

When we left, there were tears and songs.
But I felt it was a beginning.

—Amy Miller

Continued

NOVEMBER 25

Because of negative ideas about Southern Baptists, "getting a vital Baptist group in the public eye can be valuable."

which began meeting disbanded after several months. "When you invite people to a religious concert, the churched people are the ones who come," Glenn remarks. "Those who heard the Oakwood concerts probably enjoyed them, but just weren't interested in starting another church."

The situation had not altered when the Pennsylvania team arrived, says Glenn. Their leader, John Smith, "made a concerted effort to find a family who showed an interest in starting a Southern Baptist church."

"He went away shaking his head."

Part of the problem, Glenn feels, is lack of follow-up. Based in Manchester 15 miles south of Concord, Glenn concentrates his efforts to train laypersons in the 21-member church there.

"Until we get a firm foundation in Manchester, we really can't cement anything in Concord," he believes. "So it's going to be a slow process."

For Oakwood, two years later, the mission tour concept raises mixed reactions. Gouge claims outside demands on the young people's time and a major church building program have made it difficult to recruit volunteers and raise money for mission trips. And youth participation in local missions has not significantly increased since the days in Concord.

"I wish I could say the mission trips made all the kids want to get out and witness in school and visit on Monday nights with the church, but I can't see that it has," Gouge observes.

Some Oakwood members questioned the value of mission trips, according to the minister of music. "We have a segment who say, 'Some of the youth aren't committed' or, 'We spend too much money on the young people—but there are also those who feel it's one of the finest things the young people can do.'

"Sometimes after hearing all the pros and cons, I think well, what's the use?" Gouge admits. "I see the value of mission tours, yet when you have to continually sell a program, you get tired after awhile."

Though the numbers have dwindled slightly, Gouge feels the core of youth interested in missions is strongly committed.

"The spiritual growth I have seen in the youth this year is a culmination of some of the lessons they've learned in the past from mission trips," he says. "I think the ultimate results from mission trips will be when these young people become adults, have church responsibilities and are able to put to work some of the ideas they picked up on the trips."

Commitment, as well as a long-timer's attitude, seem to be the key in Vineville's success at Rabun Gap, Fleming, Ky., and Jamaica—the three mission sites it's visited for the past few years.

Each year, new friends are hard to leave and needs still clamor for attention. But for Vineville, the promise of return eases good-byes and knits a thread of continuity through the year at home in Macon.

Rabun Gap's Roger Saunders measures the team's effect on his community. "With the mountain people, outsiders are always foreigners. They're never really fully accepted," he explains.

"And that's what's amazed me about the Vineville group. They've been taken in wherever they've gone. They become a part of the churches for the week they're here."

Fleming pastor David Lyons senses new strength in the Kentucky work as a result of Vineville's visits. "We won't stop seeing the results of this for many years to come. Some of the work they did would have taken me a long time to do."

Lyons' attitude, reflected in hundreds of other mission workers' experiences, makes the HMB's Joel Land forecast an increasing number of mission teams—despite the growing pains and problems of the burgeoning movement—will hit the road in coming years.

Recognizing the need to better prepare the teams and persons or churches they work with, Land and the Church Music Department of the Sunday School Board are developing ways of teaching local churches how to recruit and train mission teams.

As the number of volunteers multiplies, Land predicts several trends may change the direction of missions strategies.

"A typical student summer missionary spends a week here, a week there," Land explains. "By using mission groups to do one-week programs, we free up summer missionaries for more long-term responsibilities."

The success of the SBC's Bold Mission Thrust emphasis on evangelizing and starting Southern Baptist churches hangs partly on the availability of mission teams, Land believes. "I think they are becoming one of the standard ways of starting new churches."

After a mission team moves into an area to break ground, a home Bible study led by a local person often results. If the study thrives, the next step is Sunday services in a hotel, Masonic lodge or school building. Gradually, the nucleus planted by a mission group matures into a church.

Land feels most volunteer groups generate good publicity for the denomination. "Sometimes people outside the South don't know who Southern Baptists are—they hear the word 'South' and conjure up a lot of negative ideas. So just getting a vital, strong, ordinary Baptist group to do something in the public eye is valuable."

Kenneth Neibel, director of missions for Central Indiana Baptist Association, also counts the mission teams as a financial asset. "If you can imagine a congregation of 25 having a group come in to do 25 backyard Bible clubs and enroll 700 to 1,000 kids, and the prospects that turn up, you'll have an idea of what we save."

"We would have to pay a pastor's salary for a long time for him to be able to turn up that many prospects."

Larry Bryson in South Carolina sees mission groups aiding local churches in reaching vacationers. "These teams help us extend a witness to people passing through our state who otherwise might not be reached in their local communities."

Land also foresees the mission youth groups altering the missionary's role. As more volunteer power takes over the job of witnessing and ministering, the missionary will concentrate on coordinating work on an administrative level.

James Hatcher, pastor of Atco Baptist Church in Cartersville, Ga., predicts that mission teams may effect even more noticeable changes at the grassroots level: "We send mission teams from this church because of Christ's command to go ye," and also, because we hope the next generation is going to be far more involved in the total mission program than the current generation is.

"The mission trip experience has had a significant impact on our youth, who will take the leadership reins shortly. And when they do, I think Southern Baptist churches are going to see a greater mission involvement across the total membership."

For Vineville pastor Tommy Jones, that large-scale involvement is reality. "It makes a pastor feel good all over to see so many of his people witnessing, teaching and training."

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN MARTIN

what if you gave a backyard Bible club and nobody came?

Or if you gave one and 40 kids came? And it rained, and rained, and rained?

Or if you had just started and the ice cream truck arrived? Good-bye kids.

Or if a pack of dogs growled and fought and scared away the kids you had laboriously collected?

Or if the park maintenance man decided to turn on the lawn sprinklers at just the spot where you were working with the children?

Or if you were expecting a dozen kids and five times that number showed up?

This summer, 48 students—male and female—had these and similar experiences.

Continued

28 NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 29

summer was a time of exploration, an opportunity to discover the nature of God's call...

ences as they learned, firsthand, what it means to start a new church. The students, from Midwestern, Southwestern, Southeastern and Southern Baptist seminaries, were part of a church extension project jointly sponsored by the seminaries and the Church Extension Department of the Home Mission Board.

Their objective: to start new churches wherever possible.

Their tools: backyard Bible clubs, vacation Bible schools, home Bible fellowships, kaffeeklatsches, door-to-door surveys, telephone calls and/or whatever they thought would work.

They worked in places with exotic names: Kamiah, Ahwatukee, Blackfoot, Sunblest, Palos, Zionsville. And in places well known: Chicago, Houston, Phoenix.

Some of the students were effective. Others weren't. Some won. Some lost. For some, it was a positive experience. For others, it was negative.

All had problems of one sort or another. Most were minor, but for at least one team, problems snarled nearly every attempt.

"It was a pretty discouraging summer," recalls Fred Peiper, Jr. Peiper and his partner, Henry Flowers, worked in several small towns south of Chicago's O'Hare Field. From the first, they were stalled by red tape.

"City officials told us we had to get a peddler's permit to go in," Flowers says. "They told us it required city council action. Then, a couple of weeks later, they said the council didn't need to act."

Finally, Flowers and Peiper were allowed to visit communities from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., hardly the most effective time for door-to-door surveys.

"We tried to get telephone surveys going, but it was too easy for the people to

Across the United States, seminary students work in many activities, from backyard Bible clubs to visitation to discover nuclei for new churches. Previous page: Desiree Oakley teaches children in a Chicago club. Right, clockwise from above: Richard Evans points out places he worked, as a bus takes members of the missions committee of First Baptist, Magnolia, through the area of a north Houston suburb; Kamiah, Idaho pastor Larry Maxwell (left) and summer worker Jim Russell talk to cedar mill foreman Bob Lycan, a member of Maxwell's Pine Ridge church; in a section of north Indianapolis, Myra Kampen and Harriette Harp visit door-to-door.

30 NOVEMBER



hang up on us. We didn't have much luck doing that," Peiper says.

Nor did they respond to door-to-door solicitation. "It was an experience," Flowers says. "I never had a door slammed in my face before. The people were so cross."

On one occasion, Flowers was chased by a large dog as he attempted to make contacts.

But occasionally Peiper and Flowers found humor in their situation: "One of our villages had a sign as you drove in on the main street," Flowers says. "The sign said 'Welcome to Worth, the Friendly Village.' Somebody spray painted out the 'Friendly' part."

Despite handicaps and limitations, Flowers and Peiper began two backyard Bible clubs, one of which was continually disrupted. "The devil drives an ice cream truck in Chicago," Flowers says ruefully. "Every time we'd get started, here he'd come. And there'd go the kids."

At their other club, they had only six kids. From an extremely low-income area, the kids were extremely unkempt, Flowers recalls. As one activity, the team led a song in which each participant licks his lips.

"One of the kids was so dirty that when he licked his lips the saliva ran down his chin and made mud on his face," Flowers explains.

Being around such people "has been like working in a foreign country ... a culture shock for me," Peiper feels. And Flowers adds, "They are so confined. I know their home is their castle, but up here they lock themselves up in it."

Similar sentiments were echoed by another Chicago team—Catherine Hall and Theresa Lukaesko—who worked in a large townhouse development.

"This was a very closed in area ... the people didn't want you to penetrate their little domains. They were not friendly at all," Hall says.

"It took us all summer to get to a point of trust. It is very hard, very slow," Lukaesko explains.

The area, called Brandywine, also presented an unusual problem for the team. Although they held five backyard Bible clubs and one Vacation Bible School, they found community activities for families so well planned it was difficult for the Baptist events to compete.

"After being here this summer, we can really identify with what the pastor goes through in trying to start a church up here," Lukaesko says.

The other two Chicago teams had better success.

The Mark Munsions, aided by Susan Melton, started five home Bible fellowships, mostly from door-to-door cultivation. "We made about 1,000 calls," Mrs. Munson says. "We probably had an easier time getting into the homes than some of the other teams, because people let a couple come in to their homes easier than they let two men."

Their work was slow and many days "we don't see anything," Mrs. Munson recalls. "Then something would come along to show us God was working. We planted the seed. We didn't know what God was doing, but every once in a while he lets us know by seeing or hearing something."

The other Chicago team, the Anthony Oakleys, worked with a newly established Berea Baptist Mission; because they had a congregational base from which to begin, their assignment was "not what we expected." "Yet they met with success in conducting backyard Bible clubs.

One attracted 120 persons, including children and adults. Another attracted about 40, but a heavy rainstorm hampered activities for two days.

When the rains came, they met in the basement of a church member's home. "She was sure relieved when the sun came out the third day," Oakley says, laughing.

The student church-starting project was begun in 1975 by John Allen, Alaska missions director who then was with the HMB Church Extension Department.

This year's group was the largest contingent to participate in the 10-week seminar program. In six of the seven cities to which they were assigned—Indianapolis, Rochester, Chicago, Phoenix, San Antonio and Houston—they concentrated on projects designed to begin new work.

In the seventh area—Utah/Idaho—the team worked in church growth.

The first reason for the program is to develop "workers," explains Allen. "Church extension people need the sensitivity ... need to know how it is done."

The second reason we send seminary teams out is to get new work started. In 1975, we saw 11 new works started.

The third reason is to sensitize seminaries as to a practical approach to missions."

Ebbie Smith of Southwestern seminary, working with the church growth team in Utah/Idaho, notes: "The internship program places seminaries as to a practical approach to missions."

Continued
NOVEMBER 31

knocking on doors was a new experience...

David Holland attracts children in Indianapolis.

many students into the real world of service. For some of them it is their first effort at actually ministering to people in a church situation. It also places students in vital contact with pioneer areas. It is of great significance not only in the lives of the interns, but in their influence on others as they return and tell about their experiences.

"Some of the interns feel a definite leaning toward pioneer work. Others have come to understand that they are not to work in pioneer fields. Both decisions are important."

For many of the students, the summer was a time of exploration, an opportunity to discover whether God was calling them to home mission work.

For some, even taking part in the program was a difficult decision. Oakley, for instance, works as a jail chaplain near Southeastern seminary. He knew the great need of his work. He did not know much about the pioneer project. Yet he decided to spend the summer in church extension.

In Chicago, the teams worked under supervision of Dale Cross, missions director. Part of their efforts were coordinated through "Extend, Now," a committee of the Chicago Baptist Association.

Denzil Alexander, pastor of Wood Dale Baptist Church, and chairman of the committee, says, "I feel the project is a good thing... it's been helpful.

"The one big problem I see is that it's tough getting beyond the feeling of temporariness. They were here only 10 weeks—that's a very short time."

Four teams worked with Ken Neibell, missionary in Indianapolis. Three established new work areas. The fourth cultivated prospects for an already started work.

One team, Larry Roberts and David Holland, established a preaching point at Cumberland, a suburb with 85,000 people and one Southern Baptist church. Their backyard Bible clubs attracted large numbers of children.

Roberts, a diploma student who spent many years in construction, noted he was "a little disappointed in the responses from the adults. It was great with the children, but not much from the adults."

Holland, a large man with a fierce red beard who grew up in a pioneer mission pastorate in Colorado, attracted children with the ease of a candy salesman. "When the kids sang the little song about Zacchaeus, they found all sorts of things to climb up on. They even climbed on me," he recalls.

Each team faced a different situation; each functioned differently. But only in one place—Houston—did major problems develop over relationships between churches and teams. It was severe enough that one team member went home midway through the assignment; another followed a week later.

Hugh Durham, missions director for the Tryon-Evergreen Association in Conroe, near Houston, explains, "There is a conflict between something that will work in pioneer areas where you don't have churches and established areas where you do."

"The pastors—or at least one of their staff members—should have been brought into the orientation process so they could understand what the teams were to do."

The team which broke down was assigned to a church with "an uncompromising and unrelenting resistance to anything that did not feed people into the local church," adds Durham.

Although the two women who went home had problems relating to each other—"they just didn't get along well"—their church exacerbated their difficulties by wanting "to use the team for its immediate benefit, no matter what the Home Mission Board or the seminary wanted."

"They even asked one of the girls to work as a secretary for a week. They told her to put the church extension materials on the desk and if I or any one connected with the program came by to act like she was working on the project materials," Durham explains.

"This just dramatizes the need to have church leaders involved in the orientation. It also dramatizes the need to have the guidelines rewritten for established areas."

Durham adds that all of the teams in the Houston-Conroe area were "squashed to some extent" by the lack of understanding, and several church

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34 NOVEMBER

BACKYARD BIBLE CLUBS

leaders in the south Texas area were "frustrated by failure to get immediate response. Most pastors in established areas don't understand the methods of enlistment of people in peripheral areas." Techniques such as home Bible fellowships, ladies' coffees and small-group Bible studies are not "liked down here by most of the pastors. Small groups have been closely identified with the charismatic movement," Durham says. One of the greatest things the Home Mission Board can do in established areas is to show pastors how to reach non-Baptists and people who will not come directly into the church," Durham concludes.

Despite problems, however, one team identified an area of new work in the burgeoning area north of Houston. Steve Cloues and Richard Evans helped First Baptist Church of Magnolia survey a rapidly developing suburb between Magnolia and Tomball. Afterwards, the missions committee of the church voted to establish a new work, rather than attempt to bus people from the area to Magnolia.

Another Houston team worked in a planned community. Mike and Kay Stroope spent the summer "trying out some new methods and some new strategy. Our whole intention was to survey the area" around Woodlands Baptist Church and "try to minister to its needs." For them, "the summer was a success knowing we touched the lives of some people..."

The summer work was a homecoming of sorts for Tom Daniel, who grew up in Phoenix and graduated from Grand Canyon College.

Assigned to the planned community of Ahwatukee on the southern edge of Phoenix, Tom and Becky Daniel had difficulty penetrating the area, despite holding Bible clubs; participating in the life of the community; doing survey work; and leading Bible fellowships. "Ahwatukee means 'house of my dreams' in Crow Indian language," Daniel says. He explains that the community now has about 2,000 residents, but is projected to have 90,000 when it is finished. Phoenix itself anticipates a population "bigger than Los Angeles by

Continue

"Life on the mission field... takes on new meaning."

—Clifford R. Raad, Executive Director, Greater Chicago Sunday School Association

When Dr. Paul Jorden, an orthopedic surgeon from Wheaton, Illinois, decided to give a year of his life to medical missionary work in Africa—and to take his wife and nine children with him—he was told to expect lots of hard, unremitting, often unrewarding work. What the Jordens found, and what this book so radiantly describes, is the deep satisfaction that working for others can bring, in Dr. Raad's words, "to a family who love and respect one another and have a deep reverence for the Heavenly Father." Photographs.

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2000 "

"The hardest part has been slowing down to wait for things to develop normally," Daniel says. "It has taken awhile to get the work started."

One way of becoming involved was through tennis. Daniel won a prize in a community tennis tournament.

"Tom played on the college tennis team, and I play some tennis," Mrs. Daniel says. "I think tennis is going to play a big part in our ministry here."

So wrapped up are the Daniels in their work they have elected to remain in Phoenix.

For Gary and Joyce Bowser, too, Phoenix was a homecoming. He graduated from Grand Canyon College and lived in Arizona before moving to Texas.

"We had worked in several missions before coming back this summer," says Bowser, a 1976 Southwestern Seminary graduate who returned to Fort Worth in the fall to study for an advanced degree.

Bowser worked with Mike Bean, a recent seminary graduate, to establish Village Baptist Chapel on the eastern side of the city.

Lynn Creel and Ronnie Pierce worked at the Thunderbird Baptist Chapel in Glendale, on the northern side of Phoenix, an area Creel calls "really different; they call anything religion out there."

The two worked with the Chapel's pastor Dennis Newkirk to establish a mission point; they called on residents of mobile homes, apartments and housing developments.

"One day I knocked on 100 doors. I found about 50 at home, but only about six prospect families," Creel recalls. He cites the establishment of a Sunday school in a private home as the top achievement of the summer.

Because Creel and Pierce had different approaches in door-to-door evangelism, they found they worked better if they separated into their own areas.

For Creel, knocking on doors was a new experience. "The most discouraging thing is that so many people are not interested... they are in their little fort and you're invading them," he notes.

The biggest problem with the work started by Susan Prickett and Brenda Dedman in San Antonio was that "it got ready to start and we had to leave."

Technically, they did not work on a church extension project. Their work—done through First Baptist Church—was an apartment ministry in which they tried to enlist apartment dwellers in a program of training for outreach.

First Church pastor Jimmy Allen "had been wanting to do an apartment minis-

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

2000 "

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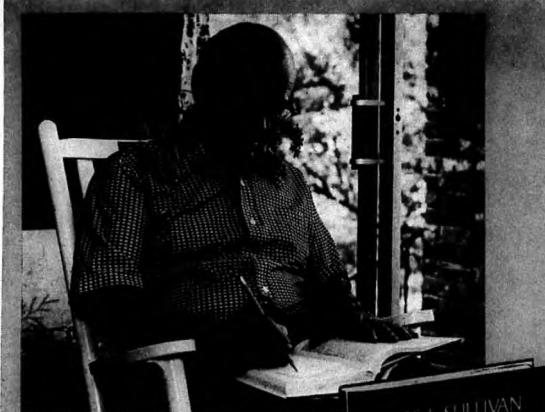
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try for some time, but didn't have the manpower," Prickett says. So the team taught volunteers how to minister, how to be sensitive, how to recognize needs of their fellow apartment dweller. The church has 255 families living in 12 different apartment complexes.

"The biggest frustration was letting just as volunteers were trained and the work ready to start," Dedman remembers.

Teton Dam washed out

The four teams—three couples and a single man—in Utah/Idaho were assigned church growth campaigns. But plans of the Daye Mills family and Joel Dunlap were changed when Teton Dam in eastern Idaho burst in early June.

"The first week Pastor (George) Echler and I made plans about our work," Dunlap says. "But the end of that week the flood came and some of the plans were impossible to follow through.

Dunlap attempted to minister to flood victims in the predominantly Mormon area.

"We had some backyard Bible clubs but they didn't work well. We advertised one of them door-to-door, and the Mormons seemed friendly, but the kids never came."

He did have one club in Rexburg, where many of the flood victims were housed in college dormitories.

"We met outside in the yard and some kids brought their dogs. The dogs attracted other dogs; they started growling and barking and the little girls screamed and hollered and ran off," Dunlap says. "If that wasn't enough," Dunlap adds, "after the club settled down 'the maintenance man turned on the sprinklers and everybody got wet. The kids screamed and ran in all directions..."

Dunlap referred to that club as the "most successful."

Mills, who worked in Blackfoot, Idaho, also was involved in disaster relief, but spent a good bit of time as pastor of the Fort Hall Indian mission after the mis-

CHAIN REFERENCE Bible
THOMPSON

ST. MATTHEW, 10

Their persecution foretold.

2817 Prayer Enjoined	38 Pray ye therefore the Lord	311 Harmless. Re 16:19.
2074 God's Messengers	and harmless as doves	456 Doves
3906 Spir. Laborers	16 he will send	3262 Council
[Jeh. 20 K]	17 But beware of men: for they	[ch. 24:9.
	will deliver you up to the coun-	2561 Scourging
	cils, and they will scourge you	3322 Synagogues (2).
	in their synagogues;	[Lu 12:11.
The Twelve Apostles	18 And ye shall be brought be-	
Sent Forth.	fore governors and kings for my	
Mk. 6:7, Lu. 9:1.	sake, for a testimony against	
2802 Apostles Called	19 But when they deliver you	
3807 Christ's Power.	up, take no thought how or what	
3803 Spir. Power.	ye shall speak: for it shall be	
3156 Evil Spirit.	clean spirits, to cast them out	3175 Inspiration Promised.
1538 Gift of Healing.	and to heal all manner of sick	[Lu. 21:15.
[Mk. 3:16]	and infirm: ye shall speak	3599 Testimo. v(1), Lu. 21:13.
2746 Peter.	2 Now the names of the twelve	3474 Spir. of Christ.
140 Andrew.	apostles are these: The first,	3003 Suffering for Christ.
1842 James, ch. 17.1.	but the Spirit of your Father	3022 Care Forbidden.
	Si'mon, who is called Pe'ter, and	Holy Spirit Inspires
	which speaketh in you.	the Message
	21 And the brother shall de-	1775 Inspiration Promised.
	mon of Zeb'ulon and J'hon hollier on the brother to death	3599 Testimo. v(1), Lu. 21:13.
		3474 Spir. of Christ.
		3003 Suffering for Christ.
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missionary there became ill.
"There is a culture shock in going there. If you went to India, the culture would be different from what we are used to. But in Blackfoot—with the Indians—there was just as much shock."

He found his work slow, complicated in part by the culture, in part by the lack of young couples in the church, in part by the relationship with the pastor with whom he worked, and in part by a mix-up with his salary.

"We didn't get any money at all for six weeks," Mills says. "But we learned to look to the Lord for our needs. We had food, gas and lodging when we needed it. We learned to depend on him."

Mills, who spent seven years in the Navy as a navigator and bombardier, plans to return to pioneer missions work when he finishes seminary.

The Jim Russells worked with Larry Maxwell in Kamiah, Weippe, Headquarters and Pierce, Idaho.

Russell approached the summer differently from most students: he didn't enroll in the project for seminary credit.

"I took it last year, and decided not to take it for credit this year. Last year I spent so much time reading and preparing that I didn't get out with the people." This summer Russell asked to come to Kamiah to work with Maxwell, a local pastor.

"I wanted to be people-oriented," he says. "I wanted to...to understand the people, how they feel...to share the missionary vision for the area. I wanted to help them see that it is not Larry's job to evangelize, but theirs." Russell says

Evaluating the summer, Russell notes "I think the main ministry of this program is to the seminary students. It is a great program. It gets them up here for an eyeball-to-eyeball experience. It does a lot more for the churches, but it does a lot more for the seminary students."

Mills and Dunlap also assessed the summer:

"A retired minister up here told me that success can't always be measured by great gobs of people in the church," Mills says. "If you have located fertile soil, or if you have plowed...or planted, you have success."

Dunlap adds: "If obedience is part of success, we may have had some success in doing what we felt God wanted us to. It is hard to see success, and there were a few times when things looked so bleak."

"I feel I have done some of what God wanted me to do, and while I haven't done a perfect job, I know the results are his business, not something for me to get depressed about."

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EXECUTIVE'S WORD
A happy Thanksgiving

Our national Thanksgiving season is a time for recalling anew God's bountiful blessings upon our nation, our families, our churches, our individual lives. I can enter heartily into this kind of observance. One of my favorite Bible passages is "Bless the Lord, O my soul... and forget not all his benefits" (Ps. 103:1, 2). But this is a special Thanksgiving season for me. It is a time of reflection and, I think, of deeper appreciation as I approach retirement from active service with the Home Mission Board at the close of 1976.

I am grateful for the opportunities which lie ahead. Retirement from an executive post, in keeping with the Board's retirement policies (which I think are sound), does not mean retirement from the Christian ministry to which God called me 46 years ago.

Now does it mean the end of serving our Lord in meaningful ways, though I hope with less responsibility and fewer pressures. I am deeply grateful for invitations to teach home missions in seminaries, to do revival preaching, to accept short-term missionary service and to speak on home missions.

I am grateful for our denomination's concern for retiring persons' welfare. Our SBC Annuity Board has been sensitive to the needs of retired Christian workers. I am thankful for actions of the Home Mission Board, in cooperation with the Annuity Board, in assisting its staff to make provisions beyond the basic retirement plan. This kind of assistance, plus Social Security benefits and private provisions, enables today's Christian workers to make reasonable financial preparation for the retirement years. For this I am grateful.

I am thankful for health, a rich blessing from God which, during nearly 18 years with the Board, has enabled me to miss only a handful of work days because of personal illness.

I am thankful for a devoted wife, who for 40 years has encouraged and assisted in every way possible. I am thankful for a supportive and encouraging family—the children and their families, and brothers and sisters and other family loved ones. All this I count as a generous blessing from God.

I am grateful for the family-like climate in which daily work with the HMB can be carried on. It has been an unique blessing to have the privilege of working with a corps of gifted, devoted Christians. Some are now retired or are engaged in other service, in addition to those presently on the staff. My esteem is very high for those with whom I have worked closely in my office day by day. I am grateful also for a host of men and women who work throughout the HMB organization as they help undergird the missionary outreach of this agency.

My life has been enriched by the lives of missionaries scattered all across the nation, some serving in as difficult situations as one would find anywhere in the world. It has been my privilege to be guests in the homes of missionaries and to visit many on their fields.

I have been a rich blessing to work under the guidance of the Board members (directors) elected by the SBC to guide the work of the agency. I have met some of the most capable and most missionary-minded persons in the world, I believe—men and women, ministers and laypersons, from all parts of the nation. Business people so busy that they could not be employed to help the Board, have given liberally of their time without financial remuneration. The women are distinguished by careful, conscientious and compassionate service. Pastors of large churches and small have left their fields several days each year with the approval and the cooperation of their church, to assist in advancing home missions. I am grateful for such a wealth of strong men and women in our Southern Baptist fellowship, and for the privilege of getting to work with them.

I am thankful for the blessings that have come in working with leaders of the SBC, its Executive Committee and its agencies and leaders of the state convention. My confidence in these people is high. God has blessed our fellowship with leaders who love Christ and who try to use their God-given abilities for "the furtherance of the gospel." This is true today as it has been in generations past.

I am thankful for Southern Baptists as a whole. We are more diverse geographically and socially and racially than we have ever been. The cement that holds us together, I truly believe, is our commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and to his mission for the world.

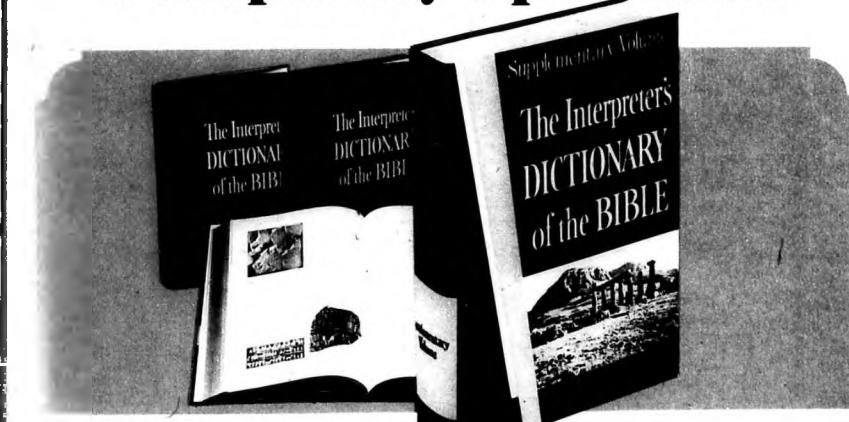
During the dozen years I have served as the HMB's executive director-treasurer, Southern Baptists have cheered me with their generous and growing financial support, their prayer support, their trust and confidence, their patience with me and with all of us who try to serve them in this great work.

I have never been more optimistic about the future of the gospel in America and around the world than I am today. I have never been more encouraged about the role of Southern Baptists than I am now.

As a people who are committed to Christ, who believe in the Bible as the Word of God and who have kept evangelism and missions at the heart of their activities throughout their history, we can look to the future with the expectation of God's continued blessing. The privilege of being a part of such a fellowship is a rich blessing; for this too, I give hearty thanks to God.

A happy Thanksgiving to you! *

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COMMENT by Walker L. Knight
A common thread

C
Why do Southern Baptists spend such enormous energy starting churches and missions? How do they organize for this effort? What are some of the methods and techniques used?

The people who gather in the pristine beauty of Clear, Alaska, or the hurting central city of Milwaukee are linked by a common thread.

That thread weaves a tapestry of people reaching inward for a sense of community and self-knowledge, reaching upward toward a God they sense loves them, and reaching outward to neighbors who have spiritual and physical needs. They willingly give hours of time, uncounted amounts of energy, and resources ranging from bull calves to building skills and bigger savings.

Someone has touched their lives with the need for a church, for a grouping of like-minded persons, and they have responded. The need they have for companionship and for a relationship with others who worship God has been met. With that meeting has come a desire to share it.

Most often the person who has touched their lives was a minister who took the difficult task of starting a congregation where there was little if any nucleus. Somewhere he gained the urge to pioneer—to build where no one else had. It is difficult, often risky work, and the expectations of both the ministers and those with whom they work are high.

For example, a minister in a resort community and his small congregation recently came to a parting of the ways. He was caught in the classic situation between established leaders and sudden new growth, a social climate almost certain to produce tension. "We like things the way they are," some said, and found reasons that he should leave.

Such situations are most often found on the fringes of growing urban centers, where groups of persons with differing lifestyles meet. Those in the rural areas have been there for years, living within established traditions, and tending to be oriented long-range goals, annual harvests, and a much slower paced life. The newer residents come with immediate goals, the faster life pace of urban living and no appreciation for traditions. They push for things to happen now.

So classic is such tension that South-

western Baptist Theological Seminary professors have documented it in a study of the rural-urban fringe to provide help for pastors who anticipate such a situation.

Lyndon Collings, an associate director of the Home Mission Board's Church Extension Department, says most new congregations, as well as the fast-growing established ones, go through a time of conflict or tension within the fellowship when leaders are changing.

He says, "If you know that this is potentially there, you can deal with it. You can help the people grow. But when a pastor is inexperienced or the tension catches him unaware, he often has to leave."

Collings says congregations go through this all their lives, but every problem is magnified with a new congregation because it is so small.

Lyle Schaller, church planner and consultant, says each congregation is composed of two circles of people. One circle is within the other. The larger outer circle is called the membership circle, and the inner one is called the fellowship circle.

New people who come may be welcomed into the membership circle, but when they attempt to move into the fellowship circle and help make the decisions, then others realize that things are not going to be as they have been. Conflict occurs.

Establishing churches on society's frontiers has never been easy, but has been characteristic of Southern Baptists since the first home missionaries in 1845 went to the churchless plains of Texas. Since then the denomination has been famed in evangelical circles for its church-starting skills. More than 34,000 living churches and who knows how many dead ones have resulted. Struggling to find the one-two-three of techniques reveals little, for the impetus is more in people than in techniques or taught skills. The HMB's Church Extension Department outlines principles more than techniques, for these can apply in most situations and offer needed flexibility.

Basic to the thrust has been the belief that no community is "churched" unless congregations are within easy driving distance, from one to five miles according to population density.

Mission leaders have felt that several small churches serve the people's needs and grow faster than a few larger ones. Records show that the ratio of members to new converts is healthier with small congregations. For example, in the pioneer areas, churches report one baptism for each eight or ten members, while in the more established areas the ratio is more than 35 members for each person baptized. Small churches tend to use their members more effectively; most serve in some leadership role.

Wendell Belew, director of missions ministries for the Home Mission Board, has never been an advocate of a single large church for a community.

"Two or three churches are not necessarily divisive forces in the Kingdom and in the community," according to Belew. "They are groups of Christians who have different personalities, and therefore appeal to persons of different temperaments. One such church in a community may have a 'high church' type worship service while another church may have a more informal presentation."

"Two or more churches of differing denominations in a community should work together in areas of mutual concern, but regard each other as legitimate functions of Christ's body as hands are to the body."

Another reason for starting new churches is that most Baptists want an option when choosing a congregation.

The denomination, through its Home Mission Board, has given priority to the starting of new missions and churches, especially after World War II when the suburbs exploded in housing developments, new families were starting, and the nation turned with increased interest to religion.

Since the early 1950s, concerted denominational efforts, such as the Pioneer Movement, the 30,000 Movement, Project 500, Extend Now, and the newly launched Bold Mission have rallied thousands of Southern Baptists to the task of starting new congregations.

The result: The denomination has become the largest Protestant group in the United States, with churches in every state. Today, only 670 counties are without a Southern Baptist congregation. These are priority targets for Bold Mission.

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READERS' REACTIONS
"...on record against ordaining women"

The articles in July-August HOME MISSIONS were so disturbing I shared them with my staff, family and some church members. I asked them for their opinions as to the articles. Their opinions reflected my thoughts even though I had not briefed them on my thoughts before they read the articles.

I get a distinct feeling that you folks are trying to promote and sell us on women ordination and the charismatic movement, instead of reporting on it. At the very least, the article on the charismatic movement seemed to be suggesting co-existence.

My church and I do not approve of the trend of the articles nor the subtle suggestions in them. The following article was unanimously adopted by our church: "The Deacons recommend that our church go on record as being against ordaining women as deacons and/or preachers.... Also we... are against articles such as the ones that appeared in the HOME MISSIONS magazine, July-August, 1976, issue, that, in our opinion, promoted the practice of ordaining women."

*Harold Dean Law
Oklahoma City, Okla.*

EDITOR'S NOTE: HM does not promote or sell its opinions on issues; its role is to inform Christians of trends and/or events that affect them and mission endeavors. HM would like to be known as a publication that respects the personhood of each individual and favors the concept of kinship of all those who seek to be Christ's disciples.

*W.F. Evans
New Albany, Miss.*

I was sorry to read the quote in the charismatics article of W.A. Criswell of Dallas. I have up until this time thought of him as a giant in our denomination. It seems strange to me how a man can write a book on how he believes the Bible to be the literal word of God and can then say this about events told of in

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