, tried first in 1958, is essentially unchanged after 18 years and now includes all programs in the newer (pioneer) conventions and selected types of missions and evangelism work in established states. It involves an extensive consultation and agreement, and is slower than direct mission work by a single mission board. The experiences of almost two decades have demonstrated that this is the best way we have found to develop and mature mission work in America.

Where we have no related state convention (such as in Puerto Rico) and in geographical or program areas where the state conventions wish the Board to act alone, the HMB acts just as the Foreign Mission Board does. It sends out missionaries and supports them (until the work can achieve self-support, self-government and self-propagation). The goal in all fields is ultimate self-support to the degree that this is feasible.

The Bold Mission Thrust of the remainder of the 1970s furnishes us with the challenge we need to move forward in a cooperative, unified national missions undertaking. May God be pleased to work through Southern Baptists' home and state mission boards to bless millions of our people and to strengthen the moral and spiritual fiber of our beloved nation at this strategic time in national and world history. •

READERS' REACTIONS

An honest look is helpful to all

Your charismatic article (July-August HM) was excellent . . . a fair and honest presentation. Most of our Southern Baptist constituency would never know about such practices without this kind of insightful writing.

On such a controversial issue, it is rare to find articles in which the writer does not position himself. You have the facts without the bias of opinion in either direction. I suppose it is more unusual for readers to respond without expressing our own bias. My particular bias is that "speaking in tongues" is not scriptural evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The languages of Acts are different from the "tongues" of Corinthians. The gifts of Corinthians are in no way related to the baptism in the Holy Spirit . . . a doctrine of a second work of grace is indefensible. The next step is a third work of grace, sinless perfection.

I have never encountered these problems. However I know they play havoc anywhere they exist. An honest look at the way things are must be helpful to all of us.

Earl Crumpler
Columbia, S.C.

• I appreciate the articles on very contemporary issues—like the charismatic movement. Thank you for your willingness and openness in facing this reality.

Mrs. Mark Reeves
Oak Ridge, Tenn.

• From beginning to end, July-August HM was full of heart-warming, human interest, issue-oriented depth reporting. . . .

Your courageous coverage of the charismatic movement will undoubtedly be a classic. I only wish every pastor, association missions director and layman in the SBC would read this penetrating analysis of the movement. If they would, I believe it would help prevent such divisions. . . .

There is no doubt that every association has the right to withdraw fellowship from any church within the association, but the real question is: *is it right?* Undoubtedly speaking in tongues is a divisive issue; but just as undoubtedly, it is one of the "gifts of the Spirit" mentioned throughout the New Testament. I am convinced that God works in different ways with different people and just because he has not worked in this way in my life, or in the life of my church, does not mean that it is an invalid experience for others.

Jim Newton
Memphis, Tenn.

• . . . may be one of your most interesting issues. . . . You are living dangerously, back in the ye-olde-mold rocking boats/rattling chains.

Floyd Craig
Nashville, Tenn.

• Wow! Talk about coverage—covering charismatics, women's right to work and a pinch of politics in one issue.

I do believe HM is becoming the nerve center of Southern Baptists. Each coverage in your July-August issue was disarmingly honest. Sure beats the tasteless batch of gruel we usually get on such subjects.

Norma Kirkpatrick
Phoenix, Ariz.

• Under no conditions would I want your job, but I am continually surprised at your ability to get so much material which seems to major on secondary and divisive issues. I refer particularly to the most recent issue (July-August HM) which gives so much attention to Glossolalia and the alleged mistreatment of women in religious circles.

After reading "Singing in the Spirit" . . . it is difficult for me to find in it any constructive contribution to the spread of the Gospel.

I would like to see the Home Mission magazine return to the basics and let some of the secondary matters remain secondary.

H.B. Ramsour
San Antonio, Tex.

• The article, "Women in Missions," (July-August HM) is a timely and needed emphasis. I hope the day will come when Southern Baptists will be able to destroy the walls that divide persons. Articles like yours may well hasten that day.

Ron Kemp
Bolivar, Mo.

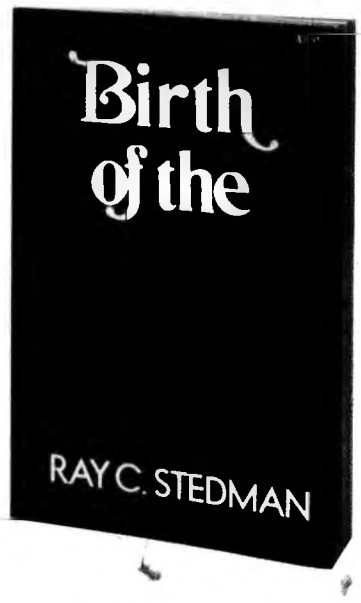
Comment on Carter

I enjoyed your July-August HM "Comment" concerning Jimmy Carter.

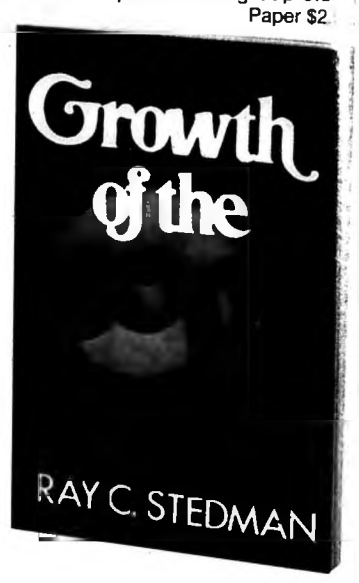
Leonard Hill
Nashville, Tenn.

Paul Little
Know what and why you believe! The foundation of our need for God; the reliability and credibility of the Christian faith; our sure hope for the future. Pocket Paper $1.50.

Ray C. Stedman
The author of the bestseller, Body Life, reveals how the same principles used by early Christians can change our lives today. Paper $2.95



Ray Stedman
The well-known "Body Life" aut: r continues his helpful study of A s (14-20), showing how God's power ( ) help us grow just as the early Ch - tians. For personal or group stu Paper $2.



Books that make a difference.

BAPTIST BOOK STORE
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We all have problems! But here's how to... Stop worrying and start trusting... Stop straining and turn loose... Stop the panic and start praying! A handbook for hang-ups! Pocket Paper $1.50.

Dan Baumann
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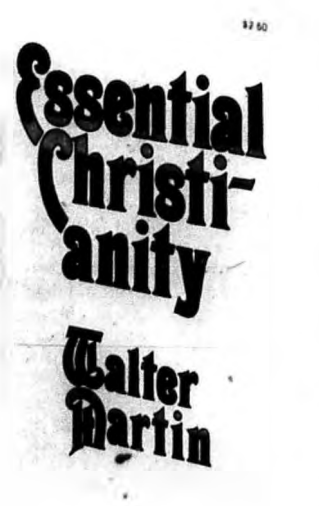

Walter Martin
A good, clear understanding of wha Christianity is all about, without having to wade through mountains of complex theological material. Good for groups Paper $2.50.