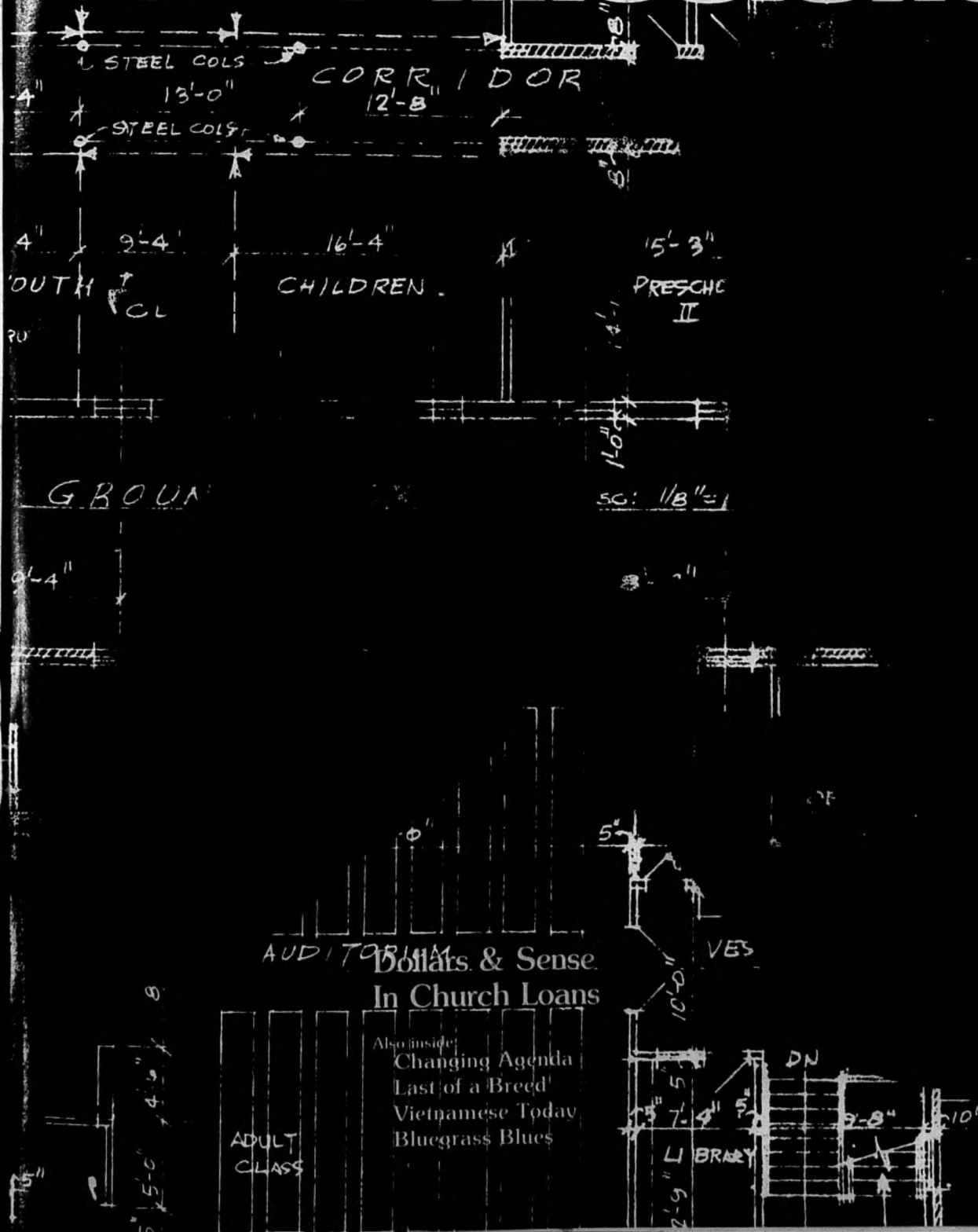


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home missions



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EDITORIAL STAFF

Walker L. Knight, *editor*
Everett Hullum Jr., *associate editor*
Celeste Loucks, *assistant editor*
Karen Mitchell, *design editor*

CONTRIBUTORS

Editorial Department
Phyllis Faulkenbury
Alice Felton
Elaine Furlow
Dan Martin
Judy Touchton

Audiovisuals Department
Knolan Benfield
Paul Obregon
Don Rutledge

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4 THE LAST OF A BREED

In these days of environmental concern, Southern Baptists are faced with the extinction of one of their species: the hip-pocket missionary. Born in the heady, "can-do" atmosphere of the 1950s, he now is threatened by such growing dangers as "paperwork pollution" and "report explosion." The species' last known habitat is Wyoming, where he exists under the generic name of Bennie Delmar.

By Everett Hullum
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The powerful witness of bookstore clerk Lincoln Bingham touched thousands of lives. Today his driving enthusiasm for home missions rises to meet the ever-growing needs in Louisville, Kentucky.

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The HMB's Church Loans Division is trying to take the "high risk" out of its loans to churches by making them more fact and less "faith." In the process of study and counseling, the division has discovered it often does the churches a favor when it says "No."

By Walker L. Knight
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Most left their native land with little or nothing—fleeing for their lives. They arrived in the U.S. with the clothes on their backs and a strong determination to seize their share of the American dream. Now, two years after the exodus, most of the Vietnamese Americans still find their new country more of a haven than a home.

By Elaine Furlow
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42 BLUEGRASS BLUES

Easter weekend it was, but the emphasis was not on the historical events of the week, in fact, religion was the farthest thing from the minds of most of the 150,000 at the annual fiddlers' festival. But, thank God, a few recalled the significance of the day.

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LEFTOVERS: HM Associate Editor Everett Hullum was in Los Angeles, covering a meeting of language missions specialists, when he saw a young man whose face he knew, but whose name he could not remember. Suddenly it came back to him: Hullum hadn't recognized the well-dressed young man because he looked so different from the last time they'd met. His suit and tie contrasted with the ragged brown turtleneck sweater and olive drab army fatigue jacket of the Vietnamese refugees in Camp Pendleton, Calif.

For Hullum, the meeting with Nguyen Nga and other refugees he'd met two years ago was like a family reunion. "It seemed almost impossible to see the same faces in such different circumstances," Hullum says. But also "very good, because they are establishing new homes, building new lives."

Doing what? The answer is in Elaine Furlow's story on the Vietnamese today. Dress doesn't make the man—or woman—as the saying goes, but as HM's Celeste Loucks discovered in April, it can influence a story. Ordinarily Loucks dresses like she's headed for tea with the First Lady. But for her Easter assignment, one that usually requires her finest apparel, she had to borrow faded blue jeans and buy some walking shoes.

Loucks and HM photographer Paul Obregon were covering an old-time fiddlers' festival. But it wasn't a down-home event—as 150,000 young people, armed with drugs and more interested in being participants than spectators, jammed a tiny North Carolina town. For Loucks and Obregon, Easter proved depressing. "Conditions were so sad," says Obregon. "It was hard to celebrate the joyful meaning of the day."

"About the only happy note was a few Christians cared enough to be there, too."

Looking ahead: Sept. HM serves alphabet soup—BMT in Baltimore, LASER in Los Angeles, CPA in Michigan. If those seem GREEK, we'll spell 'em out next month.

Cover story: For a church loans officer like Bennett Cook, architect's plans become so common they fill the mind. Comparing church building wants with building needs is one task; the HMB's Church Loans Division helps churches avoid debilitating debts. Design by Karen Mitchell.



Last of a breed

Extinction threatens an SBC species: the hip-pocket missionary. When Bennie Delmar dies, will anyone be left?
By Everett Hullum • photography by Don Rutledge



The Delmar textbook of church-starting: study state needs, put an ad in the newspaper and find a building—as he does at Thermopolis...



...then gather a group, such as the one meeting in the home of Gil and Nell Harris of Wyola, and build, as at Wilderness church of Dubois.

On the day the legend was born, he was traveling south, bound for Cody, Wyo., some 120 miles of narrow, two-lane highway away: a slender, tall, straight-backed young man, his deep brown hair wavy, his tanned face unlined.

The weather was fierce. Steel gray clouds puzzled against the white landscape. The horizon had vanished behind snow whipped clouds, churned by great gusts of blizzard winds.

Yet it was no ice-slick roadbed, nor weather, that caused the accident.

Later he said, smiling, "I never figured out why the Lord let the car roll over while I was reading the Bible."

As he reviewed the sermon he'd preach in a few hours, he recalled a passage to mark in his Bible, lying on the seat beside him. Suddenly he jerked up as the car crunched off the asphalt. Ahead was open space.

Realizing he'd missed a curve and was flying over an embankment, he quickly lay down, a whiteknuckle grip on the steering wheel. The car hit nose first, six feet below the roadbed, rolled end-over-end for several hundred yards, and finally stopped—smoking—upside down, both doors open and the body crumpled like a wad of paper.

He crawled through the space where the windshield had been, scrambled to the road. He hitchhiked in to Cody, arriving coatless and slightly rumpled.

Borrowing a suit coat and Bible, he preached to the 50-60 people. Then he asked a couple of members to take him to the hospital.

Question: Were you injured?
Answer: I seemed to be a little stove up the next day, but I didn't have any broken bones or cuts or bruises even.

The car was completely demolished. The insurance company sold it for salvage for \$70.

Shift now to another scene, years later: Winter's dying ice-breath blows from the north in wheezing, fitful gasps. Like a lace bedspread, tiny snowflakes lattice the bare brown earth. Far, far off, a dark blue car noses the horizon, heading north. Behind is Bill, Wyo.—population five. Ahead, Gillette, Wyo., 75 miles and nothing else away.

The car runs alone, its rubber tires familiar with the feel of this pavement. Its driver, wrapped in cocoon warmth,

mechanically makes the proper turns. But the driver's mind is miles away—in Thermopolis, where the search is for a building: in Clark, where the isolated, wind-buffed church meets under the lee of the Bear Tooth Mountains; in Douglas, where an oil/coal boom is mushrooming the little town's population and Southern Baptists must be ready.

The driver is 58 years old. Rotund. His wavy hair has grayed; bifocals have given way to trifocal glasses. The puffy jaw accentuates his bulldog tenacity.

Older now, he still stands ramrod straight; still moves with the lightfooted gingeriness of youth—though slower: still smiles the cherubic smile that turns his eyes to slits and sends creases radiating out, like spokes from a hub.

The smile does not hide the fire that has driven him almost 70,000 miles a year; that has caused him to spend more than his income on gas, oil and transportation; that has put him aboard every kind of vehicle: bus, car, plane, train.

That fire, burning with almost frantic purpose, propels him now. Despite weariness. Despite years.

Tonight—late—he will be home.

A few days, a thousand miles—and home. Home to Casper, the place it all began for him: 25 years; one-and-a-half million miles; and more than 120 churches ago.

Question: Do you remember how you felt the first time you saw Casper, back in 1951?

A: I was at home from the moment I came to it. I was raised in the oil fields of Oklahoma and this was an oil town. I could smell the refineries.

Q: What did Casper look like?

A: It was a prosperous town of 22,000 people; housing was hard to find. The climate was hot and dry. But outside of town was the cool of 8,500-foot-high Casper Mountain.

Man times time

For Oliver Raymond Delmar—known as Bennie—the move to Casper culminated a quarter century of preparation.

Bennie Delmar was programmed to missions. An urgent, overwhelming sense that Southern Baptist churches—ac-

cent on *Southern Baptist*—were imperative "if Wyoming and Montana and the Dakotas were to be won to the Lord."

As happens occasionally, man and times meshed.

Since the 1930s, Southern Baptists had been moving from the South. Tossed nationwide by the dust bowl and World War II, they sought "back-home" churches. They did not find them. So they began starting their own.

In the heady religious fervor of the 1950s, "the spirit of the Southern Baptist Convention was to move out," recalls Richard Peacock, one of the first Montana SBC pastors.

Delmar brought Richard Peacock, fresh from seminary, to Montana; plopped him in the car and started driving. In a couple of days, they drove 700 miles; Peacock preached twice, to tiny groups. He couldn't believe what saw.

"Glendive, Mont., for example, was a town of 12,000, you know, and didn't have a single Baptist witness," he says. "I couldn't imagine a place that size without a single Baptist church."

Neither could Bennie Delmar.

Delmar had attended the 1951 annual SBC meeting. While there, he met A.L. Lowther, his boyhood pastor. Lowther told Delmar of a small group of Southern Baptists in Casper, Wyo., who needed help. Was Delmar interested?

Yes.

A few weeks later one of the group in Casper called Delmar at his home in Tolleston, Ariz., where he was pastor. Was he interested in coming for a revival?

Yes.

He could have had no other answer.

Question: How many missions did you start the first year?

Answer: Three. And at Billings. Four. I guess.

Q: How many churches and missions were going by '54?

A: 33. At least. Maybe two or three more.

Q: How many have you started now?

A: I've been involved in starting about 70 churches personally. For the 25th anniversary of Casper First Southern, we figured more than 120 churches have come from it, counting grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Delmar had been obsessed with missions through most of his memory. Living in oil camps that often had no nearby

churches, Delmar's mother would round up neighbors to begin a church—in a school, bunkhouse, any place available. "I think," he says slowly, "my mother gave me this compulsion to begin a mission where there is not one."

6,000 miles or bust

After seminary, Delmar accepted a pastorate at remote Lakeside, a tiny community of 1,000 in eastern Arizona. There he started four missions, while wife Jo worked to make ends meet. "Jo has always supported Bennie's ministry," says a friend. "Bennie'd rather drive a hundred miles than make one phone call; he's spent thousands of dollars on his travel. And he's never been paid adequately for it. He's always overspent his income. Without Jo, they couldn't have made it."

Says Dee Gilliland, WMU director for the Northern Plains convention: "Some wonder why Jo doesn't travel with Bennie more. But they have to understand that Jo's working makes it possible for Bennie to go."

Question: How many miles do you drive a year?

Answer: About 50,000 now. I used to drive about 70,000. But my territory was larger.

Q: How much do you spend on your travel?

A: I know you'll find this hard to believe. (Hesitates) I figured it up recently and in one three-year period, I spent \$33,000 in gas, oil and repairs.

Says Northern Plains convention leader Roy Owen: "The first I heard about Bennie was when I went to the Arizona state office for the first time. Frank Sutton was director of missions. I had not met Frank, never seen him before. He was looking at a paper. He exploded, 'That Bennie Delmar—he drove 6,000 miles last month!'"

Feels Glen Braswell, former pastor in Billings, now Colorado convention executive secretary: "You can be critical, constructively so, of his wasted energy, wear and tear on the cars, gas and oil. But that's a lot better than sitting, waiting, hoping for something to happen."

"If we had a half dozen like him in this state, we'd have many more churches."

(Continued)

Question. *How'd you get to Casper?*

Answer. *I drove up. That's when I found there was no Southern Baptist work in Colorado or Wyoming or the Dakotas, Montana, Wisconsin, Iowa and so forth. So it appeared we needed to begin work in all those places.*

I talked to Roy Sutton (now Arizona executive secretary) about it. I encouraged him to come out and we'd begin work in Denver and Casper and we would develop a whole territory of Southern Baptist church work.

Originally, Delmar came to Casper to hold a revival. By the end of the second week—the week the group of 18 constituted First Southern Baptist Church in the upstairs of a power company's offices—Delmar was “convinced the right thing” was for him to move to Casper.

The name, First Southern, was Delmar's choice—though he insists the vote was unanimous. He was to repeat it dozens of times in towns throughout the four states.

“If we were going to be the same as what they already had, there was no point in our being there,” he says. “I believed we needed to have a Southern Baptist church and the people wanted a Southern Baptist church, so we put ‘Southern’ in the name.”

During the first year, Delmar examined local church baptism and attendance records for 1940-1950; large decreases by major denominations reinforced his concerns.

Question: *So as requests came from Southern Baptist families, you began to help them start churches?*

Answer: *They were not happy without an SBC church.*

Q. *Did you ever encounter opposition?*

A. *We were starting work at Newcastle, a little Montana town, and I invited those present to express their ideas. A woman spoke up and very oratorically said she didn't believe there was enough room for another church.*

Q. *How many churches were there?*

A. *Not as many as an Oklahoma town of the same size would have, that's for sure.*

As the only SBC church in a four-state region, Casper became the funnel for all requests from Southern Baptists in the northern plains; Delmar answered every one, no matter how distant.

Near the end of 1951, with First Southern averaging more than 100 in attendance, Delmar was appointed director of missions for the region. With territory larger than the state of Texas, he moved to Billings to be more centrally located. And began to live behind the wheel of his car.

“He is uniquely suited to what he's doing,” says a friend, “and the place is part of it. He's in his element here.”

As churches and associations multiplied, Delmar's land was cut—he now works only northern Wyoming. But the Delmar stories—at least one for every person who's ever known him—chronicle the years—and the man: his “car-pocket” approach to missions; his snoring “with the sound of a buzz saw”; his tremendous persistence.

In the 20 years he's driven the northern plains, Delmar has started churches in bars, halls, lodges, clubs, several church buildings, schools, homes, banks, hotels/motels, apartments, YMCAs, restaurants, a Roman Catholic cathedral, several storefronts, mobile homes, court-houses—and one warehouse.

“It was so cold I was preaching in my overcoat,” recalls the visiting pastor. “I was in the middle of the sermon when a truck honked and a man opened the doors on the docks.

“He said he was sorry but he had to load up, so we stopped the service and the 30-40 people there helped him fix the truck. Then we resumed the service.”

In New Castle, Delmar held first services in a mortuary—on New Year's Eve; in Dickinson, N.D., in city hall; in Butte, Mont., in a school gymnasium. Once he even started a church in a car, meeting in a park.

Newspaper ad hoc

Never did Delmar develop more than a loose strategy: to hit the key cities and to respond to leads from “interested families.”

For example, in the mid-'50s Delmar decided to enter the wide-open, “menacing-looking” town of Butte, Montana's fourth largest city. Despite feeling “all the time I should be looking back over my shoulder, for fear somebody was going to hit me over the head,” and once stumbling into a cafe backroom poker game, he finally located “some Baptist people”—a printer and his wife—who helped him find a place to meet. Delmar brought in two summer missionaries who spent two weeks surveying, announcing services, and leaving circulars.

“We did not ask anyone if it was a good thing we were starting Southern Baptist work or if they'd take part.”

He had tried that approach before—with dismal results.

Once, in Mills, Wyo., his newspaper announcement of plans to begin work was quickly upstaged by a more established denomination's announcement two weeks later that it was beginning services. At Shelby, his newspaper ad came “too soon.” By meeting time, opposition had formed. He found the building “was not available after all; they'd rescinded their action because someone had objected.”

In Butte, Delmar had no problems and the first service drew 35 people. “We'd put out 36 or 37 chairs, so we hit it about right,” he says. “But I've wondered: if we'd put out more chairs, would more have come?”

Question. *So it ended happily?*

Answer. *We have a fine church there now. But the invitation turned out a little unusual. We invited people to join by profession of faith or by promise of letter or by statement they'd already been baptized by a Baptist church, so the printer came and wanted to join with his wife.*

When I asked their testimony, I discovered she had not been baptized by a Baptist church, yet she wanted to join by promise of letter.

I explained we'd sure pray with them that she might make the decision to follow the Lord in scriptural baptism but she couldn't join on promise of letter.

Q. *What happened?*

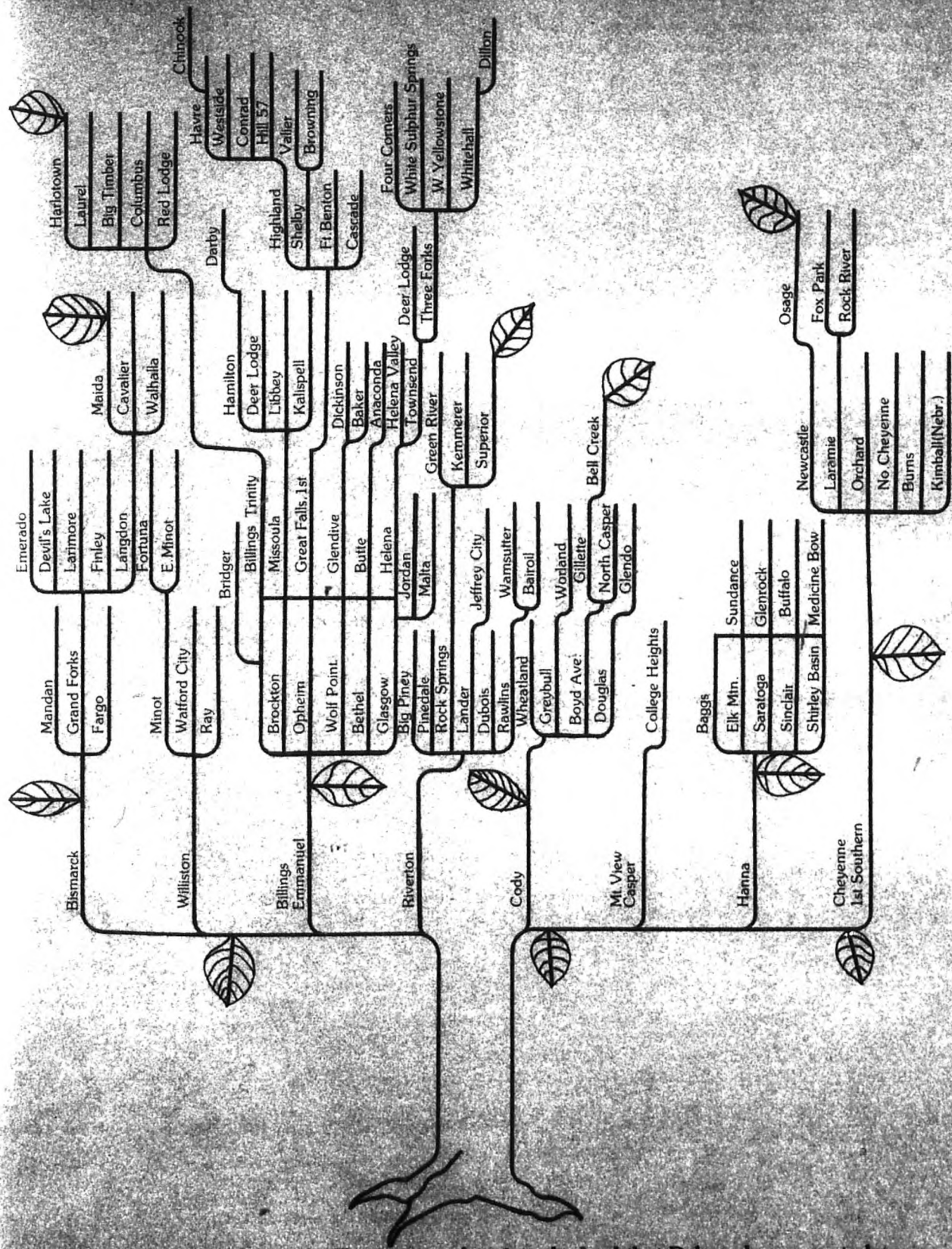
A. *He became violently angry; he was about 6-3 and over 200 pounds—and I'm sure could have whipped me pretty good, which he threatened to do.*

He told me he'd see to it we'd not have any Southern Baptist work in Butte, or in any other Montana town, and he had influence and I wouldn't have a job long—and so forth.

I'd been threatened by more important people than he was, so I told him we'd sure be praying he and his wife would join by baptism. Til then, they were welcome to worship with us. But they never did.

Often the key to new work would be a single family of

Continued



The family tree of a church: The roots go deep into the land that Delmar has come to love.

Far end of nowhere



transplanted Southern Baptists. "When the Holy Spirit would open such a door," Delmar says, "it became a conviction that we ought to respond."

His willingness to accept any request to help begin a church caused him to chart almost impossible routes and maddening schedules. During one stretch in the '50s, he weekly drove a 2,000-mile circuit, hitting a number of newly started preaching points. For a while, he made more than 400 miles a Sunday, preaching three times.

He would ride buses or trains all night, sleeping then to be able to preach in the morning. Once, when a bus ran late, he chartered a plane to make a meeting.

"I made a practice of never missing an appointment, no matter what, and never letting anything die once we started it, because we didn't want Southern Baptists to have a reputation of giving up," he says.

Far end of nowhere

That quality, perhaps more than any other, courses Delmar's veins. It is illustrated in the way he enlisted pastors: in the way he refused to back away from a mission once he believed God wanted it; in the way he stubbornly but gently turned aside opposition.

Glen Braswell, first pastor at Billings, recalls the night Delmar called to ask him to come. Braswell, a Texas pastor, and Delmar had been friends in high school and in college. But Braswell hadn't heard from Delmar in several years.

"He called and talked as though we'd talked the day before," Braswell says. "I'd like for you to come to Billings, Mont., for a revival." —he just starts out like that.

"I said, 'What?' He repeated it."

"I said, 'Bennie, where are you?'"

"'In Billings.' He said it like it was across the street."

"I said, 'No way. I don't even know where Montana is.'"

A couple of nights later Delmar called back, again making the request. This time, Braswell caved in. And the revival ended with Braswell accepting the pastorate of the church.

Twenty years later, Delmar's same persistence brought Larry York to the Buffalo, Wyo., church.

"He said, 'When do you think you can be here?'"

"I said I didn't think I could come."

"He said, 'Will Wednesday be okay?'"

"Finally I said yes. I thought it was unusual but I was talking to another pastor about it and he said, 'Yeah, that's what he did to me, too.'"

Delmar is credited with bringing dozens of unusually qualified pastors to "the far end of nowhere," matter-of-factly demanding of them the same sacrifices he freely made. Most were bi-vocational, working other secular jobs as well as pastoring.

"Bennie wanted top-notch people from the beginning," says early pastor Richard Peacock. "The only difference between us and foreign missionaries was foreign missionaries got paid. We went for nothing."

Frank Sutton, Arizona director of missions in the 1950s, says, "The reason you got so many good men up there was Bennie would get it in his head that the Lord wanted somebody in a place and wouldn't take no."

Says another pastor, "Bennie didn't think anything about

In lonely Clark's Fork Valley, near the Montana border, Delmar visits the little wind-buffed church pastored by Otha Martin.



asking anyone to do anything, if he was convinced the Lord wanted it. Oh my. And he could make you think that was what the Lord wanted, too."

Delmar was just as persistent when he began to encounter opposition from other denominations. On one occasion, he was called to the house of a regional director of another church body. The man, according to Delmar, became "quite angry" as he told how, time after time, Delmar's "inconsiderate actions" had wrecked his denomination's plans to begin new work. He asked Delmar not to begin more missions without consulting him first.

Delmar replied he "would be very careful not to begin any services in any town unless the Holy Spirit did lead us to. And if he did, we would try our best to do it."

Somehow, Delmar recalls, the man didn't seem mollified. As Delmar traversed the states, he was continually amazed at a "religious ignorance of the people"—many of whom had never heard of Jesus, except in profanity. "And this in the United States, not in India or someplace."

A 100 percent solution

People's absence of religious background often created unusual circumstances for pastors raised in the Bible belt. In Williston, Bill Jones rhetorically asked during a sermon "Who would receive such a savior as this?"

A big Norwegian jumped to his feet, waved his hand and shouted, "Me! I will!"

Jones issued the invitation immediately.

Such events impressed upon Delmar the urgency of the work; he carried its needs in this head and worked out of his hip pocket. Only in the past year—after 25 years—has he gotten his first office. It has done little to remedy his reputation for disorganization.

"You'd be driving along with Bennie," says a friend, "and he'd see a house, an outhouse and maybe a store, and he'd say, 'There's a tremendous opportunity to start a church!'"

His failures to make reports, to keep fellow workers informed—his disregard for time and distance—caused a string of superiors to tear their hair. But Roy Owen, Delmar's boss, says "even Bennie's learned to keep records now." And others, who know him well, add, "Bennie's always been organized in what he wants to do."

Casper First Southern pastor Bill Phillips says, "People think he's slow, but I've seen him get more done than a lot who're constantly juggling everything."

Echoes Peacock, who worked with Delmar at Glendive, "Churches could know when they phoned Bro. Delmar, he'd be there. He'd take care of them. He wasn't a desk-and-paper man; we had missionaries like that later on, and we never saw them. Bennie was a field man."

As a result, pastors loved him, Peacock says. "He mothers the work, yet he's not a hands-on person. He doesn't try to tell you what to do, he tries to help you do whatever the Lord is leading you to do."

Says Glen Braswell of Colorado, "He's guileless. You don't feel he's cunningly laying a trap for you. He just feels there's work to be done. So come on, let's do it together." "If he doesn't worry about where you're going to eat, it's because he doesn't worry about that for himself."

Yet, because of the distances and sparseness of like-minded persons, Delmar recognized the need to knit

together the pastors in fellowship.

One pastor recalls Delmar insisting he "go by and see W. A. Wiggins. Wiggins, now dead, was a boyhood friend and recruited by Delmar, the first pastor at Cheyenne."

"I went by and knocked on the door," the pastor says, "and when Wiggins came out, I introduced myself and said, 'Bro. Delmar told me to stop by and...' Before I could finish, Wiggins said, 'Come on in, you're the third one this week and one's here eating with us right now.'"

Question: Were you asking too much of these pastors?
Answer: We were not there for the benefit of the ministers, but for the benefit of trying to win people to Christ and to minister to people for the Lord. I knew it might not be easy. Q. They didn't complain?

A. No. And some made tremendous sacrifices. One young pastor had seriously burned hands, they were sensitive to the point that in cold weather, they would bleed.

He was working in the oil fields to support himself, and he'd come home at night and put salve over his hands and then put them in plastic bags and then put gloves over them, and sleep like that, so he'd be able to work the next day.

Certainly O.R. Delmar is one of the few—probably the last—remaining of a breed of missionary spawned by the denomination's exuberant, "can-do" spirit of the 1950s.

"Nobody knows, except those really close to him, how much Bennie has given himself and under what tremendous odds and in what discouraging tasks. But," says Frank Sutton, who worked closely with Delmar, "Bennie just didn't know anything about discouragement."

Because Delmar didn't believe defeat possible, he withstood complaints from fellow workers who didn't agree with his goals and/or his methods; and comments of others who pointed out his failure to lead churches to minister to physical as well as spiritual needs.

But Delmar has never wavered from his original, limited purpose: to start churches. That is still his life's work—"what he lives for and all he talks about," says Peacock.

Question: Do you recall any outright failures?

Answer: No, we've had several places where we've started and didn't have anyone show up. We just kept on meeting and kept on working and kept on visiting house-to-house until we did have someone show up.

Q. Are all the missions you started living?

A. No, not 100 percent.

Q. Yet even with setbacks, you've never doubted your direction?

A. I think somehow God calls people for different things and it's not just a deliberate choice or something that I decided in a logical approach to what I thought was right for my life. But somehow God chooses certain people to do certain things and he calls men to specific ministries.

Somehow, my direction of life has always been missions.

To Glendive, Mont. in deep winter, Delmar and Frank Sutton, then missions director of the Arizona convention, and Delmar's supervisor, came to begin a church.

Glendive, a 10,000-population oil-boom town near the North Dakota border, had no Southern Baptist transplants to form the nucleus. This was church-starting from scratch, and they followed the standard Delmar formula: knock on doors, advertise in the newspaper, find a place and hold the service.

Except in four days, they found no meeting place



Wyoming's missions directors, Delmar and Charles Coo, map plans.

"A lot of people living there were in mobile homes—no phones or anything," recalls Sutton, now an Arizona pastor. "We'd meet some and told them we'd let them know where and when we'd meet on Sunday. But at 10 o'clock Saturday night, we still didn't know."

"We'd been in the hotel room, praying about some place to go, when Bennie said, 'I'm calling the janitor at the Masonic Lodge again.'"

"I said, 'Don't call him. It 10:30 and he'll be in bed.'"

The man had already been asked and had refused, telling them he didn't have the authority to rent the building and the man in charge was out of town.

"Bennie got the janitor out of bed—I could hear the words and they weren't too pleasant. Finally the man said, 'Well, I don't know blankety-blank why I'm doing this, but I'll meet you boys now. But I cannot let you have that hall.'"

"I think he knew that was the only way he was going to get rid of Bennie."

Outside the snow was swirling and the temperature 10 below zero and dropping. Sutton and Delmar slogged to the lodge to meet with the red-faced custodian.

But as he learned that Sutton had preached in buildings Masons and Baptists shared, as he heard Delmar's grinning arguments, he finally gave up. Delmar and Sutton spent the next hours cleaning whiskey bottles and other debris from the hall, by 7:30 a.m., they were knocking on doors, telling people of the service.

Thirteen people came. One was the custodian. "I felt ashamed after it was over with. I was supposed to be the leader," Sutton says, "and I tried to discourage him



Late at night, a long meeting—and Delmar feels the years and miles.



Old friend Harold Hudspeth's barber shop is a first stop in Greybull.

from calling that man that time of night. But here he did and we've got a beautiful church there now."

Concludes Sutton, "He is one of the finest missionaries I ever worked with."

New world of missions

For 25 years, Oliver Raymond Delmar—known as Bennie—has worked and talked and cajoled and promised and driven himself and given himself—creating a legendary record of church-starting equaled by few men.

John Brubaker, one of the current crop of young pastors Delmar has recruited, perhaps sums up Delmar's dedication—and his singleness of purpose.

"Occasionally, you hear someone say that all this new work might die out and come to naught. Well, it might. But Bennie Delmar would have to die first."

Question: Do you feel like the last of a breed?
Answer: I guess so.

Q. Has your sense of urgency abated in any way?

A. No. But it's more controlled. (Pause) Now you have to be more patient, to work through the structures and involve more people. My work's more behind the scenes.

Q. Your world has changed?

A. (Wistfully) You don't have the same freedom to respond. At one time, you could be doing something every minute, there was so much to do. You can't do that any more. •



CHANGING AGENDA

For Lincoln Bingham, the key hasn't been the number of hats he's worn—just whether he has worn them well.

By Phyllis Faulkenbury
Photography by Don Rutledge

It took the Afro hairstyle to show Lincoln Bingham he should preach in Louisville.

"I had tried almost every profession," recalls Bingham, now director of the Baptist Fellowship Center in Louisville, pastor of West End Baptist Church, and director of missions for the Central District Association.

"I started in high school as a vocational agriculturalist. Then I went into the army and was going to make a career of it until I got married. I tried carpentry, but it was just not fulfilling.

"Next I went into barbering and even got my master's degree. Then black people stopped getting haircuts and started getting Afros.

"At this point I gave up and said, 'Lord, what am I all about?'

"And the excitement began."

Excitement is a mild term for all that has happened to 45-year-old Bingham.

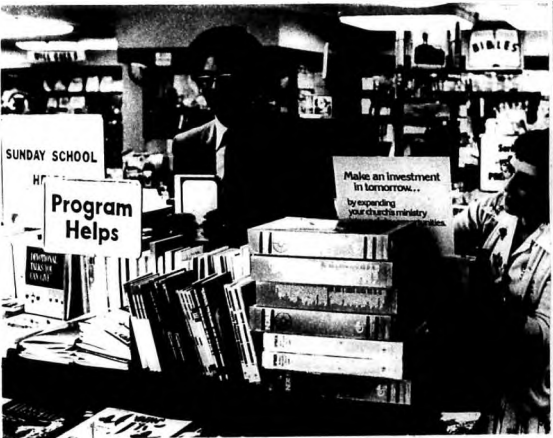
In 1959 he had "a definite confirmation by the Lord" to start preaching. "I was 25 when the call came," he says. "I had no preparation, no inclinations till then."

"I had been a Christian since I was 12, but I had never even put Christian ministries on my agenda."

Bingham entered Simmons Bible College in 1960, and in 1961 became pastor of an 11-member storefront black church. The 20-year-old West End Baptist congregation was "rapidly working on going out of business," says Bingham. "They once had had 160 members but then dwindled to 11."

In 1962 Bingham felt another definite call, this time for work at the Louisville Baptist Book Store. And his work there opened other channels.

"I had to have some kind of work to pay for my education," recalls Bingham. "At first I was nervous about



working at the Baptist Book Store. I was their first black salesperson.

"But I knew the Lord had called me there, and I was going to do my best."

Bingham started in the maintenance department, but read so much and became so familiar with the books he was soon moved to sales, and finally to sales representative for SBC state conferences, assemblies and pastors' conferences.

"I've always had a hunger for reading," says Bingham. "When I went to the book store I didn't know one book from another. But I was drawn to certain books written by some renowned teacher or scholar."

"Before long when someone would come in and ask for a book I could talk intelligently about it."

The message on the blackboard tells the story as Lincoln Bingham teaches Sunday school at West End Baptist Church, where he is pastor. Bingham was just beginning his ministry when he got a job at the Baptist Book Store. His interest in books and manager Ruth Quits help quickly gave him a reputation as "the man to know" when pastors came to buy sermon aids.

Continued

Bingham no longer works for the Baptist book store. But he finds plenty to keep him busy—from evangelism crusades to TV shows.

Bingham's obvious love for and knowledge of the books generated interest. Sales doubled and tripled in his territory.

"During those times the preacher in me came out," Bingham admits. "And some of the conference leaders began to ask me to preach."

"I was a black pastor speaking in white SBC churches, youth rallies, revivals and associational meetings."

"After I gained the trust of the SBC, my own National Baptist Convention wanted to investigate. They called me as director of Baptist Fellowship Center with priority as director of missions."

Bingham recalls, "I like to say that I

received the divine introduction into National Baptist work."

The Baptist Fellowship Center is sponsored by the Home Mission Board, the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the Long Run Association, and the Central District Association. As director of the center Bingham is an appointed home missionary.

The Central District Association is composed of 142 National Baptist churches. Through the ministries of this association and those of the Baptist Fellowship Center, Bingham reaches hundreds of people, black and white.

The center provides a day-care center and many community activities such as sewing classes, karate, exercise classes, as well as Bible classes, Sunday School clinics and Training Union workshops. Often these activities also involve the Kentucky Baptist Convention of Southern Baptists.

"The ministries of the center provide an opportunity to speak not only to our local community, but to the state and many broader areas as well," feels Bingham.

Bingham no longer works for the Baptist Book Store, but he continues as pastor of West End, is on the executive committee for the Campus Crusade for Christ campaign, "Here's Life, Kentucky," is an ad hoc advisor for the Billy Graham Crusade, writes articles for local publications on a weekly and bi-weekly basis, and is a panelist for a locally sponsored, weekly television show called "The Moral Side of the News," in which a rabbi, a Catholic priest, a Methodist bishop, a Southern Baptist pastor and Bingham discuss contemporary issues from a biblical standpoint.

The panelists also participate in an annual "Crusade for Children," which raises approximately \$1 million each year for handicapped children.

Bingham no longer attends classes at Simmons Bible College, but last semester he took 11 hours of class work at Boyce Bible College, an extension program of Southern Baptist Seminary.

Bingham says the Lord somehow provides time for everything he needs to do. "I just put it all in his hands and tell

him not to involve me in anything that I don't need to be involved in.

"When I need a rest, when things seem to be too much, then the Lord will send me a revival in another city."

The 11-member West End Baptist Church has grown to 200. "In my first revival we had 50 additions; seven preachers have come out of our church and are going to SBC seminaries."

And somehow, Bingham adds, there is time to enjoy being home. "It's always been kind of like a family effort—my getting through school, working and pastoring. My wife, Lillian, is a helper in all I do." The two children have also been understanding, Bingham says.

Emmanuel McCall, HMB director of Cooperative Ministries with National Baptists, first knew Bingham when he, McCall, was associate pastor of Joshua Tabernacle Baptist Church in Louisville, where Bingham was a member, he later taught Bingham at Simmons Bible College. "I've had the chance to see him grow," McCall says. "It's been amazing to see him come from a maintenance man in a bookstore to where he is now. He always managed to be a good student, a good pastor, a good salesman."

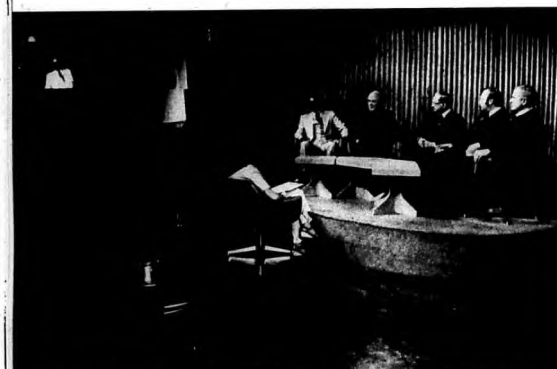
Now he has one of the most creative associational programs of any in the nation. Lincoln is providing a model for

what we would like to see more associations become," McCall concludes.

William Rogers, Kentucky Baptist director of Cooperative Ministries with National Baptists, says Bingham "gives the center an added dimension. The center was there before, but the enthusiasm that Lincoln has is new."

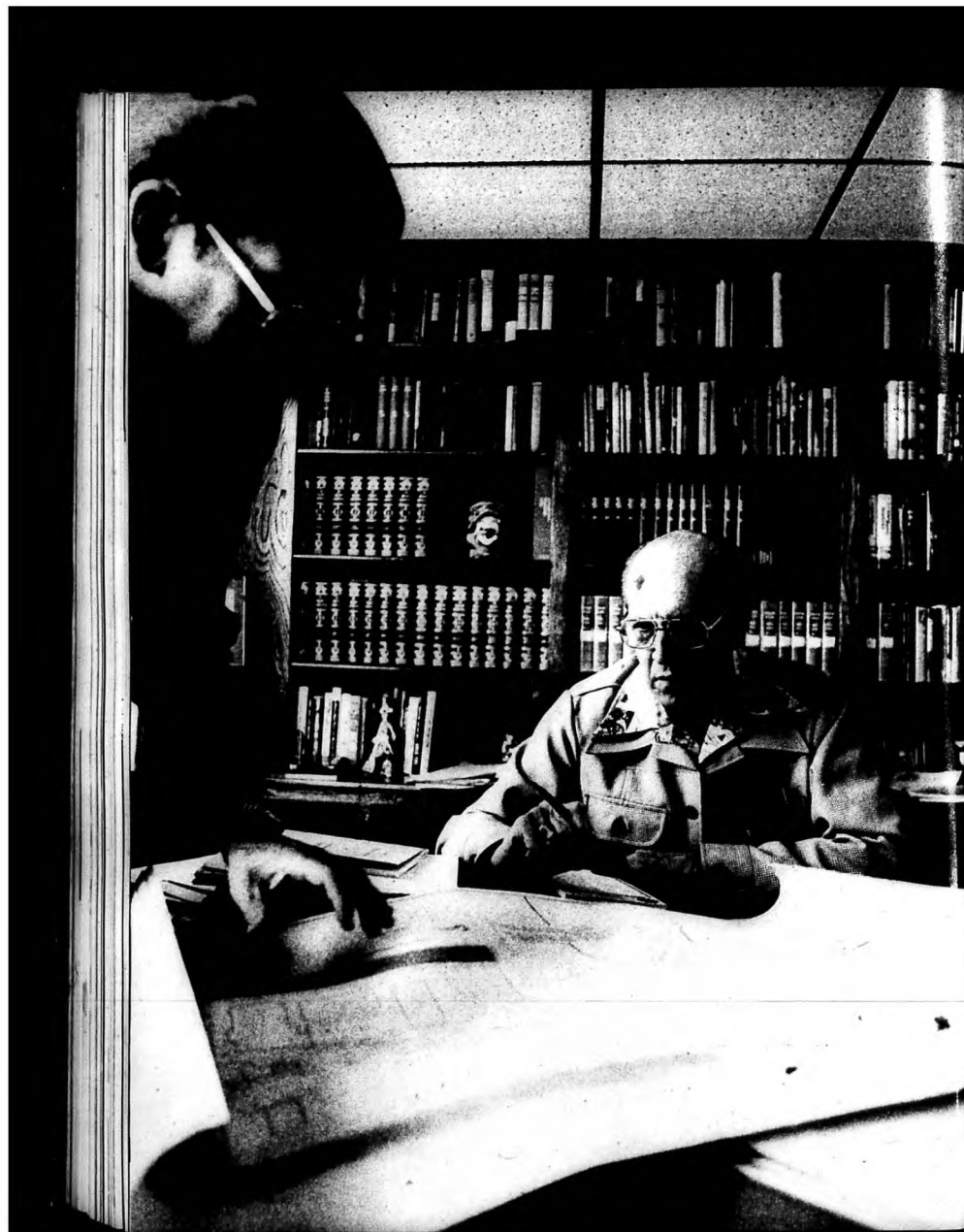
Bingham says he never dreamed "the Lord would use me this way. Each day is a new, exciting venture. I feel kind of like what someone once wrote about the wind.

"I don't know how it all got started. And I don't know how it will all end. But the Lord has set me down in some pretty exciting places."



Above: Bingham participates in a weekly TV panel discussion on the moral side of the news. Below: During sewing class, Bingham talks to weekday activities director Margaret Lasley. Then he moves to a nearby table to snatch a few moments of study time before seminary.





DOLLARS AND \$ENSE

For every church loan granted by the HMB's Church Loans Division, five churches are counseled. Sometimes, it's a favor to say no • by Walker Knight photos by Ken Touchton and Everett Hullum

Tension, like the odor of burnt toast, fills the room. And Bennett Cook hates it. Cook, Home Mission Board regional church loans director, spends hours in conferences with pastors. Most are happy occasions: advice is given, pastors and church members wanting to build; loans are granted to struggling churches. On most occasions, thinks Cook, the tone is one of promise, of excitement. Not of distress; not like today. Cook recalls the pastor's plea for this meeting: "I just can't continue my ministry under the stress of this loan." He reads the anxiety present on the face of the pastor across from him, as he pulls a folder from his heavy, gray briefcase. "Let me review the situation," he begins. "The church took a loan with the Church Loans Division for \$175,000, monthly payment, \$1,519. This meant you were spending 35 percent of your budget to retire debt—the maximum percent we allow when granting a loan. But you couldn't furnish the building, so by mutual agreement we went along with your issuing \$20,000 in bonds with a monthly payment of \$250. "Your Together We Build campaign had pledged for \$64,000, which we understood you'd use to reduce your indebtedness. You also signed, with us, a covenant agreement—adopted in the church's business session—that you would not incur additional debt without our consent." Cook pauses. A tall man, he has crisp, sharp features and a fringe of hair outlining his balding head; his face is lean and tanned from hours outdoors checking church sites and church building construction. When he continues, his voice is relaxed, but concerned. "Now we understand you borrowed another \$35,000, using the Together We Build pledges. This was for three years with payments of \$1,270 a month, which violated your agreement (with the Board). All told you have committed yourself to paying more than \$3,000 a month for debt—and your income is only \$5,500 a month? I can understand why you cannot continue; that's nearly 60 percent of income for debt retirement."

The world of an HMB church loans officer like Bennett Cook stretches from marching through fields to examining architect's drawings, such as those of pastor Mike Wilson of Yuma, Ariz.

The pastor nods and presses Cook, "I want the HMB to give us a moratorium on payments for a year. That way we can pay the balance—we only owe about \$10,000—on this note." "That's not very practical," Cook answers. "Your interest on our loan would continue during this period" (he makes quick calculations) "and you would owe \$15,000 more. The church would owe more than \$185,000 and pay interest on interest." "Let me suggest you ask the other lending institution to refinance this \$10,000 for a 10-year period, with payments of only \$100 or so." The pastor complains, "But the Home Board's Church Loans Division exists to aid churches that get into this type of situation." "Pastor," Cook responds firmly, "you must remember, we didn't create the problem. We didn't even know it existed; we want to help but we are under no obligation since you violated your covenant agreement with the HMB." Besides, the HMB has borrowed from others the money it loaned you—and the Board depends on prompt repayment from the churches to repay its debts. "I didn't create the problem either," the pastor replies. "I wasn't pastor at the time." "Nevertheless, you are the leader of the church, and you must take the responsibility." "There's another possibility," Cook suggests. "You could issue \$10,000 in bonds, pay off the other loan, and stretch the bonds for 10 years with small monthly payments. The Church Loans Division will agree to this." The pastor accepts the solution, and Cook has rescued another church from itself. For Bennett Cook, the HMB's Church Loans Division exists to finance the building needs of young churches who could not get high risk financing without its help. It also—and this is almost as important—exists to counsel churches so they make wise decisions with building and property needs: bad financing or poorly planned or poorly constructed buildings have mired down more than one young church's growth. Division director Robert Kilgore says, "Excessive debt is one of the chief causes of fellowship problems in churches. If the pastor is constantly having to talk about inability to pay

bills, the people get depressed. Either they leave or the pastor leaves."

Three decisions by church loans leaders and the SBC have dramatically changed the way Southern Baptists conduct their high-risk loan business.

- In 1965, a blue-ribbon committee of the SBC suggested a dramatic expansion was needed. They told the Board to use its loan funds to guarantee repayment and borrow an amount equal to the total in the basic funds. This move today allows more than \$24 million in borrowing; more could be possible.

- Kilgore assumed his position in 1965, bringing experience in credit, banking and church loans. A Texan, Kilgore determined to apply to church loans a thorough knowledge of community, church and finance fields. He wanted to make the process as scientific as possible.

- The division had to eliminate its high delinquency rate—once at 30 percent—if the financial world was to loan money. On-the-spot counseling was instituted through regional directors, like Bennett Cook, who have as their slogan, "protecting the churches from themselves."

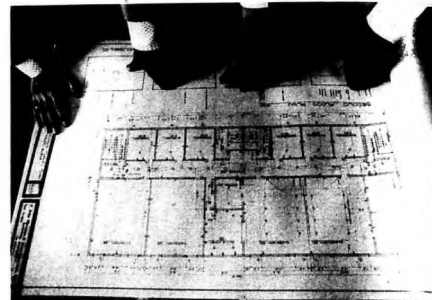
Cook, and the four other regional directors, field service every loan; for each loan closed another five churches are counseled on building and property needs. The sweeping plains and mountains of the far west, plus Alaska and Hawaii, comprise Cook's territory, forcing him to travel 100,000 miles a year with nearly 50 percent of his time away from Atlanta. Traveling from coast to coast, Cook's every trip takes him through at least two—often three, sometimes even five—time zones. Jet lag is his biggest problem, even harder coming back east when it shortens his day. Going out he has learned not to schedule anything the first night, for he has been caught in meetings that dragged on until 11 p.m.—2 a.m. Atlanta time.

Spending hours on planes gets to be a problem over the years. "I've read so many paperbacks, I forget the contents and they begin to sound alike," he jokes.

Otherwise, the most serious problems Cook encounters come in sessions with pastors and churches whose loans are delinquent.

Through these often tense moments, Cook walks with a mixture of firmness, understanding, and a genuine desire to explore all options and find an equitable solution. "We always lean toward helping the church," Cook says.

His six years' experience with the loans division, and earlier leadership on the state staff of the Northwest Baptist Convention, have given him thorough control of his emotions. Even in tense moments, his voice does not betray ner-



Cook looks over plans for an addition to First Church, Yuma, Ariz.



At a proposed site, Cook counsels Phoenix pastor Troy Wilkerson.

vousness or anger, and his calmness blankets the tenseness.

Now, just past 50, he finds few surprises, and seldom does he—or the other regional church loans officers—allow unmanageable situations to occur.

For the threat of foreclosure is not taken lightly by the division. "Rarely do we foreclose a loan," Kilgore says. "We prefer almost any alternative."

Presently, it holds 15 pieces of property—most acquired when churches disbanded; only one has come from foreclosure. Most such property is sold, usually at a loss to the division.

On one occasion, a seriously delinquent church finally deeded its property to the Home Mission Board. The divi-

In tense moments, when he must confront delinquent churches, Cook walks with a mixture of open mind and firmness: "We always lean to helping the churches."



Against a dusty backdrop, Cook talks with pastor Don Reed about construction—and an HMB loan—at his church, First Baptist of Chandler.

sion leased it back to the congregation. The arrangement is reviewed each year, and if the church becomes strong enough to buy the property back, a loan will be made.

Such work by Cook and the other regional directors has lowered the delinquency rate below seven percent. Kilgore is comfortable with that, "just excellent."

"If it gets below six percent, our policies are too restrictive. If it gets above seven percent, we are too lax with our procedures," he says.

The work of the division is controlled by the Church Loans Committee of the HMB—pastors and laypersons appointed by the SBC. They approve all loans and recommend policy or exceptions to the full Board of Directors or

executive committee. Cook feels the committee expects thoroughness. "If we take a recommendation to them, they are usually inclined to approve it, even though they ask a lot of questions and make sure we have done our homework," he explains.

The basic decision on a loan is made by the field man, but when he is faced with a higher risk than usual loan, Bob Kilgore is included.

More often than not, Kilgore favors the church. "That's why we're in business," Kilgore comments.

The loans they refuse reveal much of their methods and philosophy.

Most loans are turned down because a church maybe

has 75 to 100 in Sunday School and they want to build for 400 or 500. Excessive capacity, we've found, is often counterproductive. We think we do such churches a favor by saying, no."

"We always suggest 'unit building,' moving into a second building that will house another 150, then adding units as needed to reach the 500," Cook explains.

Joe Carl Johnson, regional director for the Midwest, faced one pastor who insisted he be allowed to build for 500, when he was running 75 in Sunday School. The HMB's appraisal revealed the church did not need a building of more than 175 capacity.

Johnson insisted the church could not afford such debt; besides, the few people would rattle around in that size building.

The pastor accused Johnson of a weakness heard often by the regional men: "not enough faith."

A small church in a Los Angeles transitional com-

Dwarfed by an old fence, pastors Jeff Ware and John Mills, and missions director Welton Stevens of Washington's Olympic Association show Cook a site proposed for a new church.

munity illustrates another type loan refusal. The pastor wanted a loan for more education space. But already the church was running 175 in space once housing 250.

Bill Updike, handling the account, asked the pastor, "Instead of building more buildings and increasing your capacity—you already have capacity to burn—what are you going to do about the Spanish people moving in?"

"That's not my responsibility," the pastor answered.

"They are coming to this community whether you like it or not," Updike said. "Have you studied the characteristics of a Spanish congregation?"

"No."

"Let me show you some of their characteristics. They usually build around a leader instead of an institution. Most Spanish leaders, therefore, relate only to 150 people. In three to five years you will be Spanish here whether you like it or not. You don't need building space; you need a change of program emphasis to get your people ready for the transition."

"It appears your church has a five-year life expectancy as an Anglo congregation. It wouldn't be wise stewardship to involve your church with a 20-year loan when such major changes must come within five years!"

"Quite often," explains Kilgore, "we have to tell churches facts no one else is willing to."

"Most churches do not have finance problems; they have program problems and we have to relate to that," he adds.

Cook says, "If we did not insist on caution, we would be doing a disservice to the pastor and the church; we've seen too many delinquent debts and half-filled buildings throughout the nation."

The regional director operates through the associational director of missions.

On a recent trip to Washington state, Cook stopped at Spokane, where Southern Baptists' fairly strong work runs hard to keep up with an expanding population. The director of missions had resigned, so from Atlanta Cook contacted Frank Barnes, pastor of Pines Baptist Church in a Spokane suburb, to help with his schedule. The Pines church, among the largest in the Northwest convention, averages more than 350 in Sunday school. Barnes feels the church is over committed with its three missions, and he wants Cook's help to reduce the financial commitment, so that Pines can secure local financing for a new, larger auditorium.

In addition to his own conference, Barnes has scheduled Cook for meetings with four pastors, plus time to check a five-acre site in an expanding middle-class community as a potential church location. The meetings are held in a classroom at Dishman Baptist Church. Prayer requests fill a blackboard behind Cook, and the top request in this drought-plagued state is for RAIN.

With George Scantlan, pastor of one of Pines' missions, Cook works through the steps of making a loan.

Scantlan wants the HMB to loan \$49,000 to the soon-to-be constituted church. Cook explains options of time, interest and payments. He walks through all data needed to process the loan.

The pastor receives \$300 a month from the Church Extension Department of the HMB for Church Pastoral Aid (CPA). Cook will check with Church Extension about that assistance. Because he seldom recommends a loan if debt payments exceed 35 percent of monthly income, Cook explains assistance from a "phase-out" program like CPA can not be counted. But this case seems without problems.

Cook's next session is a lengthy one with Pastor Leo McNamar. His North Town Baptist Church, the first organized in the 30,000 Movement, mother of several Spokane congregations, now struggles to stay alive. McNamar has retired but serves the church for a modest fee.

"It was ready to close up when I got there," he explains. Average 1976 attendance was 18; monthly income remains less than \$400. Now the church is again behind with its payment, and McNamar wants help.

"Have you considered becoming a mission and another church extending help?" Cook asks.

"I don't see why they (local churches) can't help without our becoming a mission. They help with other mission work," he counters.

McNamar then explains that starting in May the church will not have heating bills, so it could just pay interest. Cook asks for a decision by the church in conference, and agrees to request of the Church Loans Committee a three-months' moratorium on the principal.

Cook's advice does not end there, however. He discusses the church's program and what the pastor might do to strengthen the work.

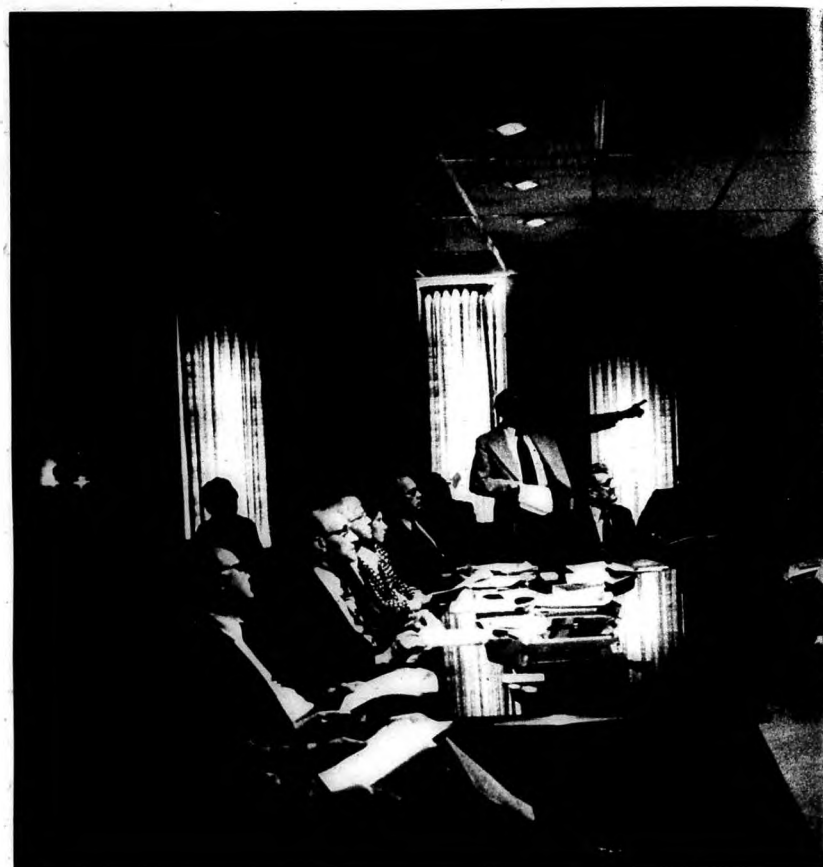
The morning's other conferences are short and cover future needs or procedures. Then Cook goes to view a possible site for a church which the association will probably sponsor. Church Loans prefers local church sponsorship, but does make some exceptions.

For example, the division recently granted a site loan for Beulah, N.C., an energy-rich town of 1,600 people without a Southern Baptist congregation.

Kilgore, recognizing coal-laden Beulah as a coming "hot spot" of the whole country, agreed to a request by the two adjoining Baptist associations for a \$30,000 loan. They, in

Continued

Says Cook: "If we did not insist on caution, we would be doing a disservice to pastor and church; we've seen too many half-filled buildings."



To help early church growth, the division gives site loans, reaching a maximum of \$40,000, interest free for two years, or until the church uses the property.

DON RUTLEDGE PHOTO



turn, bought three acres of prime land across from the high school. Now, as coal mining and electrical generation expand the town's population, Southern Baptists will be well equipped to begin work.

Recognizing such potential growth sites is an important part of Cook's job—and he carefully walks over a good portion of the land, brushing aside high grass and climbing a fence or two. With a school nearby and spacious new middle-class homes surrounding the open fields, the \$8,000-per-acre price seems reasonable. Cook brings more than past experience to his appraisal. He has been trained as a real estate appraiser. Bob Kilgore determined he could more quickly make finance officers out of church leaders and mission strategists, than accomplish the reverse. Most of his field men, therefore, have been mission leaders.

Cook, a native of Marshall, Tex., served in Texas as a music and education director before becoming director of the Church Services Department of the Northwest Baptist Convention. His work included being church building consultant, a position related to the Sunday School Board. This probably gave him his most valuable training until Kilgore sent him to school.

All regional directors, the finance officer, Olin Cox, a former bank president, and others have secured appraisal training, and have taken courses at such schools as University of Georgia and Auburn. Bill Updike, regional director for California, is taking the difficult course of Mortgage Bankers Association, among the field's top credentials.

The purchase of church sites constitutes an important phase of the work of the Church Loans Division.

The site loans, reaching a maximum of \$40,000, are made interest free until the church starts to use the property. This cannot exceed two and a half years. The sponsoring church or association is encouraged, however, to make a monthly payment on the principal from the start. The payment is adjusted once the property is used or the interest free period has lapsed.

Cook and the other field men appraise more than land. They check out building plans and construction while in progress and after completed. A letter from Cook, stating the construction is acceptable, is required before the HMB's check is mailed for any of his loans.

Getting a loan is no simple, quick process. Because of information required, it usually takes six to eight months.

The Church Loans Division has an agreement that the Church Architecture Department of the Sunday School Board will review and approve all plans the division

Cook shows the HMB Church Loans Committee a loan site.

finances. The Architecture Department, whose services are free to churches, can usually give its assistance within four to five weeks.

Services of these architects are invaluable. Cook thinks, because Baptist church education space and auditorium needs are specialized fields in which most local architects have had little exposure.

"Too many architects want to design a cathedral that will live through eternity; designs often have to be changed," Cook explains. Cook recalls an auditorium designed so the people in the back of the balcony could see only the head of the preacher. Another building, designed by a church member, permitted only 18 inches of water in the baptistry.

After first contact, Cook steers the church to the Church Architecture Department. Then he wants a local architect or engineer to prepare construction drawings to local code specifications. He requires a copy of the church budget; treasurer's report for 12 months; contractor's cost breakdown and agreement; church profile; and community profile.

These profiles are part of Kilgore's effort to make a science of the business; often they reveal insights to church and community that are unknown to church leaders.

The community profile comes from census information stored in the Church Loans Division offices; the data show racial composition, age, income, education, resident ownership and other facts which Cook and the other regional directors convert to charts and graphs.

They also check zoning and projections for the area. Once Cook found a highway scheduled to be built through the auditorium of a church which wanted a 20-year loan.

By the time Cook finishes studying the church and community profiles he knows at what stage the community exists: developmental, maturing, transitional or restoration.

To further refine the science of church loans, Kilgore surveyed 2,000 stable churches. He discovered, first, that most churches spend about 15-20 percent of their budget for local expenses (utilities, literature, maintenance, etc.); 40-50 percent for salaries; 10-15 percent for missions; and 15-35 percent to retire debts. He found that 2 1/2-3 times the annual income is the average a congregation should borrow, with variations according to loan length and interest.

The study revealed that one acre is adequate for 150-300 people; that a sanctuary needs 12-15 square feet per person; that education needs require 30-45 square feet per person; and that parking requires 325-370 square feet per car.

The average church, therefore, can get by with one-and-a-half to two acres.



Director Bob Kilgore lives by the monthly cash-flow statistics.

Kilgore brings similar reasoning to growth projections for specific communities.

Most churches start in rented quarters or in homes. Kilgore feels the timing of their move from rental to owned facilities is critical.

Here tension exists between HMB mission strategists and church loans workers, although it is not as great today as in previous years. Jack Redford, director of the Church Extension Department, feels that tangling new work with church property can be tragic. "We need to start 5,000 churches and maybe property is important in 150 of these, such as in Hawaii or Alaska."

Redford wants a conservative policy of financing property and buildings, and he appreciates the church loans field men's efforts to "protect the churches from themselves."

Redford and his associates in church extension encourage new congregations to hold off building as long as possible, to better control where the church will locate; to let strong leaders rise; and to accumulate funds before being strapped with building debts.

Basically, Kilgore agrees. "You can't argue with Jack's

nine steps for starting new churches," he says, adding, "We helped write step eight on securing a building."

The Church Loans Division seldom becomes involved with a congregation under 30-40 in size, often not until it reaches 100 members.

Yet Kilgore, conscious of the pressures on HMB mission strategists, wishes for more exactness, more detailed strategy rather than a loose, over-arching approach.

He often finds a vacuum in planning, either by denominational leaders or local associational workers. "If local mission leaders have set some overall strategy, we relate to it," Kilgore says, "but in so many situations we get in, no overall strategy has been set. We are forced to help set that strategy before we can assist the church. And it's difficult to assess the needs of one church without considering the needs of the larger community of churches."

The church extension leaders, the church loans people, and the Church Architecture Department have developed basic, small first-unit buildings for beginning churches. One popular model, called S-68 (meaning it cares for 68 persons in education and worship), can be doubled later to care for 118, then a third section added to double that. When an auditorium is needed, all of this space converts easily for education.

The funds for Church Pastoral Aid have been another point of tension. Mission leaders sometimes felt CPA paid building loans. Field men inform the Church Extension Department of loans where CPA is provided, and Redford's guidelines for CPA assistance indicate approval for debts must come in writing from his department.

Redford, admiring the thoroughness of church loans procedures, comments, "I wish others in missions would be as thorough with their CPA information as the church loans people are with their loans applications."

As in the missions loans conflict, Kilgore often walks a tightrope. But perhaps his best balancing act is to keep the \$50 million loan business healthy while taking the high-risk loans other lending institutions will not touch. To some his hard-line business sense has made him "the glass-eyed banker," tight-listed with mission money; to others he's even worse—a penurious skinflint whose policies slow down church growth that might explode if building funds were only provided by lenders "exhibiting enough faith."

Kilgore does like things neat, from his near empty desktop to the one-two-three arrangement of his arguments or presentations. And if most people feed on normal fare, Bob Kilgore feeds on digits. He converts everything to figures, from community information to church studies. And his

numbers tumble out of his charts, his tables, his calculator—even out of the slide projectors he uses in church loans conferences, as he leads the Church Loans Committee toward low delinquency, better serviced loans and an expanding corpus—"which are the requirements of a well-managed church loans portfolio, as the HMB directors have instructed," Kilgore quickly points out.

The expanding corpus grows by approximately \$1.5 million each year, or five percent.

CHURCH LOANS GLOSSARY

Like all professions, business has its own lingo. To enter its arena, churches need to understand the language of loans. For those planning to buy and/or build, therefore, this brief glossary of common financial terms may be helpful.

Amortization: The replacement of a loan in equal installments. Set up when the loan is taken out, it is calculated to retire principal and interest at the end of a fixed period.

Balloon: One large payment at the end of a loan. A borrower takes a short-term loan to carry him until he can handle a large final payment. The note is amortized, therefore, for X number of payments, all equal except for the final, large one.

Bond: A promissory note. Because bonds often result in hidden costs, the HMB considers bond programs (normally) the last resort in financing church property or buildings.

Corpus: The principal of the lender's funds. This "original sum" is different from interest or income earned.

Delinquency: A loan at least one payment overdue, usually for 30 days. Some lenders do not consider a loan seriously delinquent until it has reached at least 90 days past due.

High Risk Loan: A loan on which there is a distinct possibility for the lender to lose a portion of the principal and/or the accrued interest.

Loan of Last Resort: A loan which other lenders have refused and which is obtainable only from one source.

Points: A one-time charge assessed by the lender at consummation of the loan. The points are designed to increase the yield of a loan to a competitive position. Each point is equal to one percent of the principal amount of the loan. Seldom is a low interest rate with a high number of points a wise investment for a church, although many have thought so in the past.

Together-We-Build: A fund-raising service of the Stewardship Commission of the SBC. It is designed to strengthen the stewardship program of a church while serving as a tool for raising funds for building needs. When compared to efforts to raise money by bond programs or outside fund-raisers, this free service saves churches hundreds of dollars. The HMB recommends it to churches.

In any church's move from rented quarters or homes to a first-unit building, timing is crucial, feel most experts. But no one knows when for sure.



In sunny Las Vegas, director of missions M.E. McGlamery, Spanish-language pastor Ibelize Veltia and Cook pray "for God's will" in Veltia's efforts to secure this site—and an HMB loan—to meet the growing pains of the congregation Veltia pastors.

"We had nearly \$4 million in income during the past year," Kilgore explains. "After we paid interest on the \$21 million we have borrowed, paid for the salaries, travel and other expenses for operations, we had \$1.5 million left for growth."

"A bank wouldn't be happy with only five percent earnings. If it can't produce a much larger amount a year, with interest and fees, it isn't doing well. A company that pays a five percent dividend is usually paying only about 50 per-

cent of its net profit, and an equal amount goes into expansion. I guess we make only the expansion part."

The five percent figure needs to be measured against an even larger percentage of inflation in the economy, Kilgore adds. Actually, the division has less money, in terms of purchasing power, than the year before.

"If we cannot keep up with inflation, the division will be servicing fewer and fewer churches. It will be going backwards," he points out.

Such trends are apparent: in the past 10 years the number of churches serviced has grown only 10 percent, while the amount of money handled has doubled.

Yet not having to produce high earnings has some advantages. The division can have higher than normal delinquency rates; charge lower interest rates; make non-interest loans for sites; and provide extensive counseling services by its field and office personnel.

And Kilgore believes his HMB money actually costs the churches less. The division charges no closing fees or "points," and its interest rates are usually comparable to other institutions.

A fact that bothers Kilgore, is the amount he pays for the \$21 million he borrows from insurance companies and banks to have the money to lend. Because current commercial interest rates are higher than the 9.5 percent Church Loans charges churches, the division subsidized its loans by \$283,000 in 1976. Before borrowing can be expanded much more, he has to find a way around the loss, without borrowing less.

For being able to borrow these millions has, since 1967, made it possible to assist 400 more churches than could have been helped otherwise, Kilgore figures. "We can either go up on the interest rates or we can get into a different type of program, such as underwriting or endorsement," he says.

"Another avenue open is the state convention backed bond programs," Kilgore adds.

Actually, Kilgore believes that he has the basic organization, a strong corpus, and the ability to move into a future two to three times the size of the present operation.

Last year Southern Baptists spent \$227,500,000 on construction of buildings for 11,300 churches. The Church Loans Division made 250 new commitments with \$12 million, about five percent of the total. As Kilgore surveys the market and the potential of his division, one gets the impression that Bob Kilgore's five percent of that \$227.5 million could become 10-15 percent in the future, with many Southern Baptist churches better served and better counseled. ■

If it cannot keep up with inflation, the division will be servicing fewer and fewer churches, a condition Kilgore sees as a giant step backwards.

THE EVANGELISM LEADER

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A First: Ethnic Evangelism Conference

By Judy Touchton

The first National European Evangelism Conference drew pastors and representatives from nine ethnic groups to Montclair, N.J., for a meeting sparked with European music and concluded with an ethnic "think tank."

Due to limited funds, only about 35-40 Europeans gathered at the Marlboro Inn for daily sessions, dealing with topics ranging from revival evangelism to growing an evangelistic church.

Regardless, French, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Ukrainian, Yugoslavian, Hungarian and Spanish-speaking Baptists were involved. And Elias Golonka, a coordinator of the meeting, urged those who could not attend to "not complain, but pray, that we can have a larger conference" in the future.

The New York Baptist Association consists of almost "50 percent other than American," reported speaker Ken Lyle, minister of associational services, there. Explaining almost half of the association population is either non-English speaking or non-



white, he said, "We have a massive task, just here in New York."

While there are about 2 million Italians in New York city, Southern Baptists have no Italian churches; and although the Russian people even have their own school system, "We have not one Russian speaking church," said Lyle.

Southern Baptists also have no churches for the Austrians, Germans, Greeks, Lithuanians, Norwegians, Swedish, Swiss, French, Danes or Dutch residing in

cosmopolitan New York. Lyle said Southern Baptists need to reach the people "when they first come to this country...with different kinds of ministry."

Saying Baptists, "can't bring everybody into our Polish or Hungarian tree," he emphasized the need to "get where the people are and share the message of Christ."

Lyle said too often Christ is "incapsulated in culture." Language can be overcome through translation, however, methods and ways of

communicating the gospel can be changed. "The main barrier," he believes, "is not language, but culture."

"To get hold of the cities—and the world—for Christ," he continued, "we must teach our people to be on mission for Christ."

"The secular soil around us needs to be the primary place to plant the gospel," Lyle said.

He encouraged the ethnic churches to include more than one language group within their walls, and challenged them to reach people overseas with the gospel, through "modern day mobility."

Some European countries are blocked from official Southern Baptist missionaries. "We can't send our foreign missionaries into Poland," he cited as an example. But, said Lyle, "We can win them to Christ here, and send them back...where they have no language barriers, no cultural hangups, and they can establish pockets of witness all over Europe."

C.B. Hastings, associate director of interfaith witness for the Home Mission Board, brought samples of materials available on

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various religions, but focused on personal witness among Catholics. "Although there has been no change in Catholic dogma," he told his audience, "there has been much change in attitudes, in stance, in doctrinal interpretations and certainly in practices. There has been more change in the last 10 years," he said, "than in the 450 years since the Protestant reformation."

Jack Lowndes, executive secretary-treasurer of the New York Baptist Convention, spoke about reconciliation and "inspiring European leadership to evangelism."

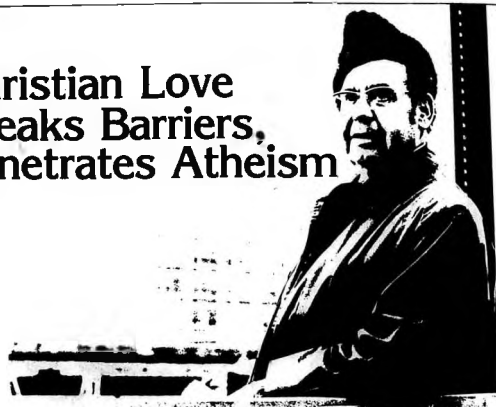
He emphasized the importance of worship, which he called both an attitude and an act, an awareness of God which makes man say "I will never be the same."

"You of European background have a lot to say to us who are Southern Baptist," Lowndes said, concerning worship. In a Czechoslovakian church service, "I didn't understand a word—but I felt the spirit. And in that little church... God spoke to me."

In smaller group sessions, each language group delineated specific needs. Said a Hungarian representative, "We are talking about evangelization, but we ought to be talking about surviving." Needs ranged from ethnic radio programming to language scripture distribution to full-time language workers.

Conference coordinator was Bob S. Sena, consultant of ethnic evangelism at the HMB; it was directed by John Havlik, director of evangelism development, HMB. ●

Christian Love Breaks Barriers, Penetrates Atheism



Elias Golonka dreams of Southern Baptist embassy.

By Judy Touchton

New York—Elias Golonka dreams of the day when Southern Baptists will have an international embassy across the street from the United Nations.

"The mission could be an information and welcome center. There could be Bible studies and Bible distribution...maybe even church services," says Golonka who since 1974 has been conducting a project for the Home Mission Board and the New York Baptist Convention to explore the possibility of a ministry to the international community.

"Ninety percent of the diplomats I meet have never even seen a Bible," Golonka says.

Recently after a Syrian official spoke to an associational pastors' conference, Golonka explained, "We don't ordinarily pay an honorarium and I'm sure as a diplomat you couldn't accept it anyway, but we'd like to give you this Arabic Bible that all the pastors have signed."

The official paused and said, "I was born in Damascus, the city of Paul. I've traveled through London and Paris and other great cities. But no one has ever cared enough to give me a Bible."

Golonka's personal goal is to establish a contact with each United Nations delegation and share the scriptures with them.

"But in many cases, I must follow the steps of protocol: call for an appointment or write the ambassador...and wait," he explains. "It takes so much time."

Sometimes he can bypass the slowness of protocol by taking advantage of opportunities such as the opening of the Chinese embassy after the death of Chairman Mao.

"When I heard the Chinese mission was to be open to the public, I bought a Chinese New Testament and went to express my condolences," Golonka says. "I was taken to the highest ranking official to present the gift on the part of Southern Baptists."

Golonka, a Polish immigrant, feels a responsibility for sharing his "born again" experience and the Bible with the two million internationals in New York City.

With some he speaks in English with his light accent. "It's my foreign language," he says.

But to the 146 United Nations delegates and 87 consuls in the city along with the 5200 international civil servants working in the 39-story UN building, Golonka speaks fluently in 10 Slavic languages including Russian and German.

Golonka maintains, however, the biggest influence on his success has been Carter's election.

"A Communist diplomat in Washington asked me what it means to be born again, and I had an opportunity to explain..." he says.

"Southern Baptists need to take advantage of this worldwide interest in Christianity," says Golonka who attributes this interest to President Carter's unabashed comments about his personal relationship with God. Golonka and the President have a friendship going back to the days when Carter participated in door-to-door visitation in a Springfield,

Mass., evangelistic campaign supervised by Golonka.

If the money for a Southern Baptist embassy, perhaps \$3 million, could be secured, Golonka hopes he might convince President Carter to appear at the dedication.

"But this is only a dream," Golonka says, "unless I can somehow by the grace of God

convince Southern Baptists of the need. If Carter would appear there would be a great opportunity for diplomats to come. But we must hurry. Something like this is overdue."

"If only Southern Baptists could have had a vision 20 years ago, we might have a mission to the United Nations already. ●

Update

Young Adults Mobilize in Michigan

Roscommon, Mich.—Scenic Bambi Lake Baptist Assembly welcomed about 60 young adults to a May evangelism retreat. Joe Ford, director of young adult evangelism for the HMB, organized the conference.

Ford said, "The conference was not only an immediate success, but should prove beneficial to the whole Michigan area."

He explained it was the first effort in mobilizing young adult work and he expected those who attended the conference to apply what they learned in their respective churches.

Each morning after breakfast, the group gathered for seminars, with opportunity for interaction and large group meetings.

Lifestyle evangelism training and vision for singles, students and young marrieds were the themes for the meetings.

Keynote speakers included Ford, Glenn Sheppard of Central Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Ga.; David Claybrook, Illinois Baptist State Association; and Jimi Towns, professor, Stephen F. Austin University in Texas.

Meeting Focuses Transitional Communities

We must be concerned with both the existential as well as the eschatological aspect of man, John Havlik told church leaders at a meeting on churches in transitional communities.

"We can't be either/or, we must be both/and," he said. "Committed to this we can influence our world."

Addressing 220 Southern Baptist pastors and leaders during the first National Conference on Churches in Racially Changing Communities in Atlanta, Havlik, director of evangelism development, said there are five things Southern Baptists must do if they are to evangelize the world:

— "We must begin to rediscover for churches that God is concerned with the world, with man's condition...that God isn't concerned only about your soul.

— "We are going to have to learn to touch with empathy and concern the running sores of our world. Evangelism is

suspect unless an evangelist learns this.

— "We must challenge the axioms of contemporary society and identify with the struggles of humanity for decency and respect.

— He said believers must live according to the scriptures.

— "And we must remember the question—as well as the answer—in the Parable of the Good Samaritan—What must I do to obtain eternal life?

"Those of us in evangelism ought to remember the first four things and those of us in Christian Social Ministries ought to remember the last thing..." Havlik reminded the group. "I regret that so many pastors have a narrow view of evangelism, but we have many indications that evangelistic pastors are becoming more aware that they can't be concerned only about a man's soul."

Conservative Churches Continue to Grow

Conservative churches generally reported the biggest gains in church membership in the past year.

The latest figures in the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches published by the National Council of Churches, indicate continued growth for evangelical bodies—a decline in most of the others.

Southern Baptist membership reached 12.7 million, a gain of almost 2 percent. Mormons increased by 3 percent, with a total of 2.3 million members. Church of God of Prophecy was up 4.9 percent; Jehovah's Witnesses were up 4.4 percent and Evangelical Church of America, up 2.6 percent.

The greatest losses were reported by the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., which is down 2.4 percent, with 2.6 million.

The United Methodist Church was down one percent, to 9.9 million; the Episcopal Church was down 1.7 percent to 2.8 million.

The yearbook, which covers 223 American and 63 Canadian churches, for 1977, showed a continued slide in membership figures for many large, ecumenically minded Protestant groups.

Louisiana Baptists Experience Renewal In Black and White

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.
Associate Editor
Louisiana Baptist Message

Minden, La.—The spirit of Christian sharing came only after some mountains of apprehension had been overcome recently during the first Louisiana black-white lay renewal weekend.

Admits Mrs. Annie Jones, a black participant, "I was apprehensive about white people living in my home for the weekend, because I had been taught to distrust them. 'I could not imagine that they came here just because they cared. 'But,' she continued, 'I soon realized they wanted nothing more than to share their Christian faith that all of us would be more deeply committed as Christians.'"

The event, conducted by Saint Rest Baptist Church in Minden, grew out of the interest of pastor B.F. Martin, after he attended the National Lay Renewal Conference sponsored by the Home Mission Board last October in Georgia. "My wife and I were the only blacks there," Martin said. "But I realized this type of program would be good for my church."

Later, I asked Calvin Cantrell (associate director of evangelism for the Louisiana Baptist Convention) to help us, since he had directed a

number of renewal weekend programs."

Martin said the renewal experience went beyond his expectations for the church. Members reported the home meetings were exceptionally good because they reached a large number of persons who many times would not come to a church.

"Even non-church members attended these group meetings," he said.

Attendance increased from approximately 100 participating in the group meetings to more than 700 for the Sunday morning worship service that lasted until 1:30 p.m.

Immediate results of the effort were evident after the Sunday morning prayer breakfast, when men from the streets were invited to attend. One man made a profession of faith during the morning worship service and was baptized that night.

"This was a significant spiritual victory," Martin said.

While the purpose of the joint effort was not to unite the National and Southern Baptist congregations, Martin said it also was significant that the two races came to accept each other.

About 16 Southern Baptists from two states outside Louisiana served as team members, and they were house guests of Saint Rest Baptist Church members.

"My home will never be the same because of the Christian love I saw in the lives of my guests."

The weekend was conducted as any other renewal conferences led by Cantrell. "The only thing different I ran into was the feeling some blacks have of accepting whites. This delayed the flow of the meeting for a short time."

"When true Christian love surfaced, the real depth of expressing the Christian faith emerged and we had an exceptional experience," Cantrell reported.

Austin Brown, a former prison inmate now serving as chaplain at the Florida State Prison, told the congregation during a catacomb service. "One of the greatest hindrances to Christian witnessing is that we do not accept others as they are. People reaching out to one another in witness."

Observed R.T. Tobin, a church deacon, "Sports had done more to foster friendship among different cultures than the church has."

"The church is behind, but it is catching up."

Martin said his church plans to continue the entire program of prayer and Bible study and have a second weekend program scheduled in eight months.

He believes other National Baptist churches will want to offer similar lay renewal programs. ●



John the Baptist

By John Havlik
Evangelism Leader Editor

Evangelism and theology of salvation may not seem to go together. In spite of a great deal of antipathy between the theologian and evangelist, evangelism needs theology and theology needs evangelism.

The theologian thinks that the evangelist has a simplistic view of the doctrine of salvation. He feels that there is too much emotionalism in the appeal of the evangelist.

On the other hand, the evangelist is quite sure the theologian lives in an "ivory tower" and that his philosophical terminology and technical vocabulary obscure rather than clarify the gospel.

He thinks that the theologian is so far removed from the hopes and aspirations of the common man that it is impossible for him to speak with any meaning to that man.

He is quite sure that the theologian is preoccupied with convincing his peers of his cleverness.

The theologian thinks that the evangelist has "head" trouble. The evangelist thinks the theologian has "heart" trouble.

This serious "credibility gap" really tells us how much the theologian and the evangelist need each other. They both have essentially the same task—to understand and give credibility to the mighty saving acts of God in history, climaxed in Jesus Christ.

For the most part, evangelists (both professional and pastor evangelists) have received training at the hands of theologians. It is unthinkable that theologians could know and understand the gospel without knowing the joy and thrill of sharing it out of Christlike compassion.

It is equally unthinkable for an evangelist to preach the gospel without improving his understandings of that gospel in the light of the best theological thought and biblical studies.

Without a doctrine of salvation, the evangelist will find himself making appeals without any real substantive proclamation of the Word.

Without evangelism, the theologian is talking to himself, with no joy and thrill of sharing the gospel with men who are out of Christ.

To share good news without understanding its depths and its claims is misleading. To know and understand the gospel without sharing it is sad.

This is not to say that there are no theologians who are great evangelists, or that there are no evangelists who are respected theologians.

John Wesley was a great theologian and great evangelist. So was Martin Luther.

When Luther was asked, "What shall we preach?" his quick answer was, "The gospel." ●

Old Tent Meetings Revived in Kansas

By Celeste Loucks

Kansans may consider Southern Baptists "off brand." But in some areas, old-fashioned tent revivals may be provoking second thoughts.

Last summer, young adults from Red Bridge Baptist Church in Kansas City rented a huge red and white tent—and set it up in Parsons, Kan., city park.

Each night a different member of the group delivered the revival sermon.

Folks in Parsons may have felt critical at first, admits Max Morris, pastor of Red Bridge. But about 150 to 200 came almost every night.

They were a little skeptical—Baptists are looked down on in Kansas as off-brand. But, he said, "they found our young people to be exciting."

And, said Morris, the experience was valuable for the young people: "A few got so excited, they are preaching full-time, now."

According to Morris, it all began with a 6 a.m. Tuesday Bible study for about 15 young men at Red Bridge.

Several who had surrendered to full-time Christian work approached Morris. "The Lord is calling us to preach," they said. "Would you teach us how?"

After the men prepared their own sermons, they urged, "Let's put this into practice." In response, Morris located a struggling church 150 miles south of Kansas City, in Parsons, and offered to have a tent revival.

"We did not have a

great number saved—about 10—and there were about 25-30 other decisions." But, Morris said, the revival strengthened the church at Parsons. "It (the church) was kind of on its back. The revival encouraged them to get off dead center, and get going."

It also encouraged the young adults from Red Bridge. "Some are preaching full-time, now—the others are taking their vacations to do tent revivals this summer."

This summer, the Red Bridge young adults received seven revival invitations. "We are going into two cities where they don't even have Baptist churches."

In towns where Baptist churches are established, local church people help publicize the revival.

Also, they take advantage of local media. "In small towns you can get advertising free," Morris said.

Often the meetings are launched by several days of Bible school held in the tent.

Red Bridge sets up a puppet ministry at shopping centers and in city parks to create interest. The 70 to 80-member church youth choir attracts people with mini concerts.

During the revival, Red Bridge volunteers take door-to-door census, and make visits in towns with established Southern Baptist churches. "They witness on the streets," said Morris.

Morris jokes that the young adults at his church travel 100 to 150 miles to preach.

And he believes, "A lot of other churches could do the same thing." ●

Olympia, Wash.—The Russian sailor poked through the barn, even the hayloft; he walked around the fields; petted the horse and examined the farm equipment.

He ate at the family dinner table; watched television in the comfortable family room. Then it was time to return to his ship.

After he left the car, he stopped, turned and walked back to Fern Powers. In halting English, he said: "I love you."

Fern Powers, wife/mother-of-five/grandmother/career woman, has been working in ministries to international seamen since 1971. She and other members of First Baptist Church in Lacey, Wash., have made contact with more than 1,000 seamen, many of whom return to port every two or three months.

She speaks no foreign languages. Yet with a Berlitz dictionary, a parallel Bible, or no words at all, she, Carole Rodgers, and several others, articulate love that cuts through cultural mores and penetrates Eastern theology and Iron Curtain atheism.

Many sailors have, as one Chinese said, "made the march for the Christ" as a result of contacts made by Lacey church members and fellowship offered by the Powers.

"I think," says Harold Hitt, a friend and advisor who directs language missions for the Northwest Baptist Convention, "this ministry has the potential of being the greatest tool for evangelizing the world that we have."

"The seamen are coming from all over the world. They are going all over the world. If we could reach enough of them with the gospel, we could have several thousand free missionaries."

He's convinced enough of the ministry's merit, he says, to have encouraged the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to contribute about \$50 a month to help defray expenses. "In terms of dollars and cents," he feels, "it's probably the best money we've spent, overall."

The Powers home is an open door and it isn't unusual to see a Japanese man curled up on their couch, watching television or drawing. Chinese sailors playing games in her living room or South Koreans taking turns riding the Powerses' palomino.

A Vietnamese young man, homeless in the United States, stayed in the Powerses' basement. Fern also sponsors, along with the church, a Vietnamese and a Cambodian family, both living in the area.

"Do you ever have anything stolen?" people often ask her. "No," she replies. "What do I have that's valuable? What do I have that's as important as telling these seamen about Christ?"

One of the most compelling—and difficult—ministries is to Russian seamen.

Once, when her dining room was surrounded by Russians, Mrs. Powers bowed her head for prayer. After the amen, she looked up to see Boris, the political officer, staring angrily.

As the others began eating, Boris continued to stare. Since then, she is careful not to offend the men, yet she uses every opportunity to witness.

Communication with the Russians, and others who do not speak English fluently, is an exercise in patience and persistence. When she attempted to invite a group of Russians for a trip to snowy Mt. Rainier, her simple invitation was implemented by hand motions, hand scrawled maps and continual references to the dictionary.

With strong support from Lacey pastor Harry Hannah, Mrs. Powers has enlisted a number of church members who provide cars and

food—such as turkey and dressing, sandwiches, pies, fresh breads and cakes—for the outing.

The group picks up the sailors—Russians, Koreans, Japanese, depending on the ships in port—and drives to craggy Mt. Rainier, where they eat. Often, they enjoy the thrill of sliding down the snowy mountainside on tractor-size, rubber inner tubes and large plastic sheets.

One of Mrs. Powers' favorite memories is of a Russian officer, who had been "excitingly open in their conversations, being playfully pulled and pushed by his men to an inner tube. Then, laughing, his furry hat pulled tight on his head, he was launched downward, boots extended and earflaps flying in the wind."

Several months after that trip, the Russian ship returned to port. The officer and half-

dozen seamen again visited the Powers farm, but this time he also requested a tour in town, including the railroad station. Mrs. Powers also took him by the church but couldn't take him in. The door was locked.

When they got back to the car, the political officer told her, "I don't go to church...I'm a Communist."

After dinner, on the way back to the ship, the political officer told Mrs. Powers he didn't think she could be a Communist. "You go to church," he told her. Later, when he had told the Americans goodbye and had turned toward his ship, he hesitated and then came back. "I love you," he said haltingly to Mrs. Powers.

Confusion over language and customs occurred once when Mrs. Powers invited three Buddhists—David, Albert and Alex—to church on Sunday evening, and afterward to her home for dinner.

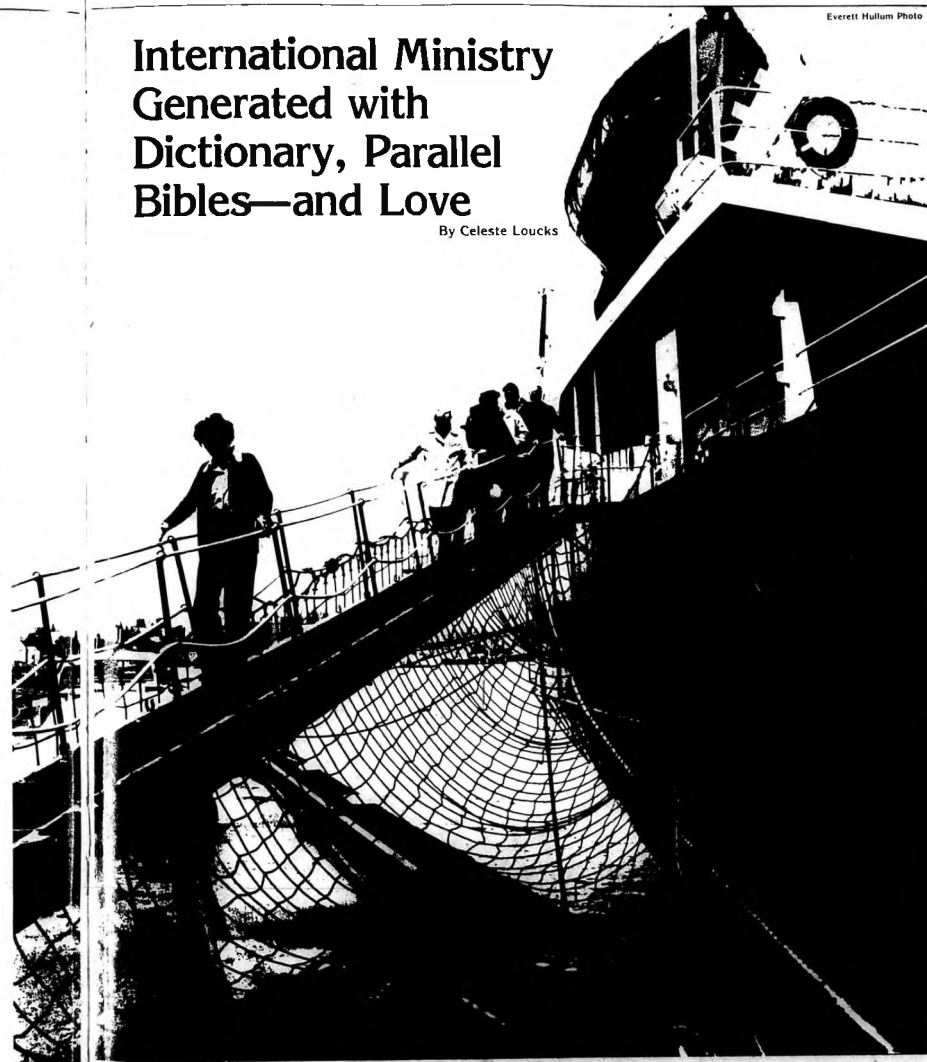
The three could not understand much of the service, and to her surprise, it concluded with a Lord's Supper observance. Looking hungrily at the meager fare of grape juice and crackers, which he thought was the long-awaited meal, Albert got tickled. Soon all three were laughing.

When Mrs. Powers explained the significance, Albert was horrified at his earlier actions. "Have I offended your God?" he asked. "No," Mrs. Powers replied. "Ours is a God of Love."

Albert responded: "Then I want to be a Christian." ●

International Ministry Generated with Dictionary, Parallel Bibles—and Love

By Celeste Loucks



Growth Snowballs At Palma Ceia Church In Northern California

By C.B. Hogue
Director
Evangelism Section

In researching a forthcoming book on "growing an evangelistic church," C.B. Hogue talked to numerous pastors of fast-growing churches. The following article, adapted from the book—to be published this fall by Broadman—is part of a series on these churches' ministries.

Hayward, Calif.—Eight years ago, Charles Bennett was a mailman. Today he pastors one of the fastest growing churches in the Bay Area—a 1,200-member Palma Ceia Baptist Church.

The transition from mailman to pastor wasn't easy for Bennett. Nor did it come quickly. But once "I believed the Lord wanted a church in Hayward, I didn't give up," Bennett said.

Although first feeling a "call to preach" in Ohio in 1945, Bennett "wouldn't answer until 1963," he admitted. He continued to deliver mail, preached whenever he could, and attended a Bible Institute in Oakland at night for four years.

In 1965, Bennett felt led to begin services in Hayward, but his brother's death in Ohio postponed his action. "It

took everything out of me," Bennett recalled. Instead, Bennett joined a Southern Baptist church in Oakland, even though he had grown up in a National Baptist church. The decision proved significant, for in East Oakland Baptist Church, Bennett found encouragement and opportunities to exercise his leadership.

His three years there gave him training and exposed him to many programs available through the Southern Baptist Convention. "The Lord has a way of preparing his servants," Bennett said. By 1968, Bennett could delay no longer. With only his family to preach to, he began services in Hayward, a middle-class, bayside community south of Oakland.

After three weeks, eight women with their children came to hear him. When he finished his message, he remembered, "I explained why I had come to Hayward and told all who wanted a church there to come stand with me." Already three black churches were in the city. Yet all but one woman came forward.

And Palma Ceia Baptist Church was born. From the first, Bennett stressed Sunday school.

He'd been a Sunday school superintendent at East Oakland, and he knew Sunday school was a good way not only to reach others, but also to help his members mature. Most of them, at this time, were women with children—and the children "needed Sunday school to help them in their lives," Bennett said. He continued to deliver mail, visiting nights and weekends.

Until 1970, the church had grown only to 130 members. Less than 120 were attending regularly when the congregation moved from a rented Congregational building to its own facility.

"Since then," however, "it's been all growth," Bennett said.

More and more families visited, liked the friendly atmosphere, and joined. The "snowball effect"—so common among growing churches—developed: growth began growth as the congregation became excited about the life and ministry of the church, Bennett explained.

Attendance doubled, then tripled.

In the first four months of 1977, Bennett baptized 56 people. The church budget—which only had become strong enough in 1975 to allow him to quit his mailman job to become full-time pastor—will top \$100,000 in 1977.

And the congregation, while still containing many divorcees and single people, shifted toward professional, middle-class families. So young did its median age become, in fact, that Bennett could not find enough low-income elderly in the church or the church's neighborhood to justify a "meals on wheels" program Palma Ceia wanted to co-sponsor with the city.

Bennett continued to emphasize Sunday school for all ages. He also began extensive "discipling training" in 13 week sessions.

Two Sunday morning services soon were necessary: the main one at 11 a.m. has more than 500 packed in every Sunday; the earlier service attracts half that number.

Weekday activities range from programs for women, youth and children to the adult-oriented discipleship training—"You'd think we were having church," we have so many come," Bennett said. "We've got the strongest visitation and witness program of any black church in the Bay area...maybe any church, black or white," Bennett added.

That active lay witness program, plus what Bennett described as "the presence of the Holy Spirit, first of all, naturally," has been the cornerstone of Palma Ceia's growth, Bennett commented.

"I'm not a great preacher," he said—although most of his congregation deny that. "But I hope to be a great pastor and a great teacher of my people."

And the first lesson he's taught, for all the years of his pastorate, has been that there is "liberty in Christ." So open and accepting has become the atmosphere at Palma Ceia, that members drive 15-20 miles one-way to attend.

"I wanted a feeling of Christ-likeness," Bennett explained. "I didn't want people to feel like strangers at Palma Ceia; I wanted them to feel part of the family of God."

At Palma Ceia, commented a white visitor recently, "Everyone sure feels that!"

Definition of a Refugee: For the purpose of participation in these projects, a refugee is defined as: An alien who has fled from and cannot return to Cambodia, Vietnam, or Laos because of persecution or fear of persecution on account of race, religion or political opinion, and has been paroled into the United States by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) as a refugee, or cannot return to Vietnam, Cambodia or Laos, and has been granted voluntary departure status by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) as a refugee.

Report to the Congress
H.W. Refugee Task Force
September, 1976

"We know the boat is dangerous, but if we stay, we will be killed. If we go, maybe we live."

Refugee Nguyen Thao Xuan 1975

Vo Van Thu hanged himself. On a warm June night in Atlanta, he tied his shirt to the bars of his cell, wrapped it around his neck, lowered his bodyweight against it.

Six months later, in a South Carolina cemetery, an old man sprinkled incense over the fresh earth of a grave. Encircling the grave were friends of Bui Tu Lam. Lam had drowned a few days before, when the car he was driving ran off the road and plunged into a pond.

Separated by two years and 11,000 miles from their homes in Vietnam, two refugees died violent deaths. Thu's

been working at the Home Mission Board as an offset printing operator. Seemingly happy, Thu and his family were sponsored by Dogwood Hills Baptist Church in East Point, Ga. Yet in June, 1976, Thu was charged with murder in the death of his three-year-old son, Thanh. The child suffered injuries which indicated child abuse, but no one seemed sure of Thu's role in the incident.

After Thu was taken to jail, a guard asked Lewis Myers, a friend of the family, if Thu might have suicidal tendencies. Should Thu be stripped and isolated so he could not harm himself?

Myers, a former missionary to Vietnam, thought that indignity might be the last straw for Thu, so the Vietnamese was placed in a regular cell.

That night—June 14, 1976—Thu committed suicide.

Myers says Thu felt heavy responsibility for the son's death and for the loss to the family. As Myers spoke in Vietnamese at the funeral, he reassured the family of the continuing concern of church and community.

Myers now says sadly, "I don't know of any way the suicide could have been prevented. The church relations were good; there was no job stress."

"But there were factors no one could identify."

Today, Dogwood Hills church continues to care for the family. Children, aged three, five, six and eight, are well-fed and clothed. Thu's wife, Nguyen Thi Lai, works at the church and talks

THE VIETNAMESE TODAY

For America's newest immigrants, the U.S. is still less a haven than a home. • by Elaine Furlow photography by Jim Wright

suicide hints of the unbroken pressures a fast-moving American culture puts on strangers from another land. Lam's funeral reveals the flexibility that same culture offers in meeting the needs and matching the customs of newcomers.

Vo Van Thu, a 38-year-old former South Vietnamese army major, had

weekly with a counselor

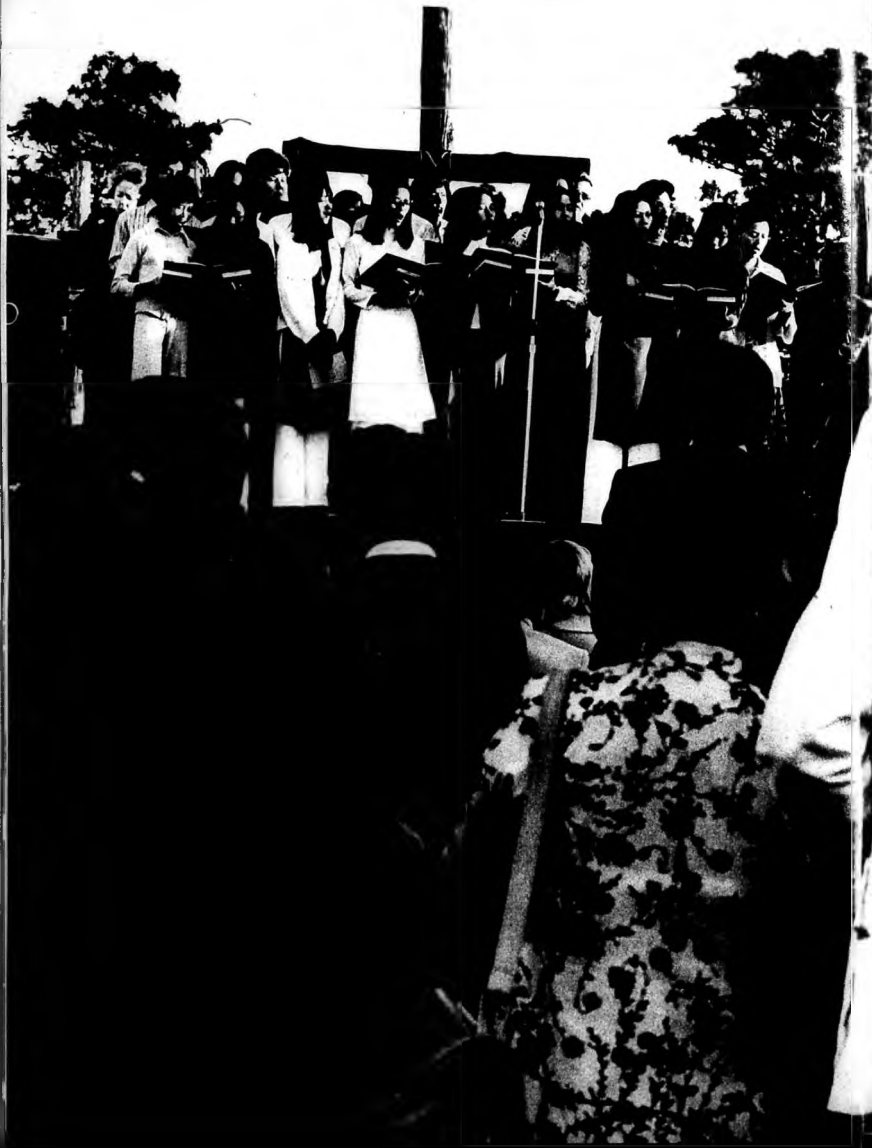
The death in North Augusta, S.C., shows how an American setting can be modified to encompass Vietnamese customs.

The nearest relative, an uncle, came from Oklahoma, carrying incense and candles, prepared to honor his relative in the traditional Vietnamese manner.

One of the strongest Vietnamese

In Vietnamese, the family name is written first, rather than last. First names, however, are proper forms of address. This style is used throughout the story.

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At the funeral, he gave an obituary, recounting family ties and recent family events. Nearly all of the Vietnamese community attended the service; the familiar customs pleased them.

"It's just like home," whispered one Vietnamese girl to another.

At the cemetery, the crowd watched as the casket was lowered, the hole filled with dirt and smoothed. Incense was then placed atop the grave and Myers explained the Christian view of death.

The ceremony departed from normal American tradition, but the changes were important to the Vietnamese traditions: is caring for the body from death until burial. Family members handle that responsibility in much the same way an American mortician does.

When the uncle asked to see the body of his nephew before it was prepared, the funeral director might have demurred. Instead he replied, "Certainly. Would you like to come to the embalming room with me?"

The uncle nodded. "I want to tell you before we go back," the mortician warned. "We make incisions in the body. It's the law."

The uncle stayed in the back room several hours.

On Easter morning in 1977, Dang Duoc, his wife, Duyet, and their children—Duyet, Buu, Duy, Linh and Cam—stood with dozens more Vietnamese and Americans in the pre-dawn chill of a sunrise service in Orlando, Fla.

Silhouetted against a sun that quickly burned away the morning mist, the Vietnamese and Americans, each in their native tongue, sang "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today."

At the word Alleluia, the same in any language, volume rose perceptibly. A small smile came over Dang Duoc's face.

It was a world away, in time and emotion, from Easter two years earlier. For on that day in 1975, Dang Duoc, a policeman in South Vietnam for 21 years, was shepherding his frightened family onto a boat in the Saigon harbor, he was obsessed with one goal: getting his family out of Vietnam alive.

For the 140,000 Vietnamese who fled to this country two years ago after the Communists took over in Vietnam, the

As sunrise breaks the Easter sky, many Vietnamese praise God for their deliverance from the awful events of two years ago.

abrupt transition into American culture has been puzzling, challenging, frightening. And finally, for many, strange ways are becoming familiar. There is much to smile about now. But the smiles still are often tinged with sadness.

The Vietnamese have found homes, although those homes may be garage apartments or houses much smaller than the ones they left behind; they have jobs, although the work may be dishwasher in a restaurant rather than officer in a bank; janitor instead of policeman, and they have Vietnamese friends and new American friends, but family members still may be in Vietnam, and communication with them is limited and infrequent. Chances are slim they will ever be reunited.

When Vietnamese first stepped off planes in California, Florida and Arkansas, says Myers, many felt a strong desire to "get out in the community, learn English, get a job, be Americans." During the first months after Vietnam's fall, they believed other families and friends might escape to the U.S., too.

Around Christmastime 1975, an emotional upheaval shook Vietnamese families, when they realized they would never again see fathers, husbands, brothers, friends.

"Emotionally that was the hardest part of the resettlement," says Myers, an SBC missionary in Vietnam for 15 years and a leader of the resettlement effort here. He terms it "the dawning of finality."

Such emotional stresses, says Myers, were the most severe problem in adjusting to the U.S. The ways in which

namese family unload grocery sacks, advised, "You know, you eat too much rice. It's really unhealthy for you."

A South Carolina sponsor, loaded with Tupperware, instructed a Vietnamese mother how to keep lettuce for two weeks in plastic containers—an idea clearly appalling to a woman accustomed to buying fresh fruits, vegetables and meats daily.

In another grocery, an American woman complained of "poor Vietnamese" buying off the gourmet shelf, never realizing foods making up their traditional diet are available, but scarce and therefore expensive.

Myers thinks in time the Vietnamese will adapt their cooking habits. Already, some changes are occurring.

In San Diego, Hoang Trong Ngha admits his family—especially the kids—like hamburgers.

In Florida, a Vietnamese woman serving guests glasses of soft drinks filled with ice cubes, explains, "We never serve cold drinks with the meal in Vietnam, but here we get used to it."

In Queens, New York, a bottle of Coke and a bottle of Asian seasoning sauce sit side by side on a ledge in the home of Than Quang Ky.

The garage apartment's blue walls slope down gently into the small room where a blue curtain separates the kitchen from a tiny eating space. Ky's wife quietly prepares fried rice and won ton soup; their adopted daughter plays happily with a big balloon.

Ky had visited New York before moving there, so adjustment was not as dif-

DAWNING of finality hit the Vietnamese around Christmastime, 1975. It was then they began to realize they'd never again see relatives and friends.

food, housing, language and employment needs were handled often made the difference in how the polite, soft-spoken Vietnamese acclimated.

Sponsors usually had good intentions. Well-meaning Americans with the ambition of making Vietnamese "good Americans" took it upon themselves to teach the newcomers how to live, how to speak, where to go.

One sponsor, watching her Viet-

ficant for him as for some others.

"I had been told New York was dirty, and it is," he says. "But I think, well, he turns the palm of his hand up, then down. "There are two sides. I see these tall buildings. I think, man did this, I am part of man, no one else could do this."

Ky, a medical doctor with years of experience in Vietnam, has not yet found a job in medicine here. Foreign medical graduates to practice in the U.S., must

pass an extremely difficult examination. In one recent sitting, for instance, 406 refugee physicians struggled with its language and medical sections; only 32 passed both sections.

Ky has passed his tests but still has not found work.

The slim, dignified man sits at his kitchen table and smiles faintly. "I was in my country, a secure future, then

uprooted," he says. "But I can adjust. I think the main thing for a man is self-respect," he adds, thumping a finger at his chest. "If you have no self-respect, you are nothing."

Most of the Vietnamese who fled to the U.S. held white-collar jobs in Vietnam. To take other types of jobs, some felt, was degrading. But most have accepted *lam tam*—a feeling of tem-

porary adaptability—and taken whatever work was available.

"A friend serving food to visitors in Vietnam may offer *lam dung tam*," explains Myers. "That means, roughly translated, 'This is not as good as you would have in your own house, of course, but perhaps it will hold you until you get home.'"

A Vietnamese person understands

this concept. And the most successful relationships between sponsors and Vietnamese have been those in which the Americans sensitively responded to the Vietnamese' desire to be themselves, using their own abilities, in their new setting.

Irvin Dawson, associate director in the HMB's Language Missions Department and coordinator of resettlement

effort, says he has received only isolated complaints about sponsors.

"Most of them have done very well," he believes. "And I think on the whole, the adjustment of the refugees has been just great. When you realize most of them left home on just four or five hours notice, were picked up and deposited in a new country, and within two years, most can take care of themselves."

The Home Mission Board, through its association with Church World Service, resettled about 3,150 Indochinese refugees. Perhaps as many as 3,000 more were resettled by Baptist individuals, churches and other groups working independently.

Dawson's office has three file drawers crammed with manila folders on refugees, listed by "A number" (alien registration number), who have written for additional help. His office has handled more than 400 requests from 37 states—everything from hospital bills for an appendectomy to help on a used car for transportation to work. Money aid comes from Church World Service, which has a fund for refugee welfare.

Of course, Southern Baptists have been concerned with spiritual needs as well as physical and emotional. The HMB's Language Missions Department has published a guide to help churches develop programs for Vietnamese. It provides help on taking a survey, including common Vietnamese family names and step-by-step ideas on beginning Bible study groups.

One songbook and three Bible study books in Vietnamese are available from the Board, as well as a pamphlet on

Such events give Baptists a chance to say welcome, and give Vietnamese a chance to share the food, music, poems and plays of their culture.

South Main Baptist, Houston, and First Baptist, San Antonio, have been particularly effective in reaching out to the Vietnamese community.

The San Antonio association has appointed a coordinator for Vietnamese work. Tran Thanh Liem Bob Davis, former missionary to Vietnam, has worked the state helping churches minister to Vietnamese.

As Vietnamese have settled into American routines of school, shopping, work and play, some have made a place for the American brand of worship as well. About 90 percent of the Vietnamese are Buddhists, though some are in name only. The other ten percent are Christians, mostly Catholics. About 30 Baptist congregations and Bible study groups, with a Vietnamese flavor to be sure, have sprung up in Vietnamese communities in the U.S.

Fifteen Vietnamese men pastor congregations, although some also hold jobs or go to school.

The largest concentrations of Vietnamese are in Los Angeles (20,000), San Diego (12,000) and Washington, D.C. area (10,000).

The strongest Baptist work is in Florida, northern Virginia, Texas and Southern California. Small cells of Christians are springing up, however, among Vietnamese in such places as Carbondale, Ill., and Kansas City, Mo.

About 4,000 Vietnamese live in central Florida, from Tampa-St. Petersburg to Titusville. Many settled in the area

THEN AND NOW

They came to the U.S. to escape, rather than to seek the American dream. But they've found it impossible to escape the memories of home.



When air force pilot Hoang Trang Ngan and his family arrived in the U.S., they felt "thankful to be alive. If I'd stayed in Vietnam, I'd be killed by now." Two years later, Ngan has settled in to a traditional American lifestyle: he owns a home in the suburbs, has joined the Baptist church in San Diego that sponsored the family, and works at the most American of institutions, a fast-food restaurant. "We have learned to like hamburgers," he says. But he's frustrated, too, with the job's long hours—including Sundays—and the fact that "I can't go back to flying."

At the fall of Vietnam, Nguyen Than Nga was separated from his wife and three children. Today he still hopes they will be reunited. Meanwhile, he studies hard at California Baptist College, works part time, and pastors a Vietnamese mission of First Southern Baptist Church of Westminster, a Los Angeles suburb. Few of Nga's small group were Christians when they arrived in the U.S., but Nga—above with former HMB missionary to Vietnam, Bob Davis—believes other are receptive. He plans seminary after college graduation. Then he'd like to be a home missionary—to his people living in the U.S., of course.



Torn from her family, 17-year-old Le Bong Lai arrived wondering if she had a future. Today, she is making her own work with mentally retarded children and in a nursery, while taking a full load as a college student studying child development. Her biggest disappointment was her failure to get a scholarship to California Baptist College—and "I do not like to miss church when I work."



PASSING

the old language down to their children is important to the Vietnamese: "The English, they will get it from play and from friends at school."

basic Christian doctrine. Myers encourages churches and individuals to set up cross-cultural exchange classes. Several have done so, including First Baptist Church, Moss Point, Miss.

Others, such as Florida Shores Baptist Church, Orlando, and First Baptist Church, Alexandria, Va., have sponsored Tet celebrations, marking the beginning of the Vietnamese new year

after leaving nearby Eglin AFB's resettlement camp in 1975. Florida's climate was reminiscent of Vietnam's, jobs and housing usually were available.

In Orlando, a congregation of 60 to 70 meets each Sunday in the fellowship hall of Florida Shores Baptist Church.

Florida Shores has sponsored 14 families. At one time, pastor Ed Segars had eight Vietnamese living with him while the church found them homes.



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"They are not a wealthy church, but they have the zeal to help," says Florida language missions director Hubert Hurt. Besides finding jobs at Disneyworld, motels and restaurants, church members have helped with transportation and English lessons. In September, 1975, the church sponsored a Vietnamese retreat with 200 attending.

Many of the Vietnamese have been located in the Barcelona Apartments, where live Don and Betty Caspers. The Caspers, according to pastor Nguyen Xuan Son, "have done everything. They take care of sick, take people to grocery, any time, whatever happens."

Out of a rent of \$142, a Vietnamese family might pay \$100 while Florida Shores church pays \$42. As families get on their feet and earn more, they assume a larger share. No one has ever failed to pay the church a rent check.

The church had the apartment rules translated into Vietnamese, parking regulations, rules against hanging wash on the balcony and so forth, and the manager has had no complaints.

One older Vietnamese woman, who had lived elsewhere, had psychological problems which vanished when she moved to Barcelona to be nearer friends. "I like to be closer to them," she explains, "to talk."

On an early Saturday morning, a soft Florida breeze floats through apartment windows, carrying voices of Vietnamese children gathering swimsuits and sun hats for a church picnic.

Pastor Son, the slim, energetic young leader of the Vietnamese group, loads inner tubes, food and a guitar, then collects two dozen kids in assorted ages for an outing. At Rock Springs park, the

of a nearby lake.

Son, who manages to get all the children home by mid afternoon, rests only a short while before the evening's baptism service, held on Saturday to accommodate a man who works. Afterwards, Son visits and prepares for Sunday's sermon.

A graduate of Southwest Baptist College in Missouri, Son dropped out of Southeastern seminary in 1976 to take over the Vietnamese work at Florida Shores church.

When he's not working with the Orlando congregation, Son travels to Sanford, Tampa or St. Petersburg to work with Vietnamese. He plans to start Bible studies in Jacksonville and Gainesville.

The long hours are "not a physical burden," he says, "but a mental one."

The Home Mission Board pays Son \$600 a month, plus travel expenses. Florida Shores pays his housing.

Florida Shores' Vietnamese ministry started in 1975 when several people met Do Quan Thuc, a Stetson student who had become a Christian earlier. They became acutely aware of the influx of Vietnamese. Pastor Ed Segars, who had preached in India and Korea, saw an opportunity to do foreign missions among Vietnamese in Florida.

"I had a great interest in these people," it began to touch my heart," says Segars. "We just really felt the leading of the Lord."

The Vietnamese group started meeting June, 1975, with Do Van Dung as pastor. Dung, a pastor in Vietnam, struggled to weld together the community of Vietnamese. After six months, he moved to Alexandria, to

SOUTHERN Baptists' programs for the Vietnamese—from settlement to sponsorship—reflect concern for the immigrants' spiritual as well as physical needs.

church van disgorges youngsters.

Strumming his guitar, Son sings Vietnamese songs while the children clap excitedly. Later, the group enjoys turkey and cucumber sandwiches on split loaves of toasted French bread, before rushing to swim in the cool water.

Nothing is as American as a "good ol' summertime" picnic—especially if it's for Vietnamese youngsters new to the States.

pastor, a Vietnamese congregation sponsored by First Baptist Church. Son came to Orlando in January, 1976.

Florida Shores' Segars, with his enthusiasm and energy for the Vietnamese work, sometimes overwhelmed the new Vietnamese pastor.

"He was afraid no one else could handle it," says Son. "There were a few problems, but now, everything is okay."

PHOTO BY MICHAEL TAYLOR

The head of each Vietnamese household is represented on the church's Vietnamese council, which meets once a month with the deacons of Florida Shores. Son and Segars. Together, they determine budgets and activities and discuss any problems.

"Most people in the church earn a very low income," says Son. "Some are part-time, \$2.30 an hour."

Yet the church collects about \$300 a month in tithes and offerings. Son hopes to channel church savings into a building fund so the group can have its own place of worship.

"Sometimes the U.S. is too materialistic," says Son. "We don't trust God, we trust insurance companies. I figure if every church member tithes faithfully, the Lord will take care of us."

Young people in the congregation are quickly learning English and getting better jobs; the older ones sometimes find it harder to adjust.

Segars recalls one dignified Vietnamese woman, sitting quietly in her backyard, finally revealed she was worried—her small plot of land in Vietnam was adequate to grow rice and vegetables for the family, but here?—How would she provide?

"The old people, you must take time, be very patient, over long years, to win them," says Son.

Because of his members' differences in education, interest and adjustment to American ways, Son says, "Sometimes I have to be very high, sometimes very low. It makes my head tense."

Pastor Son's youthful appearance sometimes makes the task more difficult.

Duoc Duy, a 24-year-old woman who works for a radio company, says some older members say, "Pastor Son, he look like my children," and they don't pay attention to him."

Her father, Duoc Dang, was treasurer of his church in Vietnam; he heads Sunday School now. Along with other mature members, he smooths communication and helps Son knit the congregation tighter.

Dang, a policeman in Vietnam for 21 years, tends plants in a nursery. "He doesn't like it," says one daughter. "He just does it for the money, to keep the family going."

The eight-member Duy family lives in a house owned by their sponsor.

"He is very good to us," says Duy. "The first time, we did not know how to

drive. They took my family everywhere.

"We were afraid to bother him too much, but he never minds. When my brother fell off his bicycle, he came right over and took him to the hospital. He gets us jobs, he helped my brother and sister go to school."

Son encourages Vietnamese to get better jobs or more schooling.

Hoang Thuong Trung, a 24-year-old man who spent five years in the South Vietnamese Air Force, was a licensed electrician in his homeland, but left Vietnam without papers to prove it. "Now when I ask for job, they say, 'Where is your license?'"

He knows it will take time to prove himself on an American job.

In Vietnam, Le Phong ran the 100 meters in track and played high school soccer. Today Phong is a house painter, for a boss who "treats me like a son." His sister, Trung, is a sewing machine operator. Together they live with their mother, Le Luoc Nguyen, in the Barcelona apartments.

When the family left Vietnam, they went first to the Philippines, then to Guam, then to Camp Pendleton in California for a month and a week. When they were offered the chance to move to Florida, the family was not sure what to expect.

"They say we can go to Florida, so we choose it," remembers Phong. "I studied it in high school. I remember about it."

Asked what he remembers, Phong smiles sheepishly, then stretches his arms. "The chapel. And where it is; that is more than most know."

When the Phong family arrived in Florida, they lived in Sanford, about 30 miles from Orlando.

"I feel very lonely and abandoned there," says Phong. "We used to live in Saigon, Sanford was very quiet."

Since moving to Orlando, the family has been happier. His mother has taken English classes. Her friends from Florida Shores—Dot Segars, Barney and Vivian Burns, Richard and Jo Ann Jameson—take her shopping. The neighbors at Barcelona speak Vietnamese, cook Vietnamese, understand the Vietnamese way.

The same is true for many Vietnamese. About half of the almost 140,000 refugees have moved from their first American homes; only five percent of refugees were still living with their spon-



Two Vietnamese children enjoy an outing.

sors in August '76. Many have joined friends where more Vietnamese live.

Ly Tang and her daughters, Dao, 14, and Hien, 5, were sponsored by a Baptist church in a small Oklahoma town. Tang's eyes still cloud at the memory of loneliness there.

A friend in Washington, D.C., said the Tangs could stay with her. The Oklahoma church gave them bus money and best wishes, and the family came to Washington.

A month after Tang arrived at her friend's house, however, that family was transferred to Kenya.

Tang was again homeless.

The First Christian Church of Falls Church, offered money to help the family; HMB missionaries Carol and Ector Hamrick offered to be their official sponsors.

Tang got a job cleaning in a hospital but soon lost the job. Her eyes, which had been damaged by sun and exposure on the boat trip from Vietnam, continued to give her problems.

"When we came to visit, she would just talk about, 'If you love us, you will help us,'" remembers Do Van Dung, pastor of the Vietnamese congregation



sponsored by Florida Shores church, while another youngster splashes in the pool.

in Alexandria, Va.

"We try to calm her," the pastor says, "so she felt a little bit better."

Two women from the Christian church started teaching Tang English once a week; the church provided groceries. The Hamricks became friends through visits, meals, trips to the store, school and doctor.

In general, say the Hamricks, Tang seems happier now, especially since she is closer to other Vietnamese.

Echoes pastor Dung, "Vietnamese are very happy and peaceful when they are living in this country. But they cannot forget their father, mother and relatives in Vietnam."

"I have a very dear friend who comes here every Sunday morning for prayer early, from 6 to 7. He lost his wife, children and all his relatives in Vietnam. When he has prayer with us, he feels better, even though he lost his family."

Pastor Dung has started six home Bible fellowships, now draws about 30 to morning services in his home, next to First Baptist, Alexandria. He has produced a series of videotapes which he hopes will be used in Vietnamese communities across the country. Le Van

Thong, a journalist in Vietnam and now a member of the Alexandria Vietnamese congregation, presents the news on the videotapes. Other people sing and comment on events in the U.S.

"I expect to have a Vietnamese church in this area soon," says Dung, "because we have Christian families."

MOBILITY of the immigrants—as they seek better opportunities through education or employment—has made some Southern Baptist efforts sporadic, inconsistent.

people who love to study the Bible and are very interested in the gospel.

"Some have been sponsored but they still feel lonely when they go through the American church," he says, a bit apologetically.

"The neighborhood even to me seems very different here, very hurried in the life. When we first came to this house, we had met two neighbors—just two. Maybe because of the language

and customs, we cannot have visiting with them. But everything is all right."

He glances at his wife and son, Cali. Now two years old, the baby was born in Camp Pendleton in May 1975, shortly after the couple arrived. To honor the state of his birth, they named him California—"Cali" for short.

Cali speaks mostly English, but often injects a Vietnamese word into his two-year-old's disjointed vocabulary. That makes his parents smile.

"When he grows up," Dung says, "we try to help him learn the Vietnamese so he can read the Bible in Vietnamese. The English I don't care, because he must go to school and he must have a friend. When he goes out, he can listen to English."

Former missionary to Vietnam Lewis Myers, says that after the initial push to "be like Americans," many Vietnamese turned toward recapturing their own cultural values.

"Parents insist their children speak Vietnamese," says Myers, "and retain the Vietnamese culture."

Many cities have Vietnamese associations, or clubs, which have grown stronger. They emphasize Vietnamese music, literature, dancing and poetry, but most of all provide a place for Vietnamese to meet. About 100 such associations exist.

"When they elect officers now," observes Myers, "they are the ones who are more in tune with today, rather than the old political leaders from Vietnam."

Vietnamese study centers draw dozens to Carbondale, Ill., (the University of Southern Illinois) or Arlington

University of Washington, University of Michigan and University of Southeast Louisiana at Lafayette all have grants for Vietnamese cultural studies.

Central Baptist Church in Kansas City is considering opening a Vietnamese center. Pastor Larry Bailey, a student at Midwestern seminary, envisions language classes (both English and Vietnamese), sewing and cooking classes, and recreation.

In Carbondale, student pastor Nguyen Huu Phuc has emphasized Vietnamese culture—but also made some adaptations to American styles. He holds the common Vietnamese family name, Nguyen. But the traditional Vietnamese order of names—family name first—confused American friends.

Now he lists his name as Phuc Nguyen, instead of Nguyen Phuc.

"The Vietnamese name does mean something," he says. "We don't want people to say it wrong. My name mean, 'to have,' plus 'blessing.' Phuc mean blessing. I don't want people to call me Nguyen. That is just opposite of how it is supposed to be. That hurts me. So I will switch. I don't mind."

When the idea of a Vietnamese ministry was broached, Pastor Myron Dillow of sponsoring University Baptist Church remembers some negative comments, like "Our home people need the jobs." "But presented as a need to be met," he adds, "the congregation voted overwhelmingly to begin it."

Only 4-12 Vietnamese come to the Saturday-night services, yet the little group launched a mission to Cambodians and Laotians when those refugees landed in Carbondale. University Baptist Church helped with food and clothes and jobs.

The number of Vietnamese in Carbondale has dropped, from 200 in 1975 to about 50 in 1977. Most have moved "to Kansas City, California, anywhere for better job," says Phuc.

"The sort of jobs they can get here are boring," he explains. "Sewing clothes, washing dishes."

Such turnover makes his work at the church hard. "More than once, I have gotten 12 people together, then they are all gone to someplace else and new group comes."

Phuc, who is studying dental technology, will move this summer to Paducah, Ky., where he has been offered a job. He plans to continue to commute back to Carbondale, 68 miles away, to hold services as usual.

While an army officer in Vietnam, Phuc studied theology with missionary Lewis Myers.

Licensed to preach by the University Baptist Church, he hopes to go to seminary. But he plans to continue secular work, explaining, "Paul supported himself by being a tentmaker."



For most Vietnamese youngsters, education is the key to full participation in U.S. society.

Like other Vietnamese, Phuc is adjusting to American life. But at the same time, he clings to a few traditions.

Missionary Myers, who has observed the whole cycle of adjustment, says that in the past year Vietnamese have moved to a middle ground between extremes: "doing everything like American friends"—their first reaction—and "doing everything like we did in Vietnam"—a reaction against Americanization.

He encourages them to retain traits and traditions that are distinctively Vietnamese: "Whatever adaptations are necessary in this culture, don't lose sight of the roots." A Vietnamese term, *Mat goc* ("lose source") expresses his admonition.

He also sees ways in which Vietnamese can contribute to their new country.

"They have a strong emphasis on education; they don't take it for granted," he says. "This has impressed

every school system where Vietnamese students attend. They are usually tops."

Myers believes the Vietnamese emphasis on a cohesive family structure comes at a time when the American family tends to be disintegrating. "We can learn from them."

Vietnamese also take their religion seriously, he says, "as opposed to a number of Americans who look on it as more social, not the focal point of life." Finally, he believes their firsthand knowledge of communism can help Americans understand its dangers.

"A 62-year-old man who leaves everything, even his family—maybe this shows what we feel about communism," one Vietnamese man told him.

The refugees generally seem industrious. Government figures show that 80 percent of employable Vietnamese men work, which is slightly higher than the rate (75.6 percent) for American males in general.

In spring, 1975, FMB missionary Lewis Myers was at home in Mississippi on furlough from his post in Vietnam. "We were planning to go back, hoping to go back; all our papers were in order."

Then came news Da Nang had been overrun by communist forces. Days later, on May 29, Saigon fell.

Myers knew Vietnam was closed. But as plane loads of refugees started arriving in the United States, Myers swung into high gear.

Red-eyed, bone-tired, but unflaggingly concerned, Myers spent hours that spring and summer in the hangars and tent city of Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

The fact that he spoke the language, and was someone in authority, reassured many Vietnamese in those first frantic days.

"Oh yes," says Nguyen Phuc, who had known Myers in Vietnam. "When people know he is there, they feel much better. See, we do not know what will happen—maybe stay here, maybe be sent back. It is so good to see him."

The Foreign Mission Board loaned Myers to the HMB as a consultant for Vietnamese ministries. In the next two years, Myers became the linchpin for work with the Indochinese refugees.

"Baptists have reacted well to the coming of the Vietnamese," says Oscar Romo, director of language missions. "Part of the secret has been the cooperation between the Foreign and Home boards, and the caliber of the man the FMB provided."

Myers' ability to speak Vietnamese and create immediate rapport opened doors

for local pastors and state language workers. As Myers patiently listened, refugees across the U.S. poured out their frustrations, their eyes often welling with tears.

The blond-haired missionary easily moved in and out of Vietnamese communities, where possible, he lay ground work for a Baptist outreach.

About 4,000 Vietnamese refugees live in the greater New York area, for instance, but no Baptist work existed among them until Myers and Jim Benson, state language director, visited Than Quang Ky, a medical doctor living in Queens.

In the small Ky apartment, Ky and Myers, chairs close together, discussed in Vietnamese the common ground: cities and experiences in Vietnam, observations about the States, the man's search for a job in medicine.

Ky mentioned his grandfather, a chess champion.

"You play chess?" he asked Myers.

Myers nodded. "Vietnamese chess?" the doctor questioned.

"Yes," Myers' eyes crinkled with a smile, the doctor clapped his hands in delight.

Myers confided the trouble he first had distinguishing the Vietnamese pieces, the doctor responded with a story about two men, hammock carriers, who "had the board in their heads. They would call out their moves as they walked."

Myers laughed, the bond grew stronger.

After such a slide show, Myers is quickly circled by Vietnamese asking questions, recalling favorite places. They ask what he knows of Vietnam today, of people left behind.

There are two official ways to get information about persons in Vietnam. One is through Sen. Edward Kennedy's Senate Subcommittee on Refugees; the other is through the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, whose representative in Hanoi works on humanitarian response to family unification.

Both sources are noncommittal about prospects of reuniting families; they take a wait and see stance.

Myers himself has received a few letters from Baptist leaders in Vietnam, but their tone is guarded and the information slight.

He believes about 10 of the churches are still in operation, though they face many restrictions. Most gather in houses; church buildings are closed.

The Myerses, among the first of 15 missionary couples appointed to Vietnam, spent 15 years in the country. Myers' territory covered three provinces (states), but he and wife Tom spent most of their time in Da Nang. Children Michael, Laura, Margaret and Gray grew up in Vietnam.

"Our family went to Vietnam as Americans, but that had nothing to do with the other segment of Americans there," Myers says firmly.

"We had Vietnamese ID papers, our being there was subject to the Vietnamese government."



Myers leads Vietnamese in Bible study.

SOMEONE

they can trust.... this has been the title given Lewis Myers by Vietnamese he's met as he roamed the U.S. Says one, "Always it was good to see him."

When Myers later asked Ky what Baptists can do to help Vietnamese, the doctor said, "I think the main thing is—you take the person out of his country, he is very lonely. Like you come visit today, makes me very happy."

The two men exchanged phone numbers, state director Benson promised to follow up with ministries to Vietnamese.

Then Myers hurried on to Syracuse, or Florida, or California, to repeat the process.

One technique Myers has used to draw Vietnamese is to show his slides of Vietnam.

"I don't think it's exploiting memories, but it takes advantage of lies, emotions."

Perhaps the Myerses' maid of 10 years best expressed the distinction. When the Myerses prepared for furlough, Myers asked, "Do you want us to try to get you a job with another family?"

"Oh, no," she replied in alarm. "I don't want to work for Americans."

Myers does not speak of the war when talking with refugees; his concern is with their present situation.

After two years with the HMB, Myers returned to the FMB this summer as associate director of the overseas division.

But many Vietnamese—who've called on him and counted on him for the past two years—would disagree.

They're sorry to see him go. ●

Of refugee women, about 44 percent are employed, as opposed to 48 percent for American women during a comparable period.

Twenty percent of the families make less than \$5,000 a year, 35 percent from \$5-10,000. Considering the large size of many Vietnamese families, the figures reflect an ability to live frugally.

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- finding the best jobs, housing and living situations they can; and
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Now refugees, Ben (her mother), sisters An and Nga, and brother Phong rushed to greet My as she met them at her Gainesville, Fla., apartment.

"We hug and cry and laugh," remembers one sister, An. "My looked so different."

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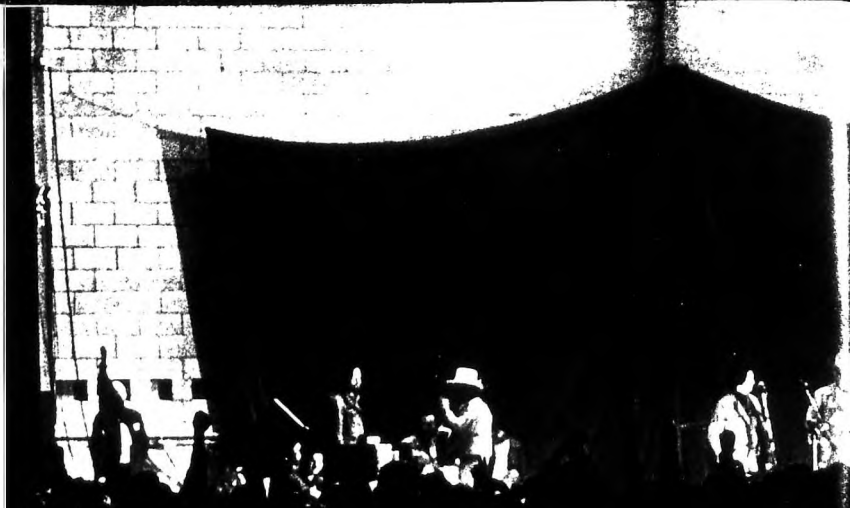
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blue grass blues

By Celeste Loucks
Photography by Paul Obregon

A thousand campfires flickered along smoking North Carolina hillsides. The night air burned with hickory and marijuana.

Down the hills, past tents, campers, cars and a string of outhouses, hundreds of young people jammed the open-air H.P. VanHoy Coliseum where lilting strains of bluegrass music barely penetrated the hooting and screaming.

On the dusty coliseum floor, the crowd, packed shoulder to shoulder and dressed in faded jeans, stomped, clapped and yelled.

On a stage surrounded by barbed wire, "Uncle Dewey"—a taut-faced, white-haired man in a black tuxedo—skillfully fiddled.



It was Easter weekend, the 53rd annual Old Time Fiddlers' Convention in Union Grove, N.C.

Whirling, kicking up dust and smiles, scattered couples attempted clogging amid the congestion.

Girls sat balanced atop men's shoulders. Bobbing and bumping, clutching beers and pinching cigarettes, the audience continued its deafening participation: "Whaaaaaaaaa hoo!" "Whaaaaaaaaa hoo!" "Whaaaaaaaaa hoo!"

Beer and whiskey—"Wanta drink?"—sloshed from hand to hand down the rows. "Grab it!" a girl frantically

screamed as a half-smoked cigarette fell in a flurry of sparks to the floor.

"Did you bring your earplugs?" a guy yelled facetiously. "You can hear some music—but it's more background. The main attraction," he gestured, "is all around."

Amid the commotion, a blue-eyed man with a walkie-talkie pressed to his ear, quietly threaded the coliseum stopping to check the pulses of persons stretched out, motionless, on benches or the ground.

The man, G.L. Brown—assistant youth minister of First Baptist Church, Winter Park, Fla.—has done emergency care at rock and bluegrass concerts since his



With his family, he has lost the meaning of the weekend—the family—and the meaning of the annual old-time fiddlers' festival.

Amid a sea of drugs and litter, the family—and the meaning of the weekend—has been lost from the annual old-time fiddlers' festival.

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Private parties are held in the evening. The festival is a family affair, with many people bringing their own food and drink.

In the 1970s, the festival was a family affair, with many people bringing their own food and drink.



Discovering a young woman passed out from an overdose of drugs, Brown quickly administers first aid to her.

"Often all we see is the bad—the dirt. If we could just see Christ in these people," feels Pastor Kale.

circus. "Black beauties, black beauties," called a couple sitting along the road. The whole gamut of drugs, from opium to LSD, from THC to heroin, casually was offered to passers-by. And a section of the encampment was referred to as the "drug store."

"There are more people on the midway and in vans tokin' on joints than are listenin' to the music," observes one.

"This is a sanctuary—a drug sanctuary," verifies Brown.

Unlike most Southern Baptists, Brown, a man in his early twenties, is equipped to cope with drugs and medical problems. He has emergency medical-technical training, crisis intervention, civil defense preparedness and experience through the Community Organization for Drug Abuse Prevention.

Usually, Brown works side-by-side with emergency medical personnel. At this year's concert, however, he and pastors from several denominations set up "J.C.'s Place," a trailer

headquarters parked across from the coliseum.

Late Thursday, John Kale, pastor of Rose Chapel United Methodist Church in nearby Statesville, N.C., stopped by J.C.'s Place on his way home. Kale has maintained a personal ministry at the festival for two years, beginning a year after his son first attended.

Wearing jeans and a plastic cross tied around his neck by a white string, Kale says much of the community has a negative reaction to the festival and to those who attend. "The people don't really understand," he thinks. "Often all we see is the bad—the dirt."

"If we could only see Christ in these people Jesus said, 'When you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me.'"

Not all of Kale's church members are even aware of his yearly festival ministry. "Some of my people know—some are not ready." With a shrug and slight smile, he says, "I don't have to tell my people everything I do."



A little girl enjoys the music; a big girl enjoys "pot."



Right: "Shotgunning"—blowing marijuana smoke from one mouth to another—increases the users' euphoria.

Last year, Brown says 200 drug overdose victims were treated. One young man died. "Some friends found him in a tent," recalls Brown, who at the time was working with the emergency medical team. "They dumped him at the (emergency) hospital and left. No one even got their names." This year's "calmer" crowd Brown attributes partly to weather: "Because of the chill factor, people are keepin' their clothes on—so far."

"Overall, it looks like a pretty sedate group." Another departure from past years is evidenced in the dearth of informal jam sessions. "You don't see fiddlers standing around fiddling like they used to," observes one festival veteran. "The fiddlers are staying away. This is a party."

Olen Gardner, a Christiansburg, Va., banjoist and judge for the fiddlers' contest the past 10 years, says, "The music has a frolic, Scottish Highland tempo. The music we play," he maintains, "doesn't cause boisterous behavior."

"These people pay to participate, instead of spectate. They get their money's worth by hollerin'."

Gardner recalls when the festival drew families, "grassroots people. Now," he says, shaking his head, "the family unit has virtually disappeared."

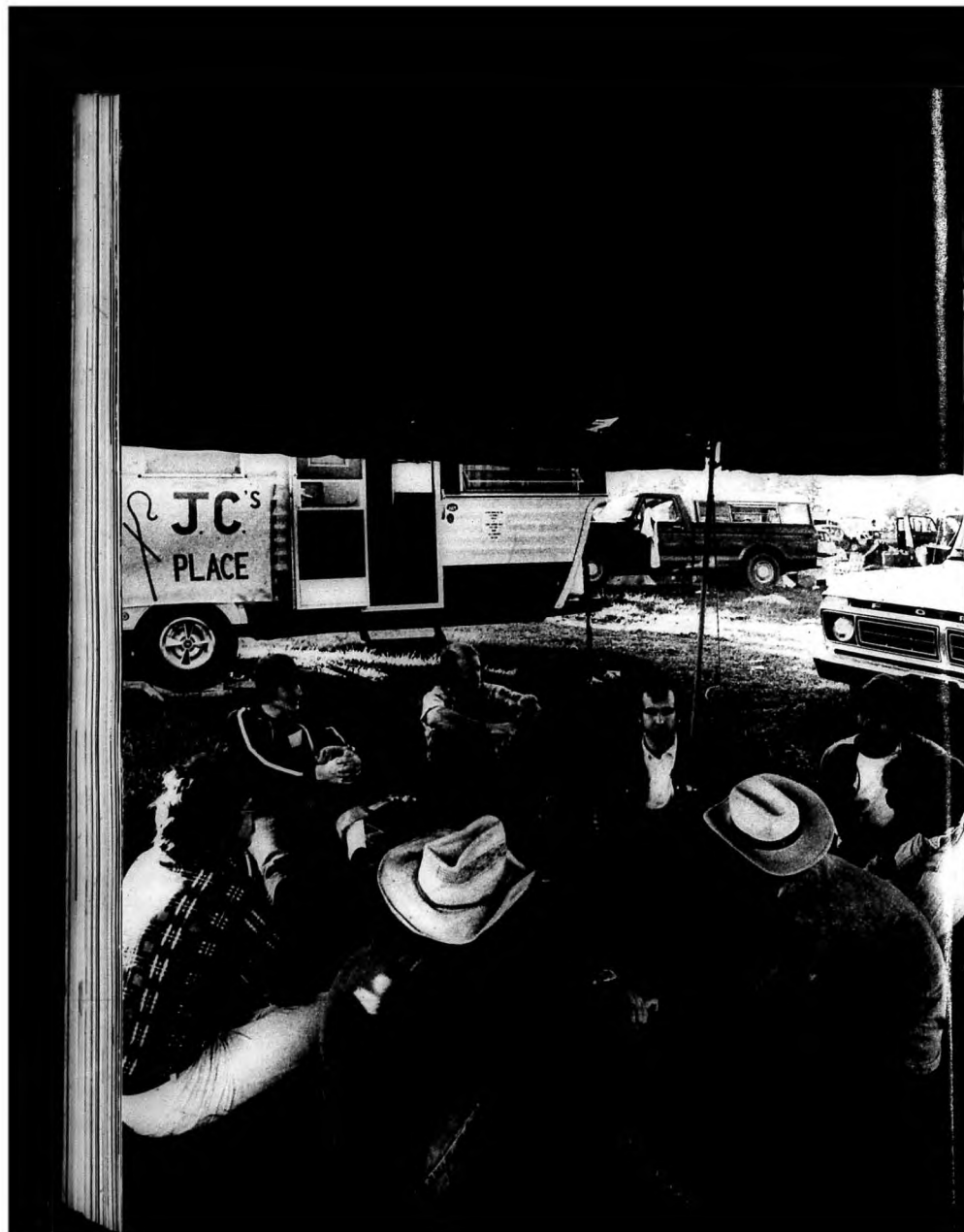
"The change scared me, at first," he admits, "all the noise, the commotion, the liberalism...."

Gardner, a former Baptist preacher, also expresses sadness at the vacant expressions and quality of living he observes.

"It's hard to describe," he says, motioning to people walking round and round the midway about noon on Good Friday, "but it's a little like zombies. These young people are in themselves. They don't seem to realize who is on their right or left."

"A casual observer might make the mistake of judging this group as [being like] Sodom and Gomorrah."

Continued



Gardner used to pass out religious tracts. He has spent many hours talking with and trying to help the young people. "Under the surface, you can find some seriousness. I don't see futility in this behavior."

"I see flirting with Satan. But I see hope."

Except to mildly harass, few stopped by J.C.'s Place. "Hey, y'all selling beer, here? Do you have Budweiser?" inquired one. "No," answered Brown. "But would you like to come in and talk?"

"Do you have a little metal spoon I could borrow for a few minutes?" asked another, referring to equipment used to prepare heroin for injection. "No," Brown said. "I have a few plastic spoons."

Friday, Brown tacked tracts to a large "personals" board and talked with folks along the midway. From one encounter, he reports:

"The guy says he believes in Jesus. He doesn't believe in a heaven or a hell."

"He believes Jesus is dead."

Brown continues, "It's hard to get a person to make a decision."

"This is the type of ministry where you plant the seeds and someone else sows the harvest."

One who has seen results of his own ministry is Howard E. Stuart, pastor of Union Grove Methodist Church.

Sitting around festival campfires, eating soup out of tin cans—and listening—white-haired Stuart hasn't tried "to sell these people anything." Instead, he lets them "sell themselves; you just plant the seed."

One young couple he met in 1976, he recalls, surprised him months later when they called and invited him to officiate their wedding. The young man is now studying to be a minister.

Such positive results have kept Stuart coming back "among that trash," as others have labeled the festival's spectators. But Stuart argues, "Some say Christ can't exist in this type situation—but he does."

"The ministers [around here] have just begun to see the light."

On Friday afternoon, seven students from nearby Gardner-Webb College joined Brown. As their cars pulled through the gates and onto the crowded, dirt roads, one remarked, "I think I look too innocent for this."

Brown gathered the students in a circle on the grass in front of J.C.'s Place for prayer and instructions.

Brown instructs his helpers in emergency medical care. Awaiting aid are thousands described by festival-owner VanHoy as "fun-loving, peaceful citizens." Despite 1976's death from overdose, VanHoy adds: "Nothin' has happened so far, thank God, that makes me wish I could get out of this."



In a moment of quiet, Brown counsels a conventioneer. "Lord, we're yours, we pray for wisdom, Lord."

"To check for OD's [drug overdose], check the vital signs," he began, demonstrating on one of the students, pressing the pulse at the neck and wrist. "See if he's breathin'. Put your hand on his stomach to tell if he's breathin'."

"If you can't find any vital signs, send one person back to the hospital for help."

They practiced ways to carry patients, discussed loading stretchers and ways to break up fights. "Talk sweet to them," advised Brown. "talk cool. Get their attention away from each other. Do something creative—give them a tract." The guys laugh. If worse gets to worse, he suggested, "push them together. In some cases, they'll pull away. They don't want to be that close."

Toward the close of the session, Brown told the men to work "two by two—that's the Lord's plan." He emphasized that besides safety, "while one works, the other can get help. While one witnesses, the other prays."

Friday, smoke settled over the hills and dust boiled up in the coliseum, where the emcee announced to a cheering crowd that all 150,000 tickets had been sold. Intricate banjo-fiddle-guitar playing contended with the clamor of the audience until past midnight.

Except for the arrest of about 100 persons outside the festival (most on alcohol and drug related charges), and a fire, set under a car and igniting a half-acre of land, Good Friday faded peacefully into Saturday.

"Talk to them sweet; talk to them cool," advised Brown to his team, "and work in pairs."



Two-by-two, Brown's group left J.C.'s Place to make their rounds of the festival grounds.

Saturday was warm. By noon, Global Evangelism, Inc., located about 100 yards from J.C.'s Place, was doing a land-office business, serving free iced tea, water and coffee—along with tracts and a few words of Christian faith.

Global's Wright Proctor of Rocky Mount, N.C., began his Union Grove ministry about four years ago. Then, it was in a tent—now, he operates out of a trailer.

Global is an independent group. Proctor has elicited help from two churches. "Church people say we need missionaries in Africa," he says, "but when they find out what we have here in the United States...they can't believe it. They are overawed."

Although Proctor couldn't keep track of the persons contacted by Saturday, about 2,000 cups had been used. His encounters ranged from "Hindus, Moslems, atheists, Catholics, Baptists and Protestants."

"Last year, we dealt with people from 38 states," he says.

Response to the ministry varies. "It depends on how drunk they are, how educated. Some are offended—some try to convert us."

In the course of the ministry, Proctor's wife has been propositioned. "So have I," he admits. And this year, the couple left their two children at home. "Lookin' over here—over here," he points to the other side, "they're smokin' marijuana. They're selling drugs here like peanuts and crackerjacks."

Proctor, who terms himself a missionary evangelist, has seen a few decisions for Christ among the group. He hopes eventually to expand the ministry, with the help of carefully screened and trained volunteers.

As Proctor talked, his wife witnessed, then handed a tract and a cup of iced tea to a bare-chested young man. His eyes glanced at the tract—he tipped the glass to drink, turned and walked off. A few steps away, he crumpled the pamphlet in his hand and dropped it.

"Sometimes I feel discouraged," admits Proctor, "but it's not a discouragement of giving up. It's discouragement of seeing so much need."

"What have I accomplished?" he asks, and pauses.

"I have filled my part of the great commission, to go..."

Brown and those with him faced discarded pamphlets and verbal turn-offs. "Are you Jesus freaks?" several asked.

"What are you high on?" questioned another. When told, Christianity, he retorted, "Everybody has their own ideas," and shrugged them off.

Commented another, "This belief [Christianity] is so narrow. I can't accept it."

The bands played non-stop from morning until late afternoon. Then, audience and musicians took a break.

Firecrackers sizzled and popped. One restless young man devised his own entertainment.

Jumping on a flatbed truck near J.C.'s Place, he talked through a megaphone, urging girls to compete for a pot of money. A noisy crowd gathered at the foot of the truck, and perhaps a thousand people stopped to watch as reluctant girls were pulled from the whistling, cheering group and pushed onto the truck bed.

Encouraged by a growing pot and the spectators' echoing insistence, one by one, the contestants stripped to the waist.

After about a half hour, a "winner" was chosen; the crowd dispersed slowly. Rebel yells and fireworks continued to crackle into the night.

At J.C.'s Place, Brown and his workers had gathered for last minute strategy: toward the end, one suggested, "We need to pray."

"Dear God," the first led out, quietly, "it seems like mass confusion out there. When we come on a situation that seems difficult to handle, give us strength."

Continued the next, "You have not given us a spirit of fear. We just pray that Satan will be bound—and protect each one of us."

"We pray for souls tonight," said another, "you can take those tracts and use them to convict, convert and compel."

"We praise you and adore you. We pray that your love can be shed abroad."

"Lord, we're yours," concluded Brown. "We pray for wisdom."

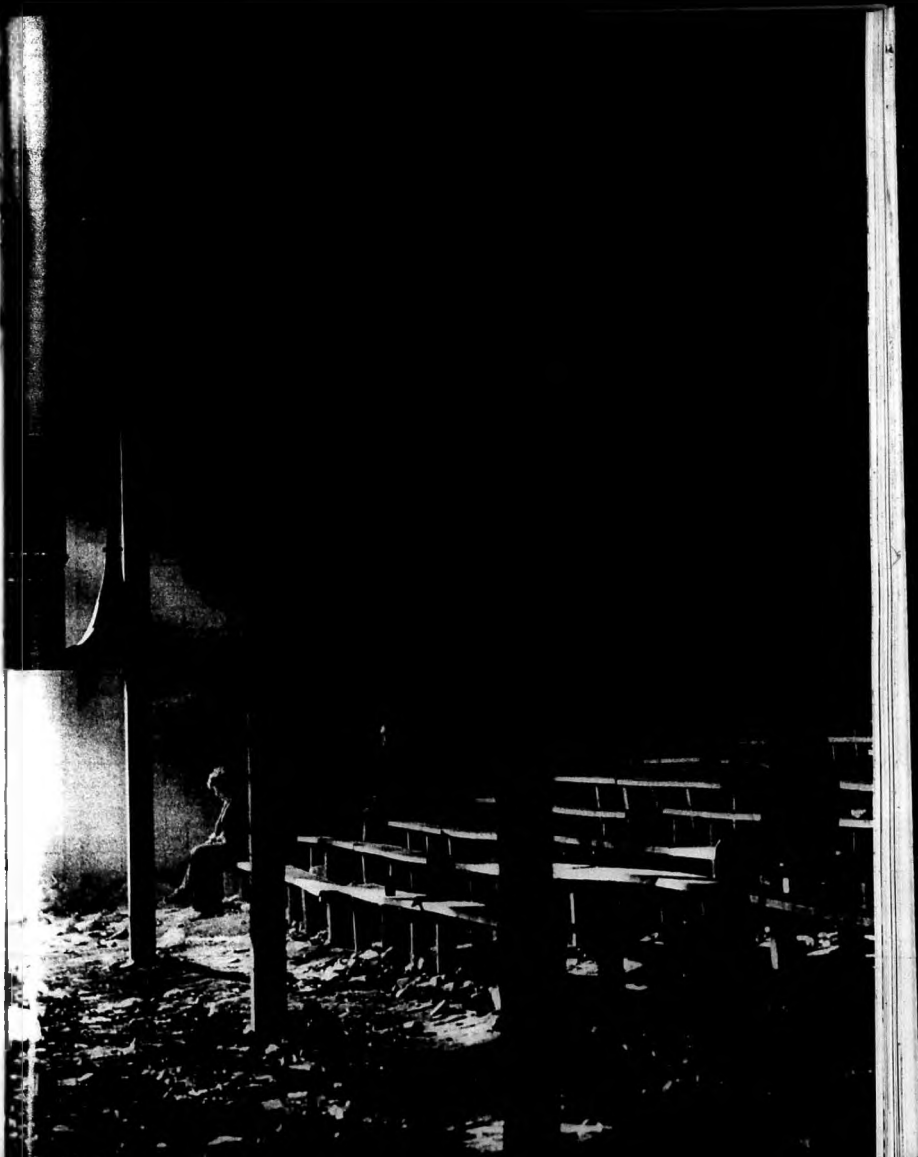
Taking the walkie-talkies and stuffing their pockets with tracts, Brown and most of the others left, two-by-two.

Brown made contact with the hospital maned by Iredell County Rescue Squad; he and his partner, Wayne Finch, followed a rescue squad member into the night. Although earlier the hospital had been relatively quiet, from 6 p.m. to midnight Saturday they were "swamped."

Answering a call, the three men headed toward the coliseum. Not far from the road, they located a man lying on the ground, a slight cut on his forehead. "Hey buddy, I'm from the rescue squad," the emergency worker said, as he knelt beside the man and began shaking him gently by the shoulder. "Are you OK?" he asked, without response. "Are you doing drugs?"

Continued

Early morning sunlight filters into the empty coliseum, but only a few of the festival's thousands feel its warmth at Easter service. They pray: "Lord, you made each of us..." Left: Through prayer, Brown seeks God's strength to face problems of the festival's finale



BLUEGRASS BLUES: Everybody danced while the music played... but few heard the Easter song.



He shined the flashlight in the man's face and pulled back his eyelids. A few conventioners gathered. "He's OK," they insisted. "He's just nodded out on downers. Leave him alone."

"Let him lie there. If he's doing drugs, that's the best care."
While Brown tried to rouse the man, the rescue team member radioed the hospital: "Walkie-talkie four to hospital. I have another victim near the arena—to the left—near J.C.'s Place. We need a stretcher. Possible OD."

Brown and his partner waited briefly, then made their way down the hill. A thick wall of smoke surrounded the area. Dust and haze clouded the coliseum. As the two walked through the aisles, J. Pierce VanHoy, a sterling-eyed man with a wide-brim cowboy hat, took the microphone: "I want you to know—I want you to know—I love every pea-pickin' one of you."

"Gawd, bless your cotton-pickin' souls. This is the most beautiful audience I ever looked in the face of." Every phrase was measured for impact and punctuated with applause.

"Somethin' tells me you love us as good as we love you." The audience cheered.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he continued, surveying the group, "this is young America on parade." He paused for response.

"Young America," he continued, "without parents." Arms waved, voices yelled louder. "Young America," he deliberated, "without police." A roar rocked the auditorium. Arms

flailed, feet pounded the bleachers, hats twirled toward the ceiling.

Another call sent Brown hurrying outside. He helped load a man on a rescue truck, then began checking young men and women sprawled out around the coliseum.

As a group inside fiddled Orange Blossom Special, Brown stopped to awaken a youngster lying crumpled in the pile of broken glass and beer cans. "Can you hear me? Are you sick?" Brown began. He bent closer, checked the pulse at the boy's neck, then checked his wrist, which seeped blood.

Brown applied pressure above the cut and tied a handkerchief around the wrist. Then, he summoned an ambulance. "He must have slipped and cut himself on the glass," Brown said, surveying the sick, wet hillside. At the top stretched a row of portable toilets.

The sky flashed red and white with hazy ambulance searchlights. Two men carrying a stretcher crunched through the debris, loaded the boy into the vehicle. Among the curious bystanders milling around the site was a round-faced man in a red jacket. "Isn't this great?" he asked, smiling.

Between Saturday night and Sunday morning, "a lot" of people were treated and released, according to Fredell, rescue workers. "This year we had more broken bones," was the unofficial report. "A dozen OD's were sent to the hospital." The rescue hospital handled its first case of frostbite, a guy passed out, "one sock on, one sock off," in below freezing temperatures. "We had three broken collarbones."

Considering "this large a crowd, this is what you'd expect," said a spokesman. "It's much better now. Kids have gotten used to drugs and know how to control them more."

At daybreak, Easter morning, Brown stood on the stage, preaching to an almost empty coliseum. He talked about Christ's death, burial and resurrection to groups of three or four standing down front, a man sitting alone on a nearby bench, and scattered groups huddled around fires in the building and outside along the hills.

He told them God loved them and cared for them. "God, 2,000 years ago, proved he cared," Brown said. "That's why we're here to share the resurrection."

After a few songs, a singer closed the sunrise service in prayer: "Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We pray that each person who is here will receive you."

"You made each one of us, Lord Jesus. Help us to get close to you."

The group packed its instruments and left. A fire smoldered on the coliseum floor.

The only noise was a man slowly walking among the bleachers, sifting through empty cans and broken glass. •

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Comment

by Walker Knight

Words, like people, sometimes get in the doghouse when they become unpopular. They stay in the doghouse until they are nearly forgotten and can be brought out again with some recovery of freshness and vitality.

Maybe the time has come to resurrect "piety" and "pious." After all, they simply mean "devotion to God." They got into trouble because people exaggerated their devotion to God and others called them pious. The words took on the tone of the people with a hollow ring of hypocrisy.

Christians today are asking some pious questions without any sound of hypocrisy, and it has the ring of a new piety. The questions include these: How can I better discipline myself for greater self-awareness and less attention to the distractions of daily existence? How can I become more aware of the presence of God, giving him loving attention and becoming more dependent upon him? How can this relationship strengthen me to do the will of God? What is the lifestyle which will flow from such awareness?

The answers to some of those questions begin to look like the piety of old:

- daily, systematic study of the Scriptures, with special attention to devotional portions.
- the keeping of a daily, devotional journal.
- meditation or contemplation when one is quiet and his mind is focused.
- prayer, although some consider meditation as prayer, and others separate prayer from the other three activities because they believe prayer should be continuous.

These, in brief, are common ingredients of the new piety many Christians are experiencing today. It is a serious search for both a sense of mystery and transcendence. The phase which is getting the most attention is meditation, in part because of the popularity of eastern forms of meditation from Zen, Buddhism, Yoga, or Hinduism. Christians are called to an



affirmation of that meditation or contemplation which has always been a part of the faith's tradition, while at the same time they are learning that much of the practice of the eastern mystics is similar to their own. However, there are crucial differences.

E. Glenn Hinson, in *A Serious Call to a Contemplative Life Style*, writes: "The chief aim of most types of meditation is the discovery or integration of the self." With this the Christian agrees. However, he believes that the authentic self is found in an experience of *The Self*, i.e., in God. The journey into the self, therefore, is a journey which he hopes will lead him to an experience in which God gives him his true self or causes his self to blossom.

Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk from Kentucky who has influenced thousands of Christians to reconsider the contemplative life, says meditation is a twofold function.

The first discipline gives "you sufficient control over your mind and memory and will to enable you to recollect yourself and withdraw from exterior things and the business and activities and thoughts and concerns of temporal existence."

The second "teaches you how to become aware of the presence of God, and most of all it aims at bringing you to a state of almost constant loving attention to God, and dependence on him."

I recently asked Glenn Hinson, who is

professor of church history at Southern seminary, why Southern Baptists had not stressed the contemplative lifestyle. He said that this has been a part of the Baptist tradition, as well as the Puritans and others who influenced us, but that we have tended to neglect nurture while stressing activity and expansion.

Today we are becoming stranger on nurture, and the emphasis on meditation and other phases of the contemplative life are being stressed.

Calvin Miller, a Baptist pastor in Omaha, Nebraska, recently published a book exposing TM for the religion that it is and presented his concepts on Christian meditation.

Miller, in *Transcendental Meditation*, writes that his own meditative style is characterized by (1) Remembrance, recalling and reliving experiences with Christ; (2) *Me Journal*, writing devotionals, paraphrasing Scripture; (3) *Meditational Readings*, reading Scripture so every word is regarded; and (4) Listening, an utterly quiet time that takes the greater portion of his devotional. He focuses upon something—an object, a sound, or a thought.

Glenn Hinson writes that "many times during the day I simply pause briefly, without a particular effort to clear my mind or thoughts, and be still—the practice of the presence of God."

Personally, I have practiced most of the steps of Miller, including Bible study along with the meditational reading, keeping a journal and selecting a definite period of the day for the meditation.

Merton comes close to suggesting that meditation pervade our lives when he writes, "Know how to meditate not only when you have a book in your hand but when you are waiting for a bus or riding in a train." •

Letters

It was Greek to us...

Thanks for "New England" (March HM). It gave well deserved praise to many of my fellow workers. However, I wonder why you went to people on the field when you dealt with Christian social ministry or with church extension programs, but to supervisory personnel when you dealt with language programs and omitted black work altogether. The result was lack of respect for Southern Baptist pastors of ethnic background who are not appointed by the HMB.

The article implied that Southern Baptists have been unable to establish churches in the cities unless they are building based and heavily subsidized. This is true only if you exclude ethnic Southern Baptists. The Haitians this year got their own building. The Arabs meet in the prayer chapel of an Episcopal church. The Greeks meet in an apartment. Worcester Second Baptist—a black congregation—has bought its own building. In Hartford, the Spanish meet in a storefront and receive no help from the HMB. All of these are urban congregations.

You also implied that the leadership of ethnic churches was untrained laymen. In fact, this is true of only a minority of those now serving. Rev. Laroche (Haitian) is a seminary graduate with 12 years pastoral experience. Rev. Ibrahim (Arabic) has over 25 years in the pastorate, most of it in SBC churches. Mr. Meimans (Greek) will receive his seminary degree soon. Mr. Colazo (Spanish) is a talented layman and I am teaching him seminary extension courses. My main function has been to acquaint my workers with the requirements of governmental and denominational bureaucracies.

Of course, further training is important for any church leader. The real limit to our ethnic urban work, however, is the appointed missionaries' ability to become so well acquainted with the urban scene that he can find and enlist the workers whom God has placed there to do the work. This is my responsibility and I will be glad to share information with any reporter whom you send into the city. You won't learn much about urban work in the suburbs.

Jim Goodner
Boston, Mass.

Striking twice?

In May HM, letters, Jack Rouse stated: "No person, to whom capital punishment has been properly applied, has ever been known to become a repeat offender. Just think of all the future victims' lives that could be saved."

The "Editor's Note" was: "No person, to whom capital punishment has been properly applied has been known to become a Christian either."

You have taken the wrong side, logically. There are more victims than killers, since more than one murderer will take more than just one life. In some cases the murderer will kill several people. I contend the potential victims outnumber the murderers. Therefore on a percentage basis more victims would be spared and these victims would have time also to become Christians. You must surely take into consideration the souls of future victims rather than just the souls of killers. If you do then we must say: "Oddly enough no person a murderer has killed has ever been known to become a Christian either!" If you are honest you must admit that you have erred.

I also feel some of the scriptural references dealing with the subject were not presented in the light of total truth.

I seriously wonder about all the people who so violently oppose capital punishment and call it brutal, if they still believe in a literal hell?

Hubert W. Wright, Jr.
Paris, Tex.

• (April HM) is another "winner." Articles on capital punishment, mental illness, and resort ministries were all good, brief, to the point, beautifully written and the photography was magnificent. Your interviews were terrific.

Sam Shepard
Algar Portugal

• It is a good thing the Roman Empire and Hebrew nation believed in and had capital punishment. Where would we be if they had decided God's laws were passé and crude and cruel? God used capital punishment even of an innocent!

Your article did present both sides but seemed rather biased to me!

As was the more recent Family Album—in picturing the speaker and giving little solution to the problem which has been exploited to the point of possible promotion or encouragement.

Clarence J. Richardson
Dallas, Tex.

Abigail and Rowena

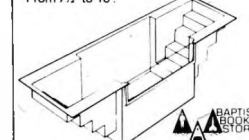
I want to thank you for your moving Comment on Rowena. It deeply impressed me and I used it the evening of Mother's Day in relation to a sermon on Abigail and David. So, thank you for sharing a very intimate account with us.

Dale R. Martin
Johnson City, Tenn.

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And In Passing

by William G. Tanner

Ten of us had lunch recently with President Jimmy Carter in the White House, and we had an impressive view of a Christian layman—a person concerned with reaching our world for Christ.

He urged us, as leaders of Southern Baptist agencies, to develop more fully the volunteer mission programs of the denomination to encourage larger numbers of both young and older people to give up to two years of service at their own expense or paid for by their families or by the church of which they are members.

The turning point in his Christian life, he told us, came from his own witnessing tour to Pennsylvania sponsored by the Home Mission Board and the Brotherhood Commission.

The President had studied our recently published Mission Challenge goals to reach everyone in the world by year the 2,000, but he wondered why Baptists would wait that long to get a massive and effective mission program underway. He wanted to get it going now.

We all came away from the consultation with a determination to convey his concerns to the Southern Baptist Convention and to make plans to achieve the goals set before us by the President of the United States.

Among the ideas advanced by the President were these:

- Seek volunteers, beginning at age 19 with no upper age limit.
- Enlist them for one or two years of voluntary mission service.

• Provide up to three months of special orientation or training for the particular project to which they may be assigned.

- Require expenses be paid by the volunteer, or his or her family, or his or her church with no reduction in contributions to the Cooperative Program.

We told the President of the recently announced "Volunteer Involvement in Missions" for laypersons desiring to contribute time, gifts and funds to short- or long-term



Southern Baptist leaders luncheon with President Jimmy Carter in the White House.

missions projects, and this could be a forerunner of what Carter envisions as a massive endeavor of volunteer missions.

The President had studied the program of the Mormons, who now have 26,000 volunteers giving two years. We do have thousands in our evangelism programs, Christian Service Corps ministries, student summer missions, Christian Social Ministries, Sojourners, the language mission associates, and the US-2 effort. However, few of these are as long-term or as massive as the President has challenged us to undertake.

I was impressed that he is serious, and we are too.

As we left, the halls were crowded with media persons, possibly as many as 50, there to cover the meeting of the President and UN Ambassador Andrew Young for their weekly 30-minute talk. I realized that he had given to us an hour and fifteen minutes because he genuinely cares about the spiritual needs of the people of our world.

He is very personable. He mentioned that he had missed some sleep the night before. Amy had come to crawl in bed with him at 4 a.m., and behind her had come her cat.

He's a quiet person, very soft spoken. At times we were straining to hear what he was saying, but the meaning came through "loud and clear." I believe Southern Baptists will respond.

*Present for the luncheon on June 7 were Porter W. Routh of the Executive Committee; Baker James Cauthen of the Foreign Mission Board; Glendon McCullough of the Brotherhood Commission; Mrs. A. Harrison Gregory of Woman's Missionary Union; Grace C. Cuthen of the Sunday School Board; Duane Cooper of Yarns City, Miss.; Fred Gregg, the President's Sunday School teacher; Anne Ward Board of the Sunday School Board; the President's pastor, Charles Trencham; and William G. Tanner of the Home Mission Board.

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LOOK WHO'S TALKING

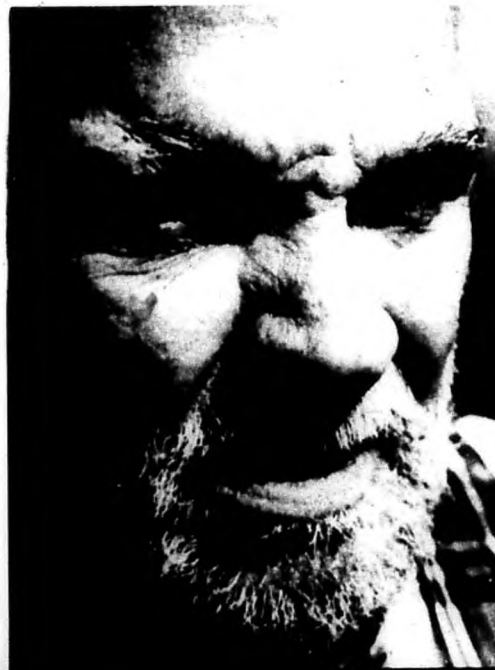
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