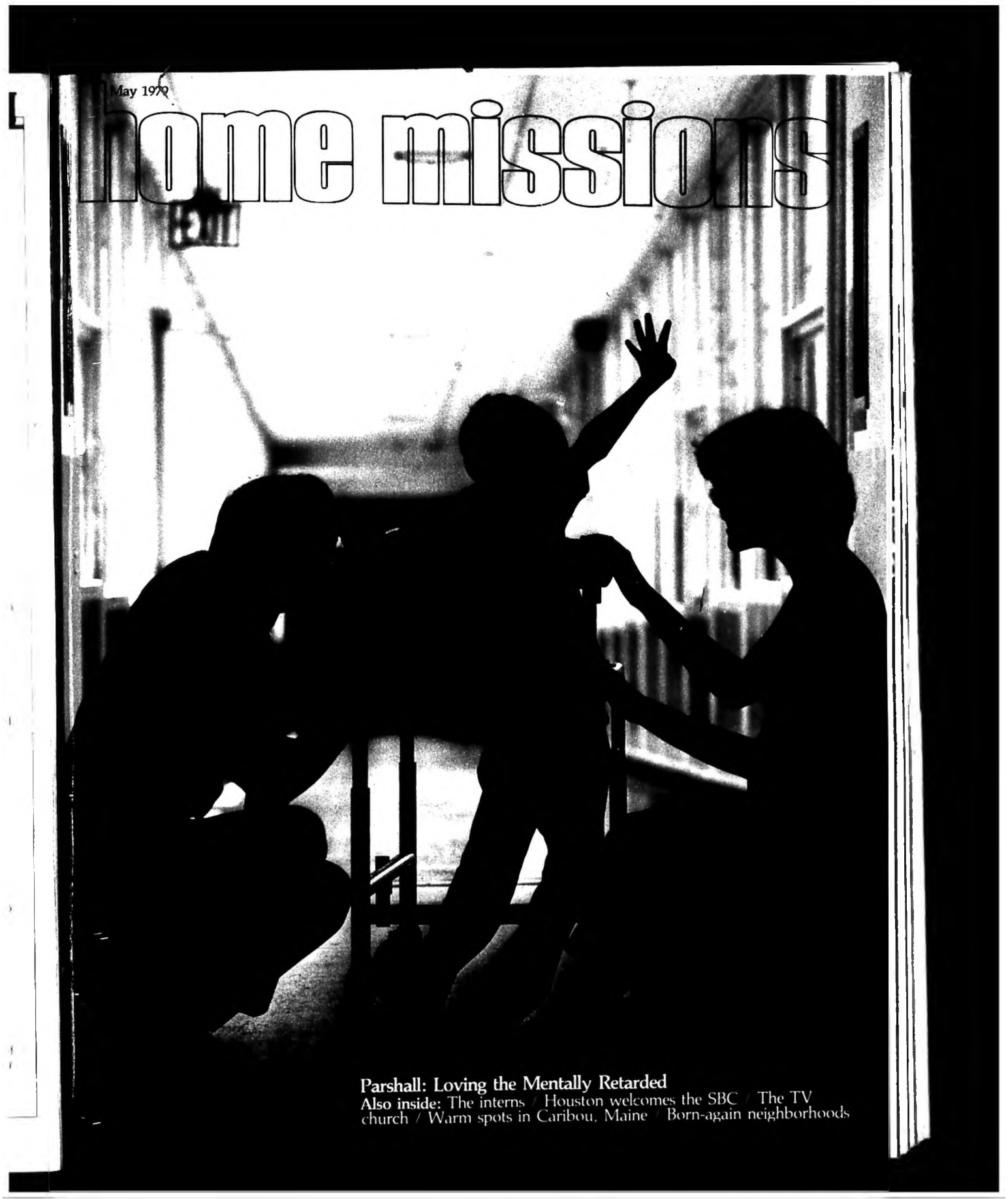
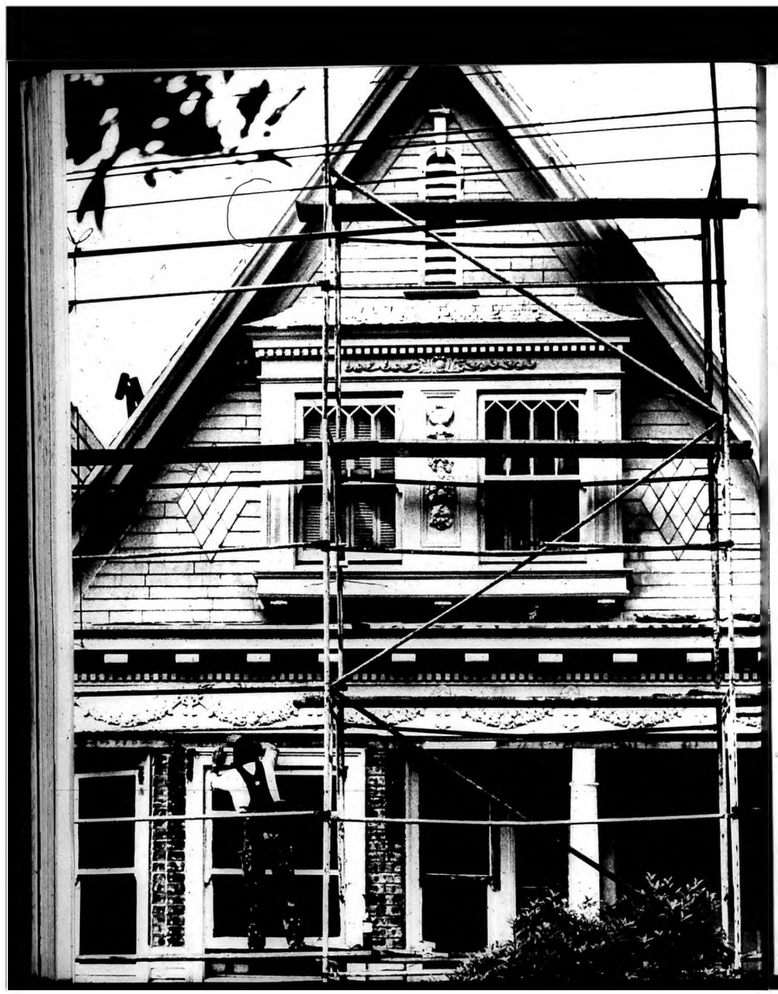

May 1979
home missions
Parshall: Loving the Mentally Retarded
Also inside: The interns / Houston welcomes the SBC / The TV church / Warm spots in Caribou, Maine / Born-again neighborhoods



home missions

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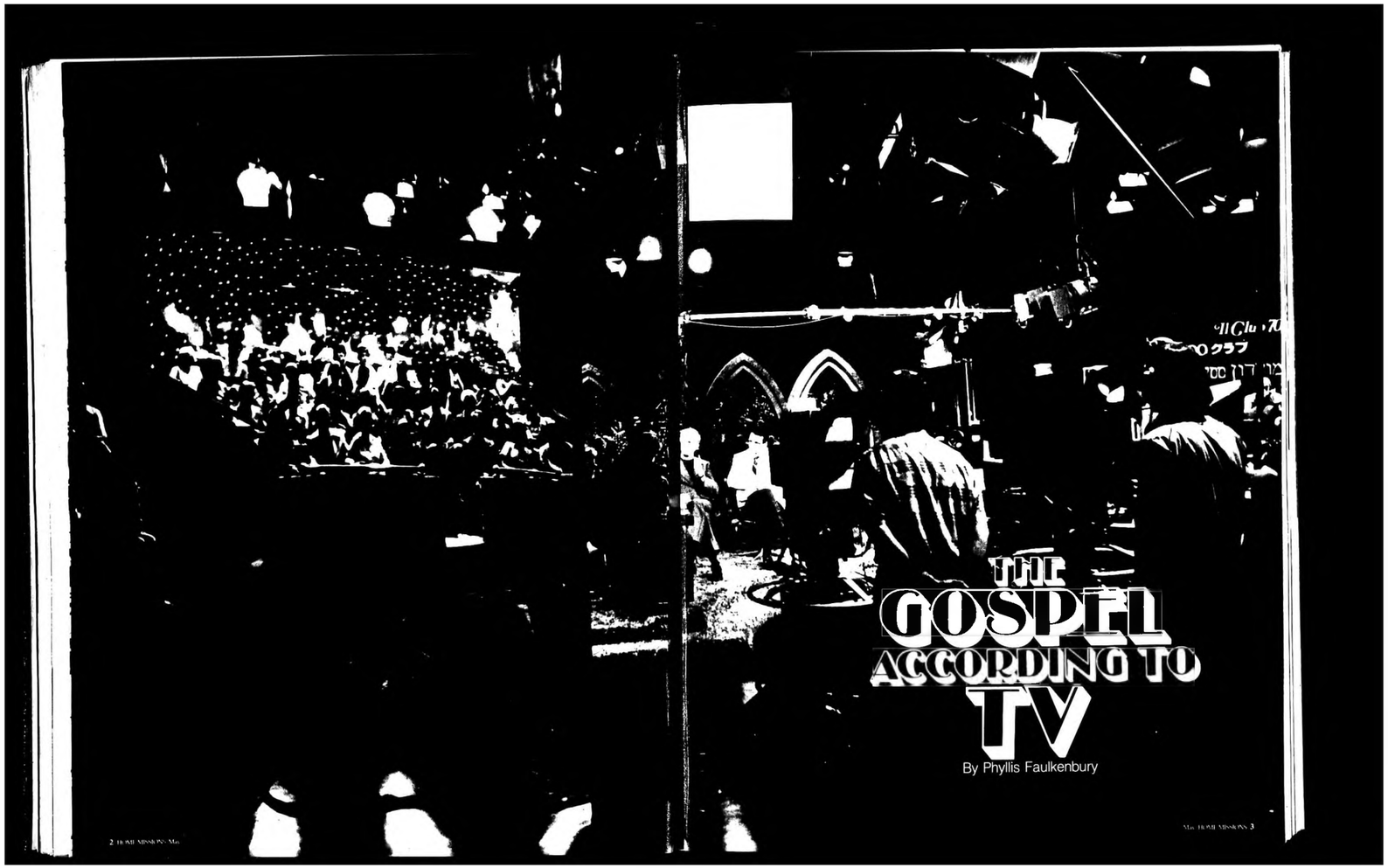
Left: *At a cost of $100,000 up, repairing/renovating old Victorians isn't cheap in San Francisco.*
Cover: *Over the years, Howard Parshall has learned special ways to relate to his Pinecrest congregation.*


THE
GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO
TV
By Phyllis Faulkenbury

The Devil doesn't own TV anymore. At least not for the next two hours. The PTL Club is on the air!" "Amen, amen. Praise the Lord!" Drum roll. Applause. *"Our enemy is not man! The enemy is doing everything he can to defeat the work of God. But praise the Lord, I believe the devil is already defeated."* And so Jim Bakker, cherubic-faced and youthful host, begins another smiling edition of the PTL show.

Today's studio audience—700 strong—meets Christen, four years old. Cameras move in close; PTL band renders mellow music. "Christen has saved her allowance—two dollars—to help Jim. . . ." For 90 minutes, guests come and go. Many have been on the edge of disaster, on the brink of death. All praise God: "My body was eaten by cancer," one guest reveals. "Hemorrhaging, I had less than a year. . . . I claimed Jesus' healing. . . ." *"Praise the Lord."*

During the final half hour, Bakker says he will pray away ills. Hand on "anointed-with-oil" cards and letters (audience members have marked illnesses—listed in alphabetical order from alcohol to colon to kidney to "other") he promises, "The Bible says by his stripes you are healed."

"Right now! It's done! In Jesus' name you are healed!"

Waving. Moaning. Shouting. Clapping. Hugging. "Remember God loves you and we do too." *And the PTL Club is off the air.*

Through the PTL Club, its counterpart 700 Club (broadcast from Virginia Beach), and a host of other religious programs that have swept the nation—from Billy Graham to Jerry Faldwell to Oral Roberts—"church" meets weekdays in television viewers' homes.

Ethical questions surrounding "religious" broadcasting's recent popularity have created an as-yet-unresolved controversy among clerics and leaders of many denominations.

"The electric church. The electronic church. Suddenly we have a name for a movement that is becoming one of the major rivals of congregational Christianity," writes Martin Marty in *Context*.

"Most of the Electronic Church, however, is part of the invisible religion that more overtly than secularism draws people into clubs and cults of their own, or more particularly, makes no demands upon them except the turn of a dial and the sending in of a dollar."

Just as loudly, others hail TV religion's merits. "The only way to reach shut-ins is electronically," believes Elwood Coggin, PTL's assistant counseling director. "TV is reaching those who would never get out and go to church."

The arguments are unsettled, yet one fact remains: religious broadcasting *is* growing—and many respond to its message. When, in January 1978, the National Religious Broadcasters Association met in Washington, D.C., its membership—2,000 delegates—had doubled over the past five years.

The respect it garnered had grown even more.

The New York Times reported 35 congressmen attended a Tuesday breakfast at which Federal Communications Commissioner Robert Lee promised the NRBA's conventioneers: "[your programming] won't be restricted because we consider it in the public interest."

Electronic evangelism was launched in 1926 by St. Louis radio station KFUO and the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church. Now, more than 1,000 Christian radio stations, 25 religiously controlled television outlets and thousands of religious radio and TV programs exist. To judge this in context of all broadcasting in the United States, consider the 1977 Federal Communications Commission report: 4,458 commercial AM radio stations, 2,848 commercial FM radio stations, 723 commercial TV stations and 253 educational TV stations.

"Many religious broadcasters are hopeful their goal of establishing an entirely separate national Christian TV network may not be far from realization," writes Kenneth Briggs, *New York Times* religion editor. "Already the largest religious television programming source, Christian Broadcasting Network. . . ; has acquired use of the RCA Satcom II satellite and plans to install 50 disc receivers that will allow simultaneous broadcasts to every area of the nation."

As TV religion sweeps the nation, so do questions and probes of methods and its message.

Many denominations produce radio and TV broadcasts: Southern Baptists, for example, in 1978 produced 32 radio and TV series aired on more than 3,200 stations. Yet no denomination's programs match the success of Robertson and Bakker.

Jim Bakker, founder of PTL (acronym for Praise the Lord and People That Love) network, boasts of being fourth largest purchaser of syndicated air time, behind NBC, CBS and ABC. Pat Robertson—senator's son, Yale Law School graduate, charismatic evangelist—began with a three-dollar donation the $60 million-plus CBN network. Although his operation is largest by far, Robertson remains one among many each week claiming attention of 14 million viewers.

Robertson's style, more than Bakker's, follows the Johnny Carson standard: 700 Club is a smooth-flowing talk show handled with sophistication and professionalism. Guests—Pat Boone, Corrie Ten Boom, even George Gallup—discuss universal themes: suffering, sorrow, "the hope Jesus brings."

Camaraderie between studio audiences and guests breeds quiet emotion. In pink-flowered dress, worn Bible across her knees, a middle-aged woman fills her hands, closes her eyes. "Just thank you, Jesus," she whispers.

Phones jingle: *"700 Club, may I help you?" "700 Club, may I. . . ?" "700 Club. . . ."* The choir-like telephone counseling group answers 30 lines, counselors all talking at once with a hum-drone musical tone, its upbeat the ringing of another phone line.

But the "star" bonds them—callers, counselors, studio audience, home viewers. Good humored, easy-going Pat Robertson jokes with them, cries with them, is their friend.

Robertson—dimpled, smiling, handsome—denies the selling power of his personality. "Anyone could take my place, if they were sent by the Lord. I think I was anointed."

The 700 Club studio audience, however, attests the import of its host's personal charisma: *"I drove all the way from Canada. . . ." "My husband and I came from Detroit. . . ." "We're here from Boston . . . to see Pat!"*

"It's funny," notes one skeptic, "when Pat's around they don't even mention God."

CBN workers believe while Robertson and the upbeat 700 Club may attract some viewers, many others support the network because prayer lines offer solutions to personal problems.

Tommy Coy, CBN's counseling director, reports over a million calls each year; every 30 seconds CBN ministers to someone. In 1977—according to Coy—41,500 persons received salvation; 35,000 reported answers to prayer; 10,000 received baptism of the Holy Spirit; 87,000 called about family problems; 43,000 had emotional problems; 3,000 contemplated suicide.

Seven thousand volunteers work as CBN telephone counselors. They lead the lost to salvation, encourage the depressed, uplift the emotionally unstable—and twice a year call prayer partners, thanking them for donations.

CBN has 70 telephone counseling centers: 38 fully supported; 24 volunteer; 8 international (in Bogota, Manila, San Jose, San Juan, Sao Paulo, Taipei, Tokyo and Toronto).

Coy, former Home Mission Board planning director, finds Baptists cooperative in setting up counseling centers. "A lot of our centers were made possible by Baptists," he says.

Like CBN, Bakker's PTL program considers telephone counseling and follow-up "the strongest part of our ministry," according to Coggin of PTL. "I was talking to a Michigan caller . . . attempting suicide. Before I hung up, a pastor was in his living room," Coggin remembers.

Polly Efird, who worked as a PTL volunteer counselor three years, handled many such calls. "Some were pretty rough," she admits, "I was called all kinds of names. But it was worth it the minute someone accepted Christ."

Efird and other counselors often spent three or four hours a day, she explains, in PTL's intercessory prayer chapel "praying for people by name who had written us."

This kind of personalized attention is the basis of the Charlotte, N.C., PTL counseling center, Coggin says. Along with counselors in the studio, volunteers answer in their homes the 12,000 calls that come every 24 hours.

Needs and ages run the gamut: "Ages 5 through 95 have called. So have professional killers and preachers," says Coggin. Seven percent of the calls are for salvation.

Coggin, former Baptist preacher, reports Baptists support PTL ministries. "We don't keep statistics on denominational preferences," he explains, "because that goes against what Jim [Bakker] meant for us to be—interdenominational. But a good percent of our supporters are Baptists, I expect."

They, like many Christians, have been concerned with growing sex and violence offered on commercial TV. A recent Michigan State University study reports that during a week of prime-time viewing, one can expect to see 30 or 40 scenes similar to these:

On "Hawaii Five-0," a demented killer strangles (in a mere 48 minutes) five or six women; on "Starsky and Hutch," a murderer attacks "women of the evening."

Comedy(?) offers little relief: Laverne says to Shirley, "Awright. Awright. Say a doctor would be interested in you. What for? A quick roll on the ol' operating table?" And on "Three's Company," a woman asks, "Do you like the way I look? Do you want me?"

Children should not be exposed to implied or explicit sex or violence, proponents of religious TV say. But others, while opposing excessive sex or violence, argue without such programs, children see a world existing only on the tube.

Jim Bakker's solution has been to produce his own programs. Robertson carefully screens commerical TV reruns before airing them. And current network prime time finds him critical: "Just because things happen in the world, doesn't make them right," he insists. "We believe television can be different. We're going to make it different."

"Making it different" means producing Christian shows. CBN's future holds soap operas, western comedies, children's shows written "from a Christian perspective," says Robertson.

Viewers will respond, he believes; he even hopes to triple 700 Club's audience. But past evidence shows that gaining viewer support can be difficult.

Typical of CBN's four owned and operated stations is WANX-TV, Atlanta. The 700 Club is telecast twice daily—at 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. Religious programs make up one-third of daily programming; "Mighty Mouse," "Heckle and Jeckle," "Deputy Dawg," "Life of Riley" and "Star Trek" illustrate the other two-thirds.

In five years, the station grew from 20,000 viewers to 300,000 viewers. But arbitron ratings, based on the number of TV viewers in the metropolitan area, revealed that when compared to NBC, WANX fell far behind. The local NBC affiliate, WSB-TV, drew 9 of 25 viewers, while WANX drew 1 of 25. During peak viewing hours, differences increased: ABC ("Charlie's Angels") 237,000; CBS ("MASH") 144,000; NBC movie, 308,000; "700 Club", 8,000. And "The Brady Bunch," broadcast on WANX opposite news—31,000 to 166,000.

"It's a difficult thing in a world like ours to compete against what ABC, NBC and CBS have to offer," admits Robertson. "But it means something—it's got to mean something—when you receive 6,000 letters every day. The net-

Continued

Smut. Sex. Violence: daily fair on commercial TV. The TV church promises to "clean up the tube."

fices. Robertson hopes to equip "young people to brave the fight against secular media. It's part of a world vision," he explains. "I saw Christ holding the world in his hands. I heard someone saying, 'Pray for the world, Pat.'"

That vision led Robertson to buy overseas stations, to invest in satellite transmitters, and to found the broadcasting school. It's a vision viewers support, he believes.

Missions outreach of the network attracted businessman Mike Lambert, Roman Catholic from Atlanta. "The show was just what I needed as a new Christian," he recalls. "I contributed money because I believed in what they were doing." He no longer supports CBN, he adds, "because other Christian media meet my needs as a more mature Christian."

But CBN's missions emphasis has little to do with most viewers' support of the network, critics say. "Just think what it means to the little old lady on social security," wrote one religion editor, "to sit down every month and write out a check to her hero, Pat."

"One of the major rivals of congregational Christianity . . . draws people into clubs and cults of their own . . . a real and critical issue. . . ."

"What would happen?" asks Don Harbuck, pastor, First Baptist Church, El Dorado, Ark., "if TV money and energy were harnessed in local churches?"

"This is a real and critical issue," says John Havlik of the HMB's evangelism section. "The advent of TV churches means a nominal member of a Southern Baptist church can remain at home, support a TV ministry and be certain he or she is spiritual."

A critical issue may surface when the TV church becomes the TV denomination: a rival, not an ally?

Southern Baptists have 35,000 churches. More than one-half have memberships under 300. These small rural congregations, says Kenneth Briggs, are hard hit by electronic evangelism: "Until recently, small-town, born-again Christians lived in relative isolation in widely separated parts of the country, sharing the same essentials of faith with Christians in other areas but expressing them in their own unique styles. Television makes it possible to galvanize this diverse sweep of Christians into a much more uniform, homogeneous constituency in which matters such as denominational identity mean far less than they ever did."

And while churches struggle to finance buildings and support denominational missions, the medium grows with vigor often surprising even broadcasters. Says a PTL official, "We don't need advertising. When we need something, Jim [Bakker] goes on the air and asks for it. Soon replies are pouring in. In a way, it's frightening."

Frightening, too, seems the most obvious symbol of the growing strength and influence of TV church: PTL's Charlotte facilities—a massive Williamsburg-style red brick building which, though it looks like many other buildings designated "church," houses studios—cameras, lights, action.

And its massive steeple—soaring heaven-ward—hides the transmitting antenna. ▪

Just by sharing a smile, and caring, intern Donna Lamb brings joy into lives of underprivileged children.

THE INTERNS

Crumpled address list in hand, Donna Lamb guides Baptist mission's station wagon through narrow, dimly-lit streets adjacent to New Orleans' French Quarter.

Look-alike frame houses sit arms-length apart, facing cars that fence the street. Ornate grillwork stands out amid peeling paint.

Now and then, screen doors slam as grinning, chattering sixth graders answer Lamb's persistent signal. Eliska, Demetria, Shenece, Troy. . . ten girls pile into the wagon: "I know where she stay—You miss! She way back there." They giggle. On this night, Home Mission Board intern Lamb and Ginny Downs, Christian social ministries missionary who is her supervisor, host their children's group for spaghetti dinner.

After the meal, Downs and Lamb gather the girls: "We want you to know why we have a girls' club at Friendship House," Downs says. "We have it because we like and care for you."

"You're important," Lamb adds.

Downs, who uses 'okays' like commas, explains she and Lamb want each girl able to say, "I'm glad I'm me, okay?"

Shenece laughs. "I'm a *nice* person."

"You bet," says Lamb excitedly, "and we want you *all* to feel that way about yourselves."

Helping people feel good about themselves is just the beginning point of an HMB intern's redemptive ministry. To preschoolers or alcoholics, words and actions say "I care."

From an inauspicious start as an emergency measure to staff New Orleans Baptist centers, the CSM internship program has grown to full-fledged training for potential missionaries.

The only program of its kind at the Home Mission Board, internship training involves all Southern Baptist seminaries, whose students work 20 hours a week at a local church, Southern Baptist center or local service agency.

Internships not only enrich students, but give the HMB a chance to evaluate their abilities. Despite students' often-voiced apprehension of (un)employment after graduation, about 85 percent of the interns become full-time home missionaries. The $62,000-per-year program supplies about half the social work missionaries.

Paul Adkins, Christian social ministries director, feels "it's one of the healthiest programs at the Board; with enough funds, we could double it tomorrow."

Funds are also a problem for interns whose salary hasn't risen in four years. "We need to reconsider in light of inflation," Adkins says.

Success or failure of internships depends upon the people who work in them, supervise them, coordinate them. The CSM department seeks men and women who will grow, mature and learn. Backgrounds and numbers of applicants vary. Southwestern and Southern seminaries may have 15-20 applicants per semester, because these schools attract social work majors and internships are limited to them. Other schools with fewer applicants select students with majors in related areas of counseling or pastoral care. The HMB funds about 25 internships per year.

"We don't have students standing in line when an opening occurs," says John Campbell, director of New Orleans Friendship House, where Downs and Lamb serve. "But we look for students with an interest in social work and some basic relationship skills."

Adds Doran McCarty, coordinator of interns for Midwestern seminary, "I look for a toughness to deal with social situations and the flexibility to move across cultural lines." (continued)

For HMB interns, helping people feel good about themselves is just the beginning—more important are words and actions that will begin a lasting redemptive ministry.

By Gwen Long • Walker Knight photographs

Francis Dubose of Golden Gate seminary agrees. "We choose people who love the city and have a feel for ministry, eliminating people with very middle-class values."

"We're not naive enough to think someone with counseling-social work background is going to work here for $250 a month," comments Ed Lilly, director of the Men's Rescue Mission in New Orleans. "But if they have the interest, we can give them experience."

Interns are usually selected by the seminary professor coordinating the program or the intern supervisor at the agency where they'll serve. "These people are the key to successful intern training," says Adkins.

Supervisors receive training themselves, attend monthly meetings and file reports on the interns' work. They give students guidance. In weekly conferences, seminary coordinators — usually Christian social ministries professors — help interns evaluate and integrate experiences.

Some interns spend their two years at the same agency; others work at different agencies each year, both to broaden their awareness and to meet rising demands for their services.

The internship helps a student discover gifts, sharpen skills and define a ministry. The intern shares responsibility for his educational experience, so initiative is essential. Supervisors expect competence and stress reliability.

If students hold the traditional concepts of "ministry," these often change drastically.

"I was pretty naive," says intern Kay Hardage from Midwestern. "I hesitated to use the word 'minister' in describing myself. Now I'm proud to say I'm a minister."

Campbell, once an intern himself, sees the experience as a redefinition of ministry from exclusively preaching to meeting needs of the whole person—spiritual, physical, emotional.

"Many interns feel frustrated doing things they have not learned to associate with a minister's role," he says, "but the culture we work in is not verbally oriented: actions count. Our 'church words' may make us feel comfortable, but they don't communicate God's love."

For example, interns Craig Wilson and Lamb conduct children's groups—it's the core of Friendship House ministry. Besides planning meetings for teens and younger children, Lamb and Wilson take them on field trips, staff summer camps and teach sex education. Lamb also

Continued on page 15.

The key is communicating God's love—not through middle class "church" words, but caring actions.

Photographs by Paul Obregon

FROM HERE, THE PILGRIMAGE CONTINUES

Like a sprig of ivy digs in and flourishes to cover a wall, Kay Hardage has covered the bare spots in the ministry of Tabernacle Baptist Church of St. Louis.

In her three years as intern, Hardage has begun a personal development class for teenage girls—"to help them become women"—and started clubs for younger children. She carries on other ministries: teen club, emergency food service, working women fellowship.

Once a month, she visits and holds services at a local hospital.

One of Hardage's most meaningful accomplishments has been Big A clubs. Designed to teach Bible to children not involved in church, the clubs reach 45 youngsters—black, white, Mexican, Asian.

"They're learning about Jesus and being given a lot of strokes," says Hardage.

In the process, she's actively involved a number of teenagers—at first unreliable, but soon dependable workers—in teaching lessons and crafts.

Hardage visits a patient at Truman Medical Center. **Above, top:** *After painting a room, Hardage and teen club members Tammie Allen, Lolly Morris and Helen Patterson enjoy a picnic (left). Hardage has been pleased the girls began to "identify the church as theirs and feel they belong."*

ministries. If the traditional ways had worked, the people wouldn't be neglected in the first place."

Agencies that host interns reap the benefits of such commitment. Some could not operate without the students who carry major responsibilities. Jerry Buckner, director of Fillmore Baptist Center in San Francisco, would like to have intern Tom Butler as permanent staff. Butler has expanded the drama program, black history class, Bible discussion class and youth club.

Although Fillmore Center is in an all-black neighborhood and Butler is white, his interracial community background equipped him to minister effectively. "It's good for kids in a black ghetto to know white Christians who care," says Buckner. "It helps them overcome prejudices."

The HMB itself benefits because interns later appointed as missionaries are "a step ahead," according to Adkins. "They've proved they can cope with stress because they've done the job before. They already buy into our idea of ministry and know it's what they want."

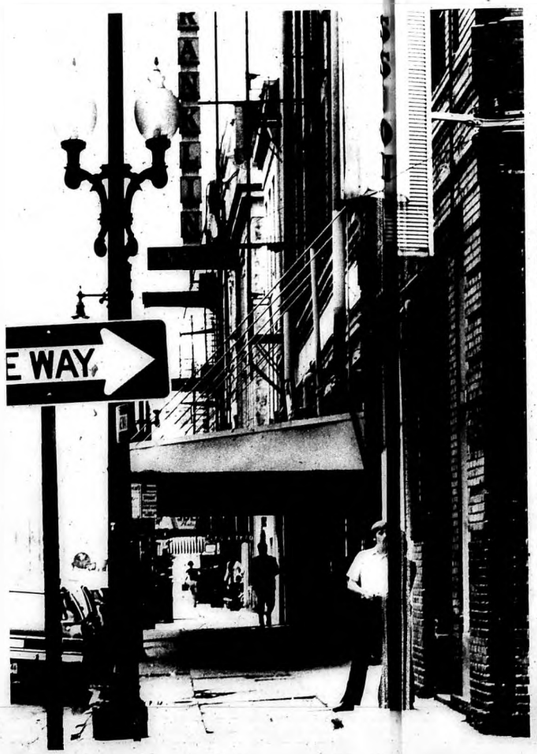
Students not appointed as missionaries are not viewed as disappointments or mistakes, however. "If they decide that's not for them, that's okay, too. They've still learned."

Interns with backgrounds of cross-cultural and inner-city work gain valuable insights that increase missions awareness throughout the Southern Baptist Convention. "Many Southern Baptists would not understand the ministry we have," Campbell says. "Part of our work is helping them see its validity; that is enhanced by interns who become pastors or church workers."

Perhaps those benefiting most from interns' work are the people to whom they minister. Although the effort seldom results in large numbers of conversions, new church members or Sunday School attendance pins, interns see changes in individuals' lives.

"It meant something to me when we visited a woman who had lost three children in a fire," says Lamb. "We could tell our support helped."

One of Miller's clients at the Rescue Mission is Charlie McAlister, a 59-year old retired Navy man. As rapport developed between them, McAlister revealed he once had made a Christian commitment. He was interested in renewing it and "working on" his problem. He's enthusiastic about his involvement at Valence Baptist Church and seriously thinking about the future. "I think he's going to make it," says Miller, who'll also help him find a job.



The benefits of interns' commitments are far-reaching, into Baptist agencies and boards across the nation. But those helped most are those ministered to by a young person they now call friend

With CSM director Paul Adkins (seated) and assistant director Charles McCullin, interns discuss their jobs successes and failures.
Far left: *Intern Bill Miller of Rescue Mission talks with one of the men who come for help.*
Left: *Donna Lamb comforts a lonely youngster.*

Another of Miller's clients has made a profession of faith, but his history of poor choices and impulsive moves may take him away too soon. Within one week Miller counseled with him about offers of marriage or a move to Florida.

The man stayed. "I wanted him to see he had made a good decision," Miller says. "He was so amazed he'd succeeded, like it was the first time in his life he'd ever done it. It's great when somebody who's walked in with sad eyes, walks out with a little hope."

Wilson gets his payoff the same way. He stresses to group members they are persons of worth and value. When the message gets across and kids see a future, he feels successful.

Desire housing project's rows of dirty brick, gray-roofed apartment buildings stretch for blocks, distinguished only by an irregular pat-

continued

tern of burned-out windows. No children or toys break the plainness of the bare yards. Parents are afraid for them to play outside.

Van and Al, children of two of Desire's 1,800 families, went with Wilson to camp last summer. Although their cabin group was the least athletic and competitive, creativity and enthusiasm won them second place in the talent show and overall competition. The intern was pleased the boys felt okay about being second. They didn't have to be first to feel they had accomplished something. Two years ago, it couldn't have happened that way.

"A lot of them believe they'll stay where they are for the rest of their lives; they don't see a way out," Wilson says.

"I hope we can offer them some alternative. We don't want them to depend on 'Mother's Day' checks once a month from now on."

As graduation nears and his internship at Friendship House ends, Wilson discussed with each boy his relationship with God. Three told him they had become Christians "because of their relationship with us and the things we've talked about," Wilson says. He worries about their growth, though, because no church is nearby to nurture them.

Many interns feel they could make an even greater contribution if they did not have to hold a second job. Although the HMB recommends students not work outside of their internships, low salaries force many to do so. Others cannot consider applying because they need more money to stay in school. Wilson and Lamb hold part-time jobs at churches, Hardage works as a secretary, Vanlandingham works as a handyman and financial manager.

Sometimes studies are pushed aside. "There's tension between ministry demands and schoolwork," Vanlandingham says. "I've got a 2.4 grade average, so you can tell who wins."

Once he needed to find shelter, food and clothing for a Vietnamese refugee family. Four days later he got back to classes. Other interns tell similar stories of full full days, long nights and inadequate study time.

In addition, fellow seminary students often don't understand what interns do; some are critical. Interns express frustration at students who come to the city to hand out tracts but won't stay to do the hard work of building redemptive relationships.

"The average seminary student doesn't want

To help youngsters in Friendship House clubs learn to comparative shop, bearded intern Craig Wilson takes them on weekly trips to the grocery. The program is one of many that provides practical aid for community residents.

to work with these kids," says Wilson. At times he "can really feel the non-acceptance from more traditional students, vibes that say, 'You're kinda strange.'"

"Only a select group works in the central city," Hardage agrees. "Others are afraid of the reality it presents about life—retarded persons, mixed races, poverty." These needs are met through Tabernacle Baptist Church, where she works.

Fellow students need more exposure to Christian social ministry work, interns say, and professors of traditional approaches need to communicate their respect for this kind of ministry.

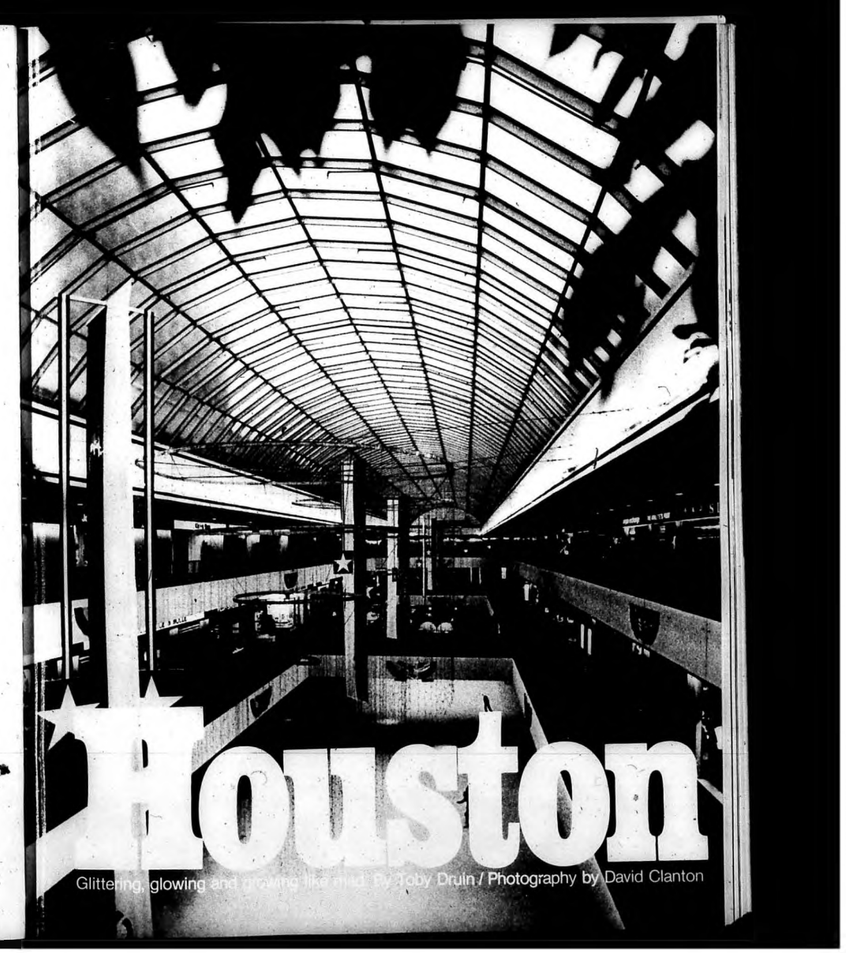
McCarty, author of *Supervision of Ministry Students* and coordinator of the program at Midwestern, believes all students could profit from the kind of training and self-examination CSM interns experience. He calls it "the most exciting thing I'm involved in at the school."

Concludes the HMB's Adkins, "The way to improve the internship program is more funds and more people. Cooperation with the seminaries is great and our strongest area is adequate supervision on the field. It's our way of recruiting the best missionaries we can get."

And a way for redemption to begin. •

Long is promotion assistant, Promotion Department, HMB.

Not only does the interns program equip future missionaries for hardship—it reaches untouchables with a message of hope; it provides a way for their redemption to begin.



Houston

Glittering, glowing and growing like mad. By Toby Druin / Photography by David Clanton

The largest American city without zoning ordinances, Houston's growth is not only overwhelming, but also unpredictable.

Everywhere bloom signs of growth. . .

Visitors at the space center examine a NASA rocket.

The Southern Baptist Convention has met five times in Houston: in 1915, 1926, 1953, 1958 and 1968.

But it has never met in *this* Houston.

"The Changing-est City," Houston in 1979 bears remote resemblance to the host-city of previous conventions. Today it is a throbbing, rumbling giant: fifth largest metropolis in the United States, largest in the South or Southwest.

Since 1968, Houston has grown by almost one-third. 1.6 million people jam its freeways and clog its sophisticated new shopping malls. Crowding in each year are enough newcomers to populate a city the size of Arlington, Texas. Three million persons squash its soft coastal soil and a thousand more arrive weekly. Some believe by 2050, Houston will be fourth largest city in the world.

Everywhere bloom signs of growth—new highways, new housing developments ($1.1 billion in building permits in 1977), skeletons of new skyscrapers imposing sparkling landmarks upon an already sprawling skyline.

Houston reeks of wealth. Indisputably the energy capital of the world, Houston refines one of every four gallons of gasoline and other oil products used in the United States. Through Houston's vast refineries, oil funnels from wells to internal-combustion engines almost as fast as oil executives funnel through Houston's black-gold "Wall Street West."

The oil companies, if not headquartered in Houston, boast major offices there, their glittering towers and geometric complexes gaudy testimony to the power of the petro-dollar.

Port of Houston, in tonnage third largest in the United States each year threads 4,500 ships through its narrow 50-mile channel up from Galveston on the Gulf Coast. Their cargo, $11 billion in international trade, is second among U.S. ports.

Houston-Galveston leads the South and Southwest in total bank deposits, and over the past 11 years has topped the nation in the growth of bank deposits—up more than 182 percent.

Freeways accommodate 400 new automobiles each day.

For the past two years, the city has led the nation in new office space construction. Assessed property valuations in 1979 will total $12 billion.

And that, pardner, is a few "Texas brags" from the day in late August 1836 when the Allen brothers stepped off riverboat "Laura" and paid $1.40 per acre for 6,642 acres on Buffalo Bayou.

They named their settlement for Gen. Sam Houston, a Baptist, who four months earlier had led Texas in its decisive battle for independence from Mexico.

By 1845, the year Texas became a state in the Union and Southern Baptists became a convention, Houston was a community of 18,000—and all of its folks could have sat in the Summit, where this year's SBC opens for its 122nd session.

Continued

The city creates an environment agreeable to work or play. But the Midas touch hasn't turned everything golden.

Houston grips an affluence whose vigor and intensity have built for its citizens—with a median age of 27, youngest in the nation—a glittering environment as agreeable to play as to work.

Nonetheless, the city offers everything: professional and amateur sports, with many events held in the Astrodome—forever the symbol of Houston's spirit of innovation and flair; professional ballet and world-class symphony; among the best regional theaters in the United States; and even cowboys and Indians in championship rodeo.

But Houston's people are more likely to travel by spaceship than by covered wagon. The city is the site of the $202-million Lyndon Johnson Space Center, still the largest research and development facility of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration—and home of the space shuttle program.

Yet, even with its Midas touch, Houston hasn't turned all golden. As in any modern city, neighborhoods decay, their poverty made uglier by surrounding plenty.

Tensions surfaced by affluence tear at family life. Crime soars—Houston has been called the nation's "murder capital."

And racial violence, often against Mexican-Americans—whose population grows by the thousands monthly—mars the city's sun-tanned body.

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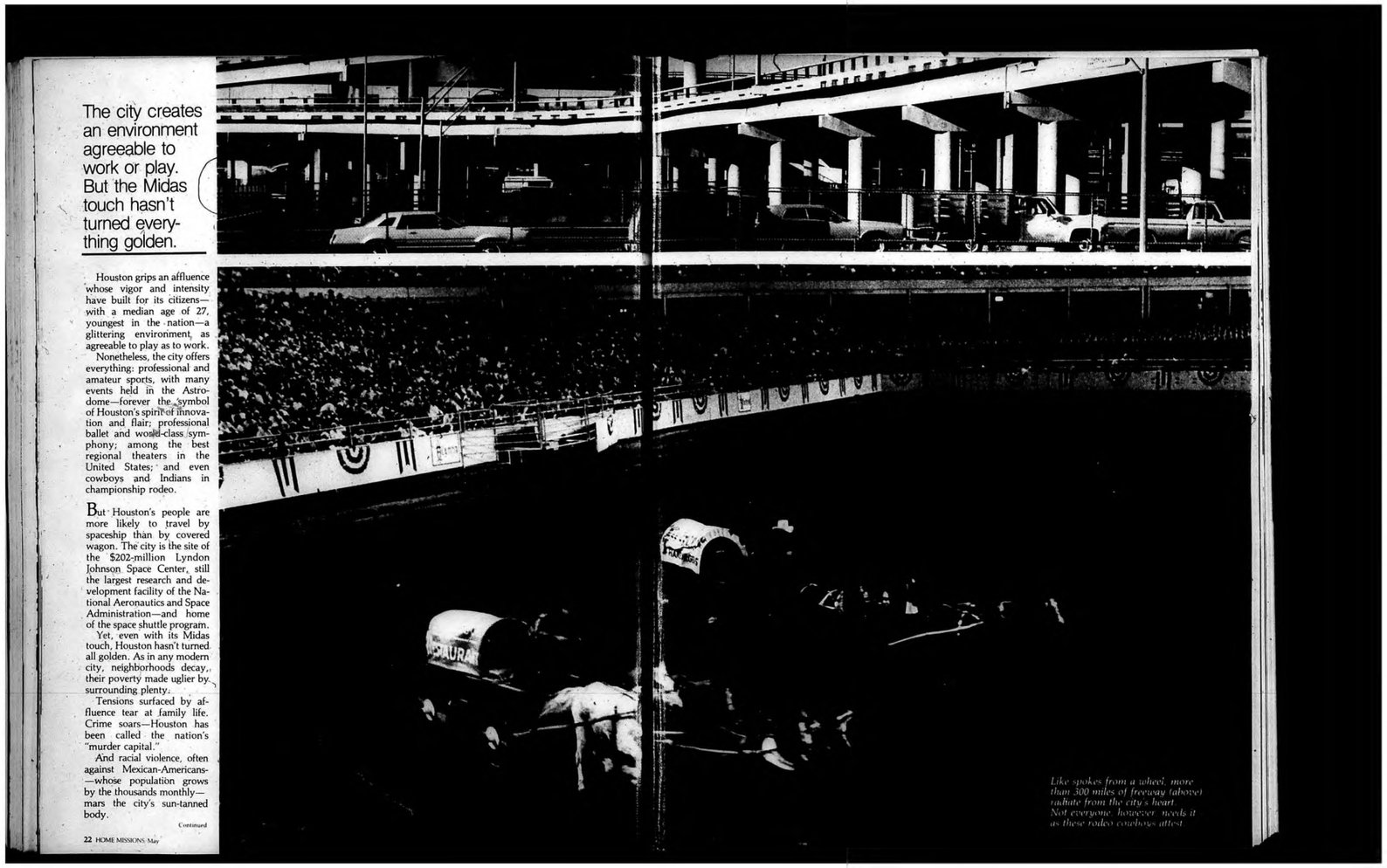
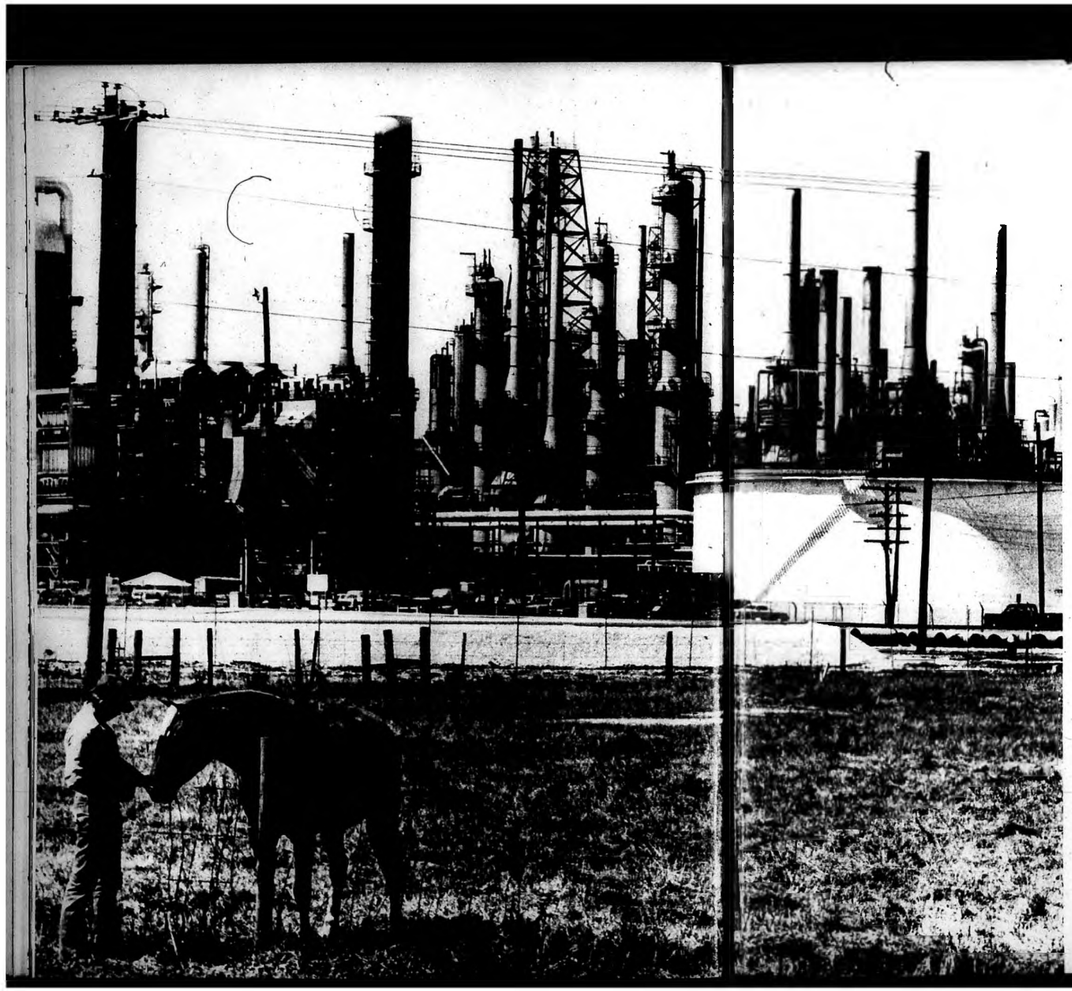


Like spokes from a wheel, more than 300 miles of freeway (above) radiate from the city's heart. Not everyone, however, needs it as these rodeo cowboys attest.



Baptists, too, are big . . .

The most obvious need, says Wilson Brumley, is for new churches

As with everything in Houston, problems loom larger. But here Baptists may be equal to the challenges.

When the Allens founded the city, Baptists were there. Four years after the place got its name, Union Baptist Association—Texas' oldest—was formed to meet the new community's demands.

Today Union association, with 223 churches and a dozen missions, is the SBC's largest; with 220,000 members it vies with Dallas association and beats half of the nation's Baptist state conventions in membership.

"I never think of it in terms of our being the largest association," says Wilson Brumley, metropolitan missions coordinator for the association. "I just usually think about the tremendous opportunity we have here because we are large and vigorous. That imposes on us responsibilities smaller associations in other big cities might not have."

Brumley came to Union six and a half years ago, after serving as a regional coordinator for the Home Mission Board. For him and his wife, it was like "coming home," he recalls. Both grew up in a neighboring county.

He took over an already impressive associational program, but under his leadership it has become a model of ministry. It has an association-sponsored counseling center, a branch of Southwestern seminary, leadership training institutes and a soon-to-be-opened conference center that will accelerate association plans to develop lay leaders.

Lay leadership, says Brumley, is the association's number one resource, and the new conference center will enable Union to better prepare its people for the decades ahead.

The most obvious need Brumley sees now is for new churches. "The association grows by 75,000 to 80,000 people annually," he says. "Translating that into churches per population, we ought to start eight or nine new churches every year just to keep pace with where we are now—with a church for every 9,000 persons."

continued

Coupled with the need for new churches is need for land. Union has a foundation which purchases church sites; its an omnivorous consumer of money.

In siting a potential church, the association uses the same criteria as a major department store or oil company uses to select locations. And that means, Brumley says, "we're competing with such firms in purchasing land. In the past few years, costs have soared tremendously."

Other challenges confront Houston Baptists: combatting problems of city life, reaching ethnic language persons flooding the area.

Already the Spanish-speaking population approaches a half million—they comprise much of the need, yet offer much of the hope of the association.

In addition, Union has congregations among 15 language groups. A Home Mission Board survey has located other ethnic groups needing ministries.

"We become more and more cosmopolitan by the day," says Brumley. Houston is a city of worldwide significance, he believes. And a city where Baptists are a significant part—"not set aside from society, but doing our best to help shape and mold it in the fashion God wants us to be," Brumley says.

"Baptists are a part of this whole big city and we are going to make a difference."

(continued)

That Houston Baptists are strong is evident in their numbers and their wealth. When First Church's John Bisagno had to catch a plane after worship services his 10,000-member congregation rented a helicopter.

"Baptists are a big part of this city; we're going to make a difference."

The Maranatha School opened in 1974 with 60 children; today, with more classrooms, enrollment could total 3,000.

"Call them illegal, but don't deprive them. . . ."

These children don't look different from thousands of Mexican-American children in the 230 Houston public schools: black hair, deep brown eyes and mischievous smiles. They laugh, cry, run in the halls when no teacher is looking; teens interested in music—and each other; the younger ones often forgetting lunch money.

But youngsters attending school at Maranatha Baptist Church are very different. They are children of undocumented aliens, their parents attracted to the area by lure of a better life.

In Houston—as in most U.S. cities—undocumented aliens work; that's why they've come to the states. Few accept welfare or public assistance because they fear discovery and deportation. Consequently, taxes are deducted from their wages; they pay rent which pays owners' property taxes; they are charged sales tax on purchases. But in Houston, when illegal aliens send their children to public school, they pay. Plenty.

Texas' free public education does not extend to children of undocumented aliens. Tuition is $135 per month in Houston; next year it will be $162.

Four years ago, when the wave of illegals became a flood, a school was begun for their children in two rooms of a community center. When they outgrew the facility, the center asked churches to provide schools.

Pastor Robert Martinez at Maranatha responded. "You can say these children are illegal, unwanted, rejected or whatever," he says, "but the thing is: on Christians lies responsibility to see they are not deprived of education.

"I told my church it would be a missionary project."

The school opened in 1974 with 60 children; enrollment hit 450. It's now at 370 but would be "two or three thousand if we had room," says Martinez. Every available nook is occupied by students, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily.

"We don't give them much recess," Martinez explains. "They study, study, study. We try to give them as much instruction in four hours as they would get in six in public school."

Pastor Robert Martinez

The shorter day is a necessity. Many children ride city buses from all over Houston; others come in parents' carpools; others in church van or bus. "If we went from 8:30 to 3:30 or 4 o'clock," says Martinez' daughter, Sandra Loredo, secretary for the school, "some kids wouldn't get home until after dark."

Also teachers' jobs are part-time. Many have children of their own and aren't interested in all-day employment. "The teachers come from the community and the church," explains Martinez. "They are doing it because they love the children."

Lucia Maley teaches 30 sixth graders in a classroom which would be crowded with that number. She came after nine years as Spanish instructor at the University of Houston. "I wanted to help," she says. "They need it."

The school accepts children in grades kindergarten through high school. A few older grades bunch together simply because of inadequate space and too few teachers.

Although perhaps 20 percent of the children move on to public schools after parents acquire proper documentation, most students have been at the school since it opened. As soon as one leaves, however, 10 more are ready to enroll.

For their child's education, parents pay $7 a week—less if more than one child enrolls. The $7 per pupil, help from the church budget and everything Martinez scrapes up keep the school operational.

Dog-earred textbooks—some 15-20 years old—are public and private school discards. "Two times two was four a thousand years ago," says Martinez. "It hasn't changed."

He doesn't expect need for his school to change, either, until Texas law allows illegal aliens' children to attend public schools for free.

"As long as we are this close to the border," Martinez says, "the need will be increasing. Somebody has to help them. It's the Christian thing to do."

Continued

From switchblades to fires to shootings, "Miz Quirter" has withstood them all. And loved it. Or most of it. . . ?

Sometimes it's "Miz Quirter." Or "Mismquirter." Or maybe even "mizQuirter."

Mildred McWhorter answers to all of them. For she remembers early days at Baptist Mission Center on Fletcher Street when she was called worse—much worse—by people who doubted she could tough it out in the low-income Mexican-American community.

McWhorter remembers the names, the long hours, the open hostility that taunted her and tempted her to go home to Georgia.

She remembers the fear that gripped her when a teenager cut buttons off her blouse with a switchblade knife. And she remembers her tearful call to the Home Mission Board and the "reassuring" response: "Honey, it sounds like you're on the way to becoming a good home missionary."

In the 16 years since, McWhorter has passed a thousand tests under fire: from switchblades to fires to shootings in the middle of the night. But she has remained at Baptist center—loving every minute of it . . . well, almost every minute.

McWhorter didn't start out to become a home missionary in Christian social ministries. She felt called to missions, but "what could a woman do?"

In college, she again sought "the Lord's will for my life." She didn't know, she recalls, "what he could do with someone with no special ability and who was silly half the time. But he gave me a sense of humor and over the years, it's kept me from getting stabbed or shot."

During a stint as summer missionary, McWhorter met Raymond Collier, who asked her, upon her graduation, to come to Port Arthur, Texas, to run a mission center.

Five years later, she moved to Houston to revive the ailing Fletcher Street center.

The decision to move was not made easily. "I have never had God lead in real direct ways," McWhorter says. "I can look back and see it, but I can't always know right that minute."

Her first look at the area's need hooked McWhorter: "I never will forget how discouraging it was. The house

Continued

After 16 years in the tough Mexican-American community, Mildred McWhorter at Baptist Mission Center knows most of her neighbors. And they know her. She's welcome everywhere. (Above)

McWhorter anticipated 20-30 kids at her first VBS. To her surprise, 339 enrolled. Later VBS funds helped build Joy Fellowship Center.

"That woman is trying to tell us about God!"

had been closed for two years and the place was knee-deep in junk."

She sought volunteers—finally found six. "We had no equipment and absolutely no money," she recalls. "The HMB was supplementing my salary, but I could have qualified for food stamps."

After she and some others cleaned the building, she began visiting. Her only help was Gloria Montalva, a convert of McWhorter's efforts in Port Arthur who was hired to be her shadow—"they were afraid of what might happen to me alone on the streets around the center."

McWhorter visited 9-10 hours a day for 31 days before "I got a soul in that building. I told them we were interested in them and their needs and wanted to help. But they would stop me on the porch. . . ."

Mexican-American teens jeered, "Get out, Paleface; you don't belong here!"

The showdown came when McWhorter found a gang throwing knives against the center's back door. Horrified, then angered, she quickly singled out "Jesse" as leader.

"I called his name," she remembers. "They were dumbfounded I knew any of them. I said, 'Hey, fella, you're the leader, aren't you?' That puffed up his ego and I started talking to him. I told them if they'd let me use their knives to do some carving, I would serve them cookies and Kool-aid.

All eight pushed inside, propped their feet on tables and started "saying all kinds of stuff, calling me dirty names in Spanish."

McWhorter ignored their jibes. Having learned to carve in Georgia, she began shaping a rabbit of soft pine. As she whittled, she talked of a "friend who might have been a wood carver."

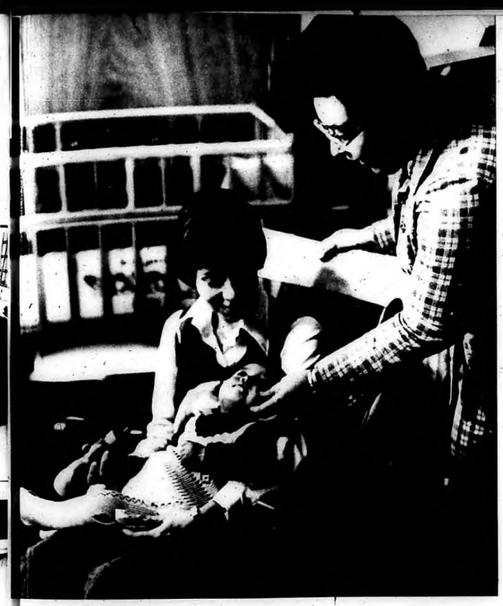
They listened only a few minutes before one jumped up. "Let's get out of here," he yelled. "That woman is trying to tell us about God."

But the gang returned daily. Soon, as she walked the neighborhood, McWhorter had trusted bodyguards.

That year, more than 350 persons attended the center's "open house." "God did it," McWhorter says. God took care of Jesse, too. He was the first person at the center to profess faith in Christ.

As others accepted Christ, McWhorter held classes for "new believers," to make sure "a convert knows he has been won to something as well as from something." One young woman, Nicholosa Salazar, "bugged me and bugged me about letting her help. She said if we'd start a Bible study, she would love the babies while we taught."

Starting with just herself, McWhorter now uses over 600 volunteers.



At the time, the center was confined to a small house; no money was available for expansion and McWhorter was barely able to exist. Yet she rented a vacant, rat-infested store a short distance away, paying $50 of her own money. "All I meant to do was have a two-week VBS."

McWhorter and Salazar anticipated 20-30 youngsters, but enrolled 339. "We couldn't even stand them in the room. We had them beside the building, behind the building—even put up a shelter on a vacant lot."

The children "would listen for three hours and then beg us to stay."

They did. And like "manna from heaven," a disbanding church gave her money to buy the property. Baptist men tore down the old store and with two years of VBS offerings from Houston churches, later built Joy Fellowship Center.

Today the centers minister to more than 4,500 persons annually in 54 programs that include Bible study, worship, recreation, literacy classes, crafts, girls' and boys' clubs, choirs and a host of other things springing from McWhorter's fertile brain.

And she doesn't work alone. Two paid staff members are assisted by 600 volunteers from more than 100 churches, who give thousands of hours each year "and do all the work," McWhorter says.

The centers operate on a budget of $120,000—about half from Union association, the rest from the Texas convention, HMB and churches and friends. "I never solicit money," says McWhorter. "God sends it."

McWhorter blends concern for spiritual and physical needs: "If I had to spend the rest of my life doing social work without evangelism, I'd quit. I don't see any purpose in it. You can put shoes on a man's feet and a coat on his back and food in his stomach—and he's hungry and cold tomorrow.

"But if you put Christ in his heart, he gets a job and earns his food and clothes."

But conversions aren't prequisite for help. She aided one man with seven jobs—all lost for drinking. "When he came about the eighth job," she recalls, "I lost my Christian cool and told him I couldn't help."

A few minutes later, "I repented and went to apologize. But he was still mad and—you guessed it—I lost my cool again.

"I told him it looked as if God ought to let him die rather than let him drink up good water and breathe good air. I should have been kicked for saying that. He slammed the door in my face."

A couple of hours later, "I went back to apologize. This time his wife met me at the door. She told me her husband had said he was going to get a job and prove I was wrong, even if it killed him."

After he became a Christian, the man told McWhorter the thing that really made him clean up his life was "taking Christ into my heart."

"To me, the message of Jesus Christ is what makes social work work," McWhorter says, "and it is what makes it last." •

The road to ministry was a road to openness to persons - just simply being myself with them.

And so, in Pinecrest Mental Hospital, the world of Howard Parshall was turned upside down.

By Walker L. Knight □ Photography by Steve Wall

More than 20 years ago, it was called G-1: a long, fenced-in dormitory on the edge of the college-like campus—100 acres of trees, fields and buildings. When the superintendent opened G-1's door, Howard Parshall was stunned. Before him, in a huge dayroom, were about 50 profoundly retarded males, most nude. They grunted, yelled; talked gibberish. They jumped up and down, rocked back and forth, oblivious to each other, each in his own world.

The room served as a common toilet, and the smell overwhelmed and sickened the young Parshall.

The superintendent said, "These people are a part of our institution; they're ones to whom you'll minister."

It was 1957. The superintendent of State Colony and Training School at Pineville, La., had exercised shock treatment—a look at the worst possible situation in institutional care for the mentally retarded.

Howard Parshall, 32, a recent graduate of the Institute of Religion at Texas Medical Center in Houston, was being asked to become the school's first full-time chaplain.

"We wanted to show you how it is," the superintendent said. "So what do you think?"

Parshall's words came falteringly: "I don't know what to think. . . . I just don't know."

In a near sleepless night, Parshall prayed, "Lord, what in the world can be done for these people? What kind of ministry can I have? Am I really needed here?"

Back in Houston he shared his impressions with his wife, Clara, and in spite of Parshall's confusion, they sensed this assignment was what God wanted. "I remember rationalizing that I could go to the State Colony [later named Pinecrest school] and if it didn't work out, I could go on to a general hospital. The experience would help me.

"I didn't have any special training, but then no one did. The only way I can explain things that have happened, is God simply put me down here and said, 'Howard, this is where you are going to do your ministry.'"

Since, Howard Parshall and Pinecrest school have gone through profound changes together.

Cottage G-1 still cares for profoundly retarded males but fences and prison-like atmosphere are gone. Attendants no longer gather apart from the residents, drinking their coffee and observing. Each attendant is responsible for 10 persons. Each resident's day includes dressing, feeding, walking; bus rides, chapel, projects; relaxation and recreation.

"The level of care has been revolutionized. Residents are fully clothed and in control of their bodily functions; four live in a room. Not only is each day programmed, but each resident has a long-range development plan.

The change started in 1960 when Coates Stuckey became superintendent. His philosophy was to provide services to help each resident—no matter how retarded—develop to fullest potential. Pinecrest took another quantum leap when the Kennedy Administration funneled federal funds into mental health care, most designated for individual services.

As Pinecrest changed, so did the ministry of Howard Parshall. From a maximum population of 2,100, Pinecrest has leveled off at 1,600 residents. By moving some persons to other facilities, Pinecrest lost its least retarded residents. Today's average I.Q. (intelligence quotient) is 19.

Among its spacious buildings and garden-like grounds, Pinecrest cares only for the severely retarded, with I.Q.s of 20-35, and the profoundly retarded, with I.Q.s below 20.

Parshall, who speaks in a low voice, explains, "Years ago, if we had tried to put the same residents in this type of en-

Continued

Parshall leads services in the chapel, built by donations and dedicated "to the least of God's little ones."

At Pinecrest, "each child is like a cup; each has differing capacities. Any given cup can only be so full."

vironment, they would have destroyed the place. It shows the tremendous gains in social training."

Parshall arrived before these gains, however, and his first efforts at ministry suffered.

For worship services in the gym, residents thronged to folding chairs, creating bedlam, especially when first arrivals grabbed seats on the stage—thus composing the choir.

It was choir in name only, since there was no special music, but as services proceeded, "choir" members would go to the restroom or to get a drink of water, with 6-10 others trailing behind. A constant stream of people flowed to restrooms, water fountain, smoking area—and back again. When the service closed, "holy hell broke loose. They took off in all directions," Parshall recalls.

After a few weeks, Parshall eliminated the choir, that elevated seat of honor and visibility. Then he announced that five minutes before the service everyone could get water or go to the restroom, but after it began, they were not to get up. When these changes did not halt the chaos, he asked attendants to enforce quiet. At the same time he emphasized to the residents that while they were not required to come, if they came they were to maintain order.

With passing of time, services evolved into a more traditional church form. And Parshall's concept of his own ministry unfolded.

"I found that I became a religious figure who represents the living God. They understood God partly by understanding me and what I tell them about God—what they see and feel and experience in me as a person," he explains.

"I define my ministry as direct contact with the residents in a helping role.

"To these I'm God's man. I am friendly. I'm loving. I care about them. I am affectionate with them. I touch them in friendship. I read their letters. I shake hands. I am accepting. In this sense God is accepting of them."

The first years he tried "to program for the residents, to make something happen." Then, he recalls, "it began to dawn on me they were affecting my life. They were making a contribution to me as a human being. The road to ministry was a road to openness to persons, just simply being myself with them. I came to sense their feelings, to show them affection, to listen to their talking, to pray with them.

"As this began to happen they ceased to be retardates and more and more became my friends. They became persons. This is when my ministry began to get turned around," Parshall explains, tears filling his eyes.

"I've simply tried to pray with them when they wanted to pray, provide worship services, Sunday School activities, visit them in the hospital, and try to help them experience feelings of acceptance and worth by what I say and do for them," he says.

At first, Parshall found it difficult to accept residents' inability to comprehend his sermons. "It was almost devastating to realize they can't understand my message. But I couldn't write them off as human beings just because they couldn't understand."

Sometimes, studying in his office, he would become de pressed. To break the mood, he would talk with residents Then, he says, "I felt alive and relevant and real, because I was in touch with persons."

Worship service became the focal point of Parshall's ministry as he searched for ways to communicate the good news of God in Christ. Yet his pleas for discipline "to help you have a *real* church" quickly revealed most could not believe "real church" meeting in a gym.

Over the years, desire for their own building grew in residents' feelings; at Parshall's urging, persons throughout Louisiana began to raise money for a chapel. Eventually $40,000 was collected. School maintenance crews provided labor. Individuals and small groups bought pews.

Meanwhile, at every Pinecrest service, residents gave their nickels and dimes. After 10 years this offering reached $750, enough for the piano.

With completion of the red-brick chapel, weekly worship services take on a "real church" atmosphere. Yet Parshall has learned "to put very little credence in the spoken word. They cannot think abstractly. Words are symbols they cannot process. Their involvement is more important.

"The story or sermon is the weakest part of the service. I must recognize that, but it is important to have a complete service. I am probably communicating more by my tone of voice, my stance and my gestures, than by what I say."

The mental health box score

Levels of mental retardation, as set by the American Association on Mental Deficiency.

- **Mildly retarded** (I.Q.s of 50-70) are slow learners who acquire equivalent of 3rd-6th grade education.
- **Moderately retarded** (I.Q.s of 35-50) show delayed motor development, and function well in special education programs, learning some first grade material. In spite of hyperactivity, they enjoy group experiences and want to please. In adulthood most will require sheltered work conditions and limited social privileges.
- **Severely retarded** (I.Q.s of 20-35) have marked delay in developing social and motor skills, but over the years can learn to feed, dress and toilet-train themselves. Hyperactivity, epileptic seizures, poor motor coordination and speech difficulties are common. They can be taught simple skills, like sweeping and mopping. Speech is limited to few words, but they have other ways of communicating. They require supervision and care throughout life.
- **Profoundly retarded** (I.Q.s under 20) by adulthood can be taught to walk, feed themselves, and become partially toilet trained. Behavior is bizarre. Coordination is poor. Speech is limited. •

At first, Parshall's "congregation" frustrated him, but soon he discovered the more he gave, the more he was given in return.

As evidence of their involvement, Parshall points to the actions of a teenage boy, twisting in his seat and swinging his hand almost incontrollably, in his eagerness to take up offering; to the red-haired 60-year-old woman who in high, strained soprano, sings—as a birthday song—the national anthem; to the wild gestures, filled with pride and joy, of a youngster attempting to lead where others cannot follow, in a rendition of his favorite song, "Deep and Wide"; and finally to the slow, awkward and moving procession after service, as residents help each other out of the chapel: pushing wheelchairs, holding friends by the hand.

To all, Parshall has an affirming "you did good."

A majority of residents come to one of the 10 worship services Parshall holds each week. At one of the services, blind or deaf residents in wheelchairs attend, accompanied by foster grandparents who give care and affection to the ones who need it most.

Parshall encourages residents to lead singing because "that person experiences a sense of worth, a sense of productivity, perhaps of what being loved really means. The individuality of the person is recognized and accepted. Theologically, this is what ministry is with the mentally retarded."

Parshall, attendants and staff take in stride accidents and difficulties associated with their work. During one service, a resident lost control and urinated on the pew and floor. When the group left, a cottage parent patiently cleaned up.

During his first year, Parshall was warned by one of the older attendants, "Preacher, it's dangerous to give these [religious] leaflets out." Not understanding, Parshall passed more tracts to residents, then watched as some dropped them on the floor, others ignored him completely, and some stuffed them immediately into their mouths.

"I got the message," he admits.

Parshall has made no concerted effort to minister to school staff, which numbers 1,600 (some services require 24-hour maintenance).

"I haven't felt the need to be the preacher to everybody, but I've been available. My ministry to the staff happens informally as I visit the cottages or wherever," he says.

However, staff members do talk about the support they feel. Education director Paul Erny says, "He is a good release for me. We can talk. A few minutes with Howard seems to relieve the pressure."

With a large number of employees in stressful circumstances, turnover is high. As many as 30 new employees a month are hired. Parshall holds his part in the orientation at the chapel, explaining pastoral care for the school, his early experiences in the gym, his policy of voluntary attendance, the purpose of the worship services, the help he needs.

Rodney Richmond, director of the social services department, recently studied operations of other institutions about the size of Pinecrest. On his visits, he learned most chaplains do not hold religious services for residents with I.Q.s below 25. "I'm so pleased that this would go against Howard's practice. If he limited his ministry to those above an I.Q. of 25, he would have almost none left," Richmond says.

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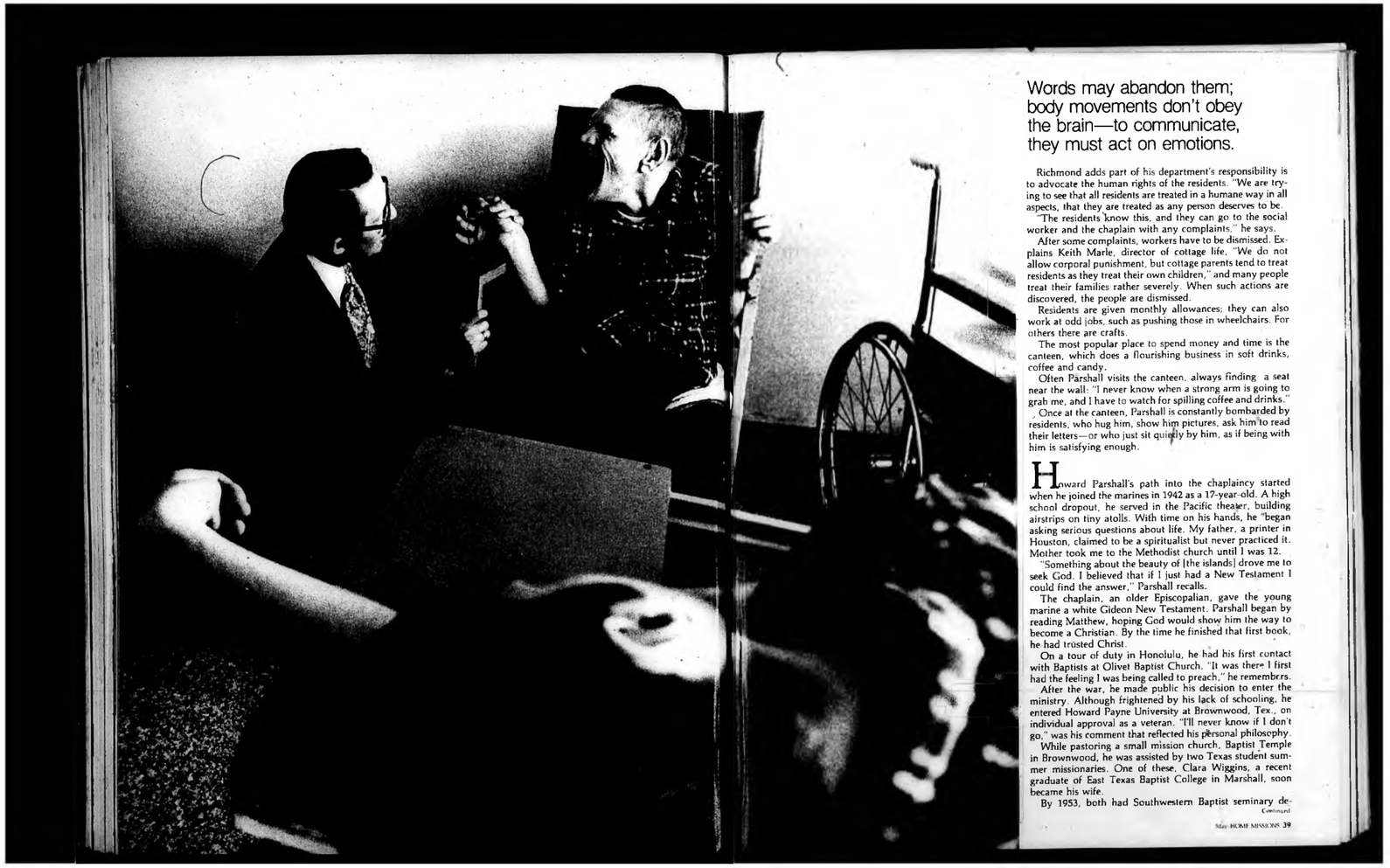

Words may abandon them; body movements don't obey the brain—to communicate, they must act on emotions.

Richmond adds part of his department's responsibility is to advocate the human rights of the residents. "We are trying to see that all residents are treated in a humane way in all aspects, that they are treated as any person deserves to be.

"The residents know this, and they can go to the social worker and the chaplain with any complaints," he says.

After some complaints, workers have to be dismissed. Explains Keith Marle, director of cottage life, "We do not allow corporal punishment, but cottage parents tend to treat residents as they treat their own children," and many people treat their families rather severely. When such actions are discovered, the people are dismissed.

Residents are given monthly allowances; they can also work at odd jobs, such as pushing those in wheelchairs. For others there are crafts.

The most popular place to spend money and time is the canteen, which does a flourishing business in soft drinks, coffee and candy.

Often Parshall visits the canteen, always finding a seat near the wall: "I never know when a strong arm is going to grab me, and I have to watch for spilling coffee and drinks."

Once at the canteen, Parshall is constantly bombarded by residents, who hug him, show him pictures, ask him to read their letters—or who just sit quietly by him, as if being with him is satisfying enough.

Howard Parshall's path into the chaplaincy started when he joined the marines in 1942 as a 17-year-old. A high school dropout, he served in the Pacific theater, building airstrips on tiny atolls. With time on his hands, he "began asking serious questions about life. My father, a printer in Houston, claimed to be a spiritualist but never practiced it. Mother took me to the Methodist church until I was 12.

"Something about the beauty of [the islands] drove me to seek God. I believed that if I just had a New Testament I could find the answer," Parshall recalls.

The chaplain, an older Episcopalian, gave the young marine a white Gideon New Testament. Parshall began by reading Matthew, hoping God would show him the way to become a Christian. By the time he finished that first book, he had trusted Christ.

On a tour of duty in Honolulu, he had his first contact with Baptists at Olivet Baptist Church. "It was there I first had the feeling I was being called to preach," he remembers.

After the war, he made public his decision to enter the ministry. Although frightened by his lack of schooling, he entered Howard Payne University at Brownwood, Tex., on individual approval as a veteran. "I'll never know if I don't go," was his comment that reflected his personal philosophy.

While pastoring a small mission church, Baptist Temple in Brownwood, he was assisted by two Texas student summer missionaries. One of these, Clara Wiggins, a recent graduate of East Texas Baptist College in Marshall, soon became his wife.

By 1953, both had Southwestern Baptist seminary de-

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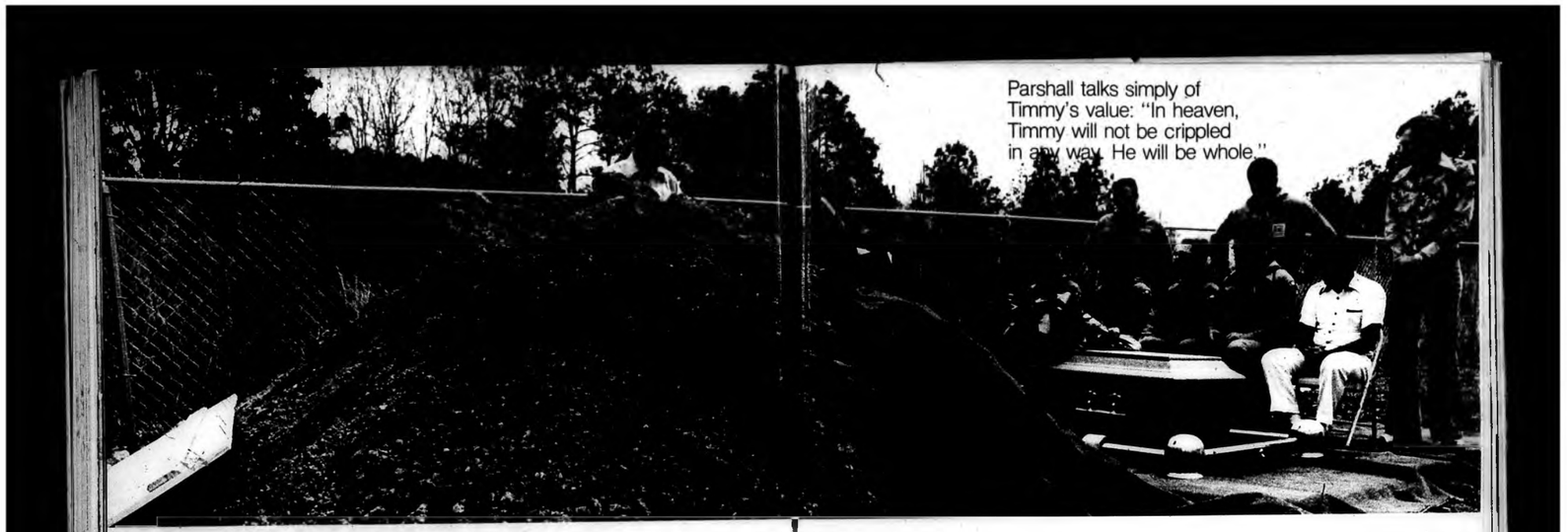


Parshall talks simply of Timmy's value: "In heaven, Timmy will not be crippled in any way. He will be whole."

grees, his a bachelor of divinity and a master of religious education, hers a master of religious education.

By the time Parshall entered seminary he had a definite leading into hospital chaplaincy. He knew endorsement required three years of pastoral experience, so he determined to get that. But while a pastor at Weimar, Tex., the Institute of Religion opened in Texas Medical Center in Houston. He entered the summer program of pastoral care, commuting 90 miles by bus. When he was approved for an internship, he resigned his church and moved his family in with his mother. Lean financial days followed. Upon completing his internship, Parshall remained at Memorial Hospital as associate chaplain. That was when Superintendent Sloan of Pinecrest contacted him.

During his more than 20 years at Pinecrest, Parshall has explored deeply the meaning of the chaplaincy—and his role as a minister and a chaplain.

"Most chaplains I have known in my training see themselves as junior psychiatrists, public relations persons, social workers or therapists," he explains. "I see my role as minister. I've seen too much ridiculing of ministers and of chaplains who seem to be spiritual—a cynical attitude by other chaplains. It got to me. I determined not to be that way when I became a chaplain," he says.

Parshall determined also to confirm his spiritual relationship with God by his openness to people. He does not want any doubt at Pinecrest that the chaplain is a minister, "not going around continually preaching, or passing out tracts, but functioning as a man of God."

One factor helping mold Parshall's approach surfaced while he was pastor of First Baptist in Weimar. Visual problems and severe headaches led to discovery of a brain tumor. An operation returned to normal his vision, and his heavy black hair covers the scars of radiation treatment. But 20 years later, on the Pinecrest campus, he noticed one eye bulging; it appeared bigger than the other. He immediately went to a doctor who diagnosed return of the tumor.

This tumor also was surgically removed.

The experience produced in Parshall a profound awareness of God, "not that I was any better a person or prayed any harder, but the Lord gave me a heightened consciousness of his presence. I would go into the chapel and just cry. I felt things were all right. It was almost as though I could step right into heaven."

Since then, Parshall has retained a continuing sense of God's presence, and the chapel has become more than a place to hold worship services. He starts every day sitting there in meditation and prayer.

As the chapel symbolizes for Parshall the opportunities of his new life, he also uses it to relate the new life after death. Not only does he attempt to minister to those who are dying, to their families, and to their friends, but he plays a central role in the funeral of a resident whose body is not claimed by relatives or who is to be buried on the grounds. This happens often, since many residents outlive relatives or are simply forgotten by them.

Parshall becomes funeral director, signing death certificates and taking charge of the cemetery and recording the graves. He arranges for the grave to be dug, orders a casket, gravestone, casket spray, then prepares the service.

Once the chapel—God's House—was erected, funeral services took on a different meaning. "I determined to have a service that as nearly approximates a normal funeral as we could have," Parshall says.

"I asked the Boy Scout leaders and superintendent about using the scouts [all residents] as pallbearers. They loved it. They feel this is a real function," he adds.

Only a few clouds dot the afternoon sky when Howard Parshall conducts funeral services of Timmy, a 14-year-old boy who came to Pinecrest 13 years ago.

Timmy's parents could not be found, but a small group of Pinecrest residents have gathered in the still, quiet chapel. Eight adults, registering little emotion, sit in front pews on the left. On the right are an equal number of uniformed foster grandmothers and other attendants; many cry, most noticeably the "grandmother" who cared for Timmy.

Music. . . Parshall reads Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd . . . ." Aware of the significance of each death, Parshall reassures, "We will miss Timmy. He may have come here alone, but he had friends, especially his foster grandmother, whom we remember today.

"It is the most natural thing in the world to fear death, for it is unknown. . . . Only that which is real and worthwhile can we take with us, and it reminds us of the meaning of life. Many persons have been touched and changed because Timmy lived among us for a season. He made a contribution in the sight of God."

Prayer—thanking God for Timmy's life, asking comfort for those who grieve. As Parshall finishes, six Boy Scouts—adults, some bearded—solemnly load the dark gray casket, topped with its red carnation spray, into the hearse.

The waiting hearse carries Timmy's body to graveside. A mound of moist, loose dirt is piled beside the grave. One of the staff sits on the fender of a pickup truck parked nearby; another leans against the chain-link fence.

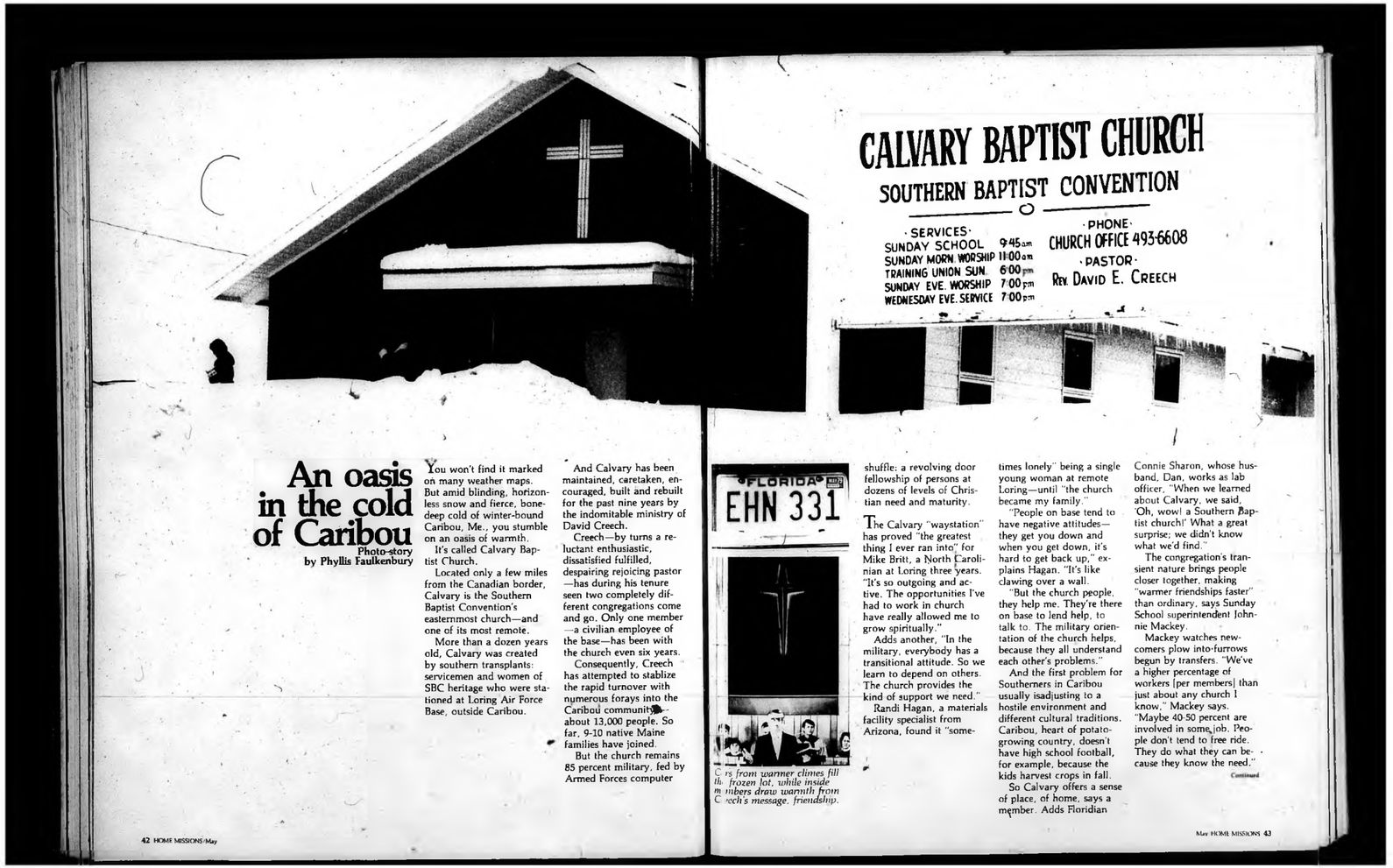
The Boy Scouts move the casket to the lowering device, one man guiding its placement. Parshall reads from 1 Corinthians 15, of the Christian's hope in the resurrection.

"In heaven Timmy will not be crippled in any way," he tells the small group. "He will be whole, and we can rejoice in his home-going." He prays a final prayer.

Howard Parshall, the scouts, the scoutmaster and two residents who have come for the burial drive away. Two workers lower the casket into its wooden box at the bottom of the grave, then shovel dirt to fill the hole.

To mark Timmy's grave, a plain headstone waits nearby. •

Adapted from *Chaplaincy: Love on the Line* by Walker L. Knight, photographed by Steve Wall. © 1978, Home Mission Board, SBC. Copies of this book, part of the "Human Touch" series on home missions, are available at Baptist Book Stores or the HMB ($4.95 each).



An oasis in the cold of Caribou

Photo-story by Phyllis Faulkenbury

You won't find it marked on many weather maps. But amid blinding, horizonless snow and fierce, bone-deep cold of winter-bound Caribou, Me., you stumble on an oasis of warmth.

It's called Calvary Baptist Church.

Located only a few miles from the Canadian border, Calvary is the Southern Baptist Convention's easternmost church—and one of its most remote.

More than a dozen years old, Calvary was created by southern transplants: servicemen and women of SBC heritage who were stationed at Loring Air Force Base, outside Caribou.

And Calvary has been maintained, caretaken, encouraged, built and rebuilt for the past nine years by the indomitable ministry of David Creech.

Creech—by turns a reluctant enthusiastic, dissatisfied fulfilled, despairing rejoicing pastor—has during his tenure seen two completely different congregations come and go. Only one member—a civilian employee of the base—has been with the church even six years.

Consequently, Creech has attempted to stablize the rapid turnover with numerous forays into the Caribou community—about 13,000 people. So far, 9-10 native Maine families have joined.

But the church remains 85 percent military, fed by Armed Forces computer shuffle: a revolving door fellowship of persons at dozens of levels of Christian need and maturity.

Cars from warmer climes fill the frozen lot, while inside members draw warmth from Creech's message, friendship.

The Calvary "waystation" has proved "the greatest thing I ever ran into" for Mike Britt, a North Carolinian at Loring three years. "It's so outgoing and active. The opportunities I've had to work in church have really allowed me to grow spiritually."

Adds another, "In the military, everybody has a transitional attitude. So we learn to depend on others. The church provides the kind of support we need."

Randi Hagan, a materials facility specialist from Arizona, found it "sometimes lonely" being a single young woman at remote Loring—until "the church became my family."

"People on base tend to have negative attitudes—they get you down and when you get down, it's hard to get back up," explains Hagan. "It's like clawing over a wall.

"But the church people, they help me. They're there on base to lend help, to talk to. The military orientation of the church helps, because they all understand each other's problems."

And the first problem for Southerners in Caribou usually isadjusting to a hostile environment and different cultural traditions. Caribou, heart of potato-growing country, doesn't have high school football, for example, because the kids harvest crops in fall.

So Calvary offers a sense of place, of home, says a member. Adds Floridian Connie Sharon, whose husband, Dan, works as lab officer, "When we learned about Calvary, we said, 'Oh, wow! a Southern Baptist church!' What a great surprise; we didn't know what we'd find."

The congregation's transient nature brings people closer together, making "warmer friendships faster" than ordinary, says Sunday School superintendent Johnnie Mackey.

Mackey watches newcomers plow into furrows begun by transfers. "We've a higher percentage of workers [per members] than just about any church I know," Mackey says. "Maybe 40-50 percent are involved in some job. People don't tend to free ride. They do what they can because they know the need."

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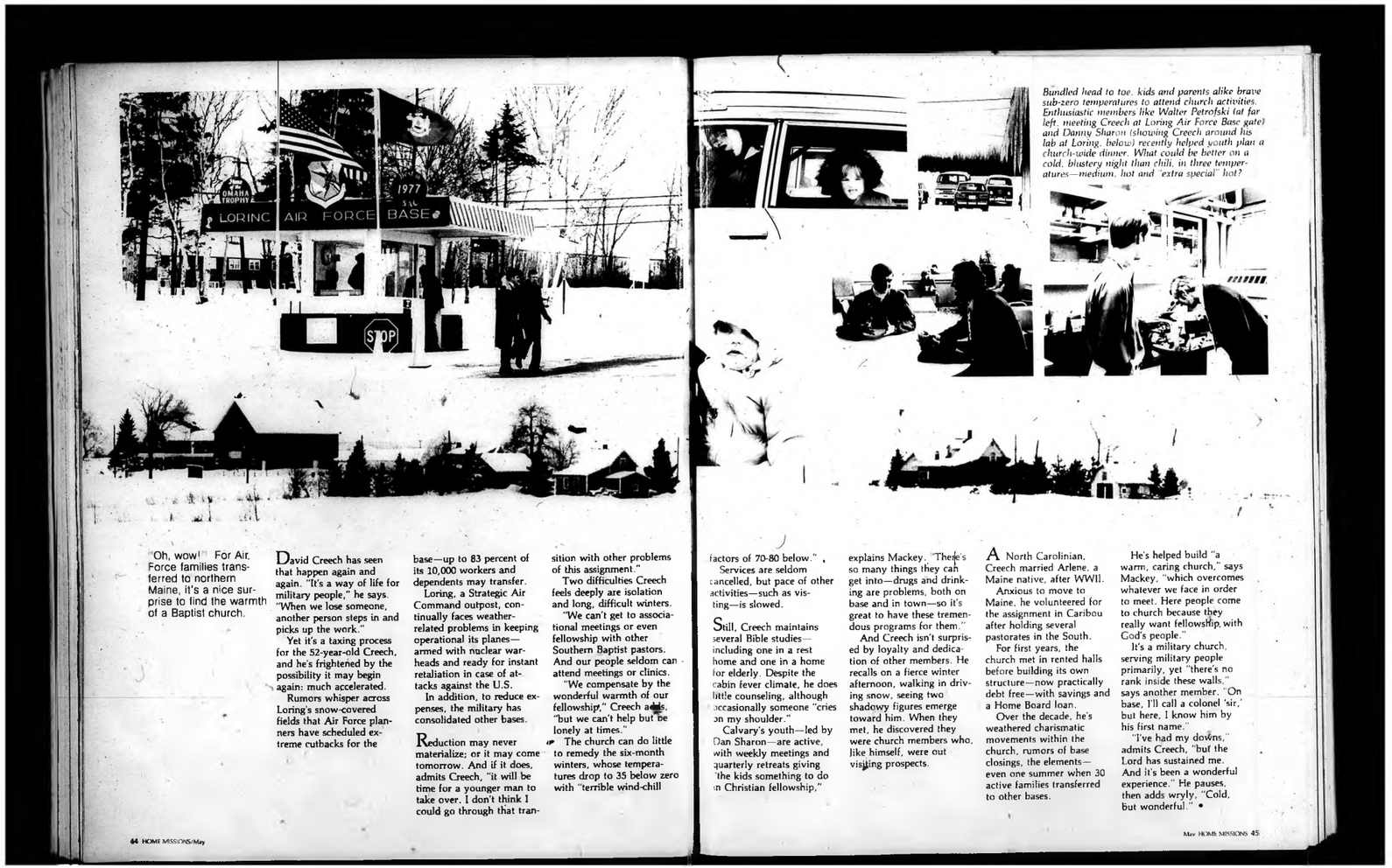


Bundled head to toe, kids and parents alike brave sub-zero temperatures to attend church activities. Enthusiastic members like Walter Petrofski (at far left, meeting Creech at Loring Air Force Base gate) and Danny Sharon (showing Creech around his lab at Loring, below) recently helped youth plan a church-wide dinner. What could be better on a cold, blustery night than chili, in three temperatures—medium, hot and "extra special" hot?

"Oh, wow!" For Air Force families transferred to northern Maine, it's a nice surprise to find the warmth of a Baptist church.

David Creech has seen that happen again and again. "It's a way of life for military people," he says. "When we lose someone, another person steps in and picks up the work."

Yet it's a taxing process for the 52-year-old Creech, and he's frightened by the possibility it may begin again: much accelerated.

Rumors whisper across Loring's snow-covered fields that Air Force planners have scheduled extreme cutbacks for the base—up to 83 percent of its 10,000 workers and dependents may transfer.

Loring, a Strategic Air Command outpost, continually faces weather-related problems in keeping operational its planes—armed with nuclear warheads and ready for instant retaliation in case of attacks against the U.S.

In addition, to reduce expenses, the military has consolidated other bases.

Reduction may never materialize; or it may come tomorrow. And if it does, admits Creech, "it will be time for a younger man to take over. I don't think I could go through that transition with other problems of this assignment."

Two difficulties Creech feels deeply are isolation and long, difficult winters.

"We can't get to associational meetings or even fellowship with other Southern Baptist pastors. And our people seldom can attend meetings or clinics.

"We compensate by the wonderful warmth of our fellowship," Creech adds, "but we can't help but be lonely at times."

The church can do little to remedy the six-month winters, whose temperatures drop to 35 below zero with "terrible wind-chill factors of 70-80 below."

Services are seldom cancelled, but pace of other activities—such as visiting—is slowed.

Still, Creech maintains several Bible studies—including one in a rest home and one in a home for elderly. Despite the cabin fever climate, he does little counseling, although occasionally someone "cries on my shoulder."

Calvary's youth—led by Dan Sharon—are active, with weekly meetings and quarterly retreats giving "the kids something to do in Christian fellowship," explains Mackey. "There's so many things they can get into—drugs and drinking are problems, both on base and in town—so it's great to have these tremendous programs for them."

And Creech isn't surprised by loyalty and dedication of other members. He recalls on a fierce winter afternoon, walking in driving snow, seeing two shadowy figures emerge toward him. When they met, he discovered they were church members who, like himself, were out visiting prospects.

A North Carolinian, Creech married Arlene, a Maine native, after WWII.

Anxious to move to Maine, he volunteered for the assignment in Caribou after holding several pastorates in the South.

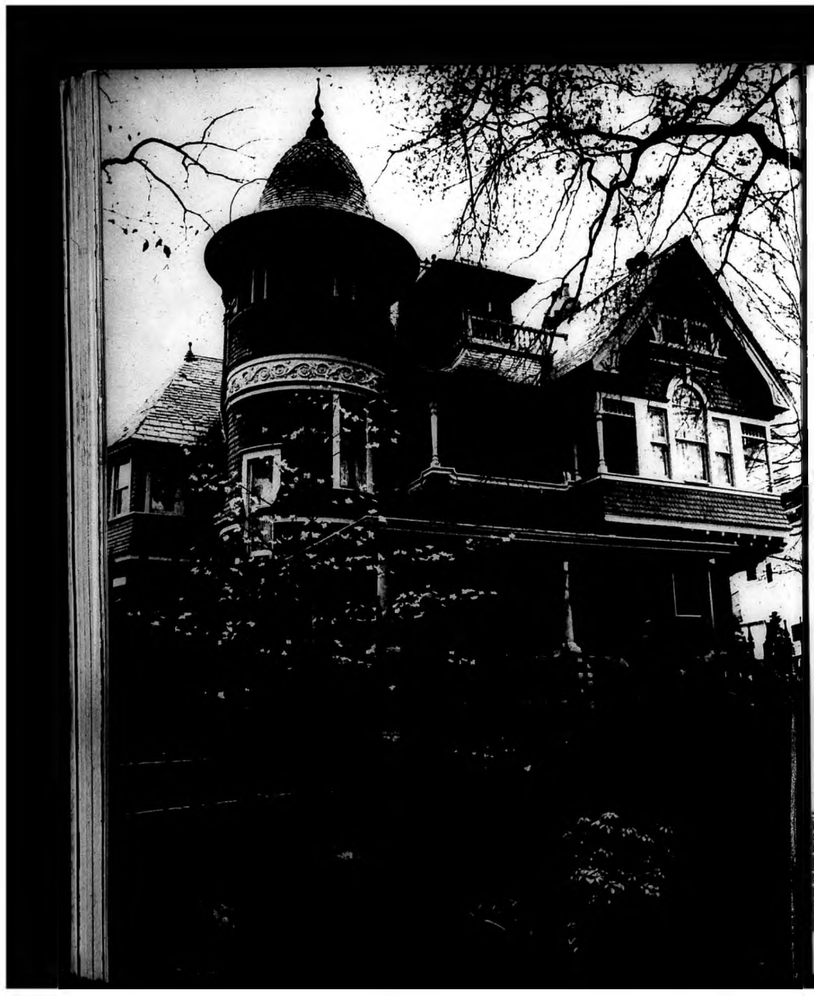
For first years, the church met in rented halls before building its own structure—now practically debt free—with savings and a Home Board loan.

Over the decade, he's weathered charismatic movements within the church, rumors of base closings, the elements—even one summer when 30 active families transferred to other bases.

He's helped build "a warm, caring church," says Mackey, "which overcomes whatever we face in order to meet. Here people come to church because they really want fellowship with God's people."

It's a military church, serving military people primarily, yet "there's no rank inside these walls," says another member. "On base, I'll call a colonel 'sir,' but here, I know him by his first name."

"I've had my downs," admits Creech, "but the Lord has sustained me. And it's been a wonderful experience." He pauses, then adds wryly, "Cold, but wonderful." •



Born again neighborhoods

By Everett Hullum

Come with me, if you folks will; shortly we'll begin our walking tour of Inman Park. Gather at the sign, ma'am: "Atlanta's oldest suburb. Circa 1890"—that's the one.

We'll start in a minute.

What better way to spend a Sunday afternoon? Such a day we have! Couldn't order a grander one, could we? Sky forever blue, deep enough to make a postcard proud.

Did you ever notice how many shades of green burst out this time of year? Those early leaves on the oaks and elms along Edgewood and Euclid—they're pale, almost yellow-green; and the grass, it's emerald; and those shrubs, jade.

Look at the dogwoods: rows of popcorn balls. Did you know dogwoods grow best and bloom most profusely when they're hidden from direct sunlight, like these in Inman Park, covered with their protective blanket of tree limbs?

The trees—they're special. You can't canopy a new suburb in stately hardwoods this size. These beauties take time . . . some are at least 50 years old. Older. . . .

I'm always sorry to see that crabapple's blossoms go. Still, it's beautiful the way the ground beneath turns snow-covered from its falling petals. Azaleas bloom daily now, exploding pink and crimson and white. Tulips, backlighted by the sunshine over there, flame red and yellow. And the wisteria. Their tendrils encircle columns of porticos and climb 'round fences. They need something strong to support their heavy panicles of purple-pink.

Springtime!

Isn't it fine to be alive on such a sharp, crystal day?

Feel that soft, cradling breeze? Wraps you in freshness. Seems you can just about hear the world singing a song of newness. Of re-creation: "Morning has broken, like the first morning, . . . of the first day." It's the season of re-awakening, stretching and yawning flowers and trees and birds. People, too. A birthin' time, Grandma called it.

Inman Park's a good place to sense the spirit of spring. You'll find new life here.

And death. Sure, it's still here, too.

Inman Park has dying among its burning. Decay, neglect, unconcern are still around. You can see them in the frailty of peeling paint and chipped wood; in the sadness of torn shutters and rusted gutters and broken windows. There remain haggard facades of aged homes suffering despair, poverty, apathy, desertion. And—dreaded city disease—absentee-landlordism. Ill health grips dusty yards, packed so hard even last week's rain couldn't muddy 'em up; and cracked sidewalks, still puddled by clogged sewers; and curbs, littered with refuse and gutters crowded with debris.

All these are still in Inman Park.

But not as they once were.

They're obvious along our tour route. When you see them, imagine what this neighborhood was a decade ago.

It's changed a great deal since then.

And changes still.

Once you could hardly walk these streets. Even if you could avoid the trash you never felt safe. A neighbor was saying the other day, she had been afraid to walk around when she moved in, just two years ago. Today she doesn't hesitate to go anywhere. Last month we had only six burglaries and just "one serious crime," as it was described in the neighborhood newspaper. (I didn't hear what happened.)

The point is: things have changed.

That's one of the attractions of Inman Park: change.

You never know. . . .

Look at it this way: you're seeing an urban test tube, an experiment with a concept called community. "Urban pioneers" they've been christened. People discovering what conditions offer an inner-city neighborhood not merely survival, but exciting, hopeful life. When they began coming here 10 years ago, they found streets weighed down by all the urban sins, a neighborhood in which the human spirit was dead. They began to breathe into it warmth, comfort, community. . . .

They aren't here by accident, you know. Yet Inman Park's fate is not at all certain—even with their dedication. Can they blend diversity, these newcomers and old-timers, into a unit with minimum stratification and displacement. This is really a religious issue, you know. . . . Oh, sorry. Going too fast, am I?

Perhaps we'll get back to that later.

Just remember: change doesn't come quickly in Inman Park. And not in bold strokes. You don't wake up each morning to witness utopia. These old shells are not transformed at the snap of one's fingers: click! You think a tumbled-down, cut-up, faded-out apartment pops out of a hat a sparkling, multifaceted Victorian jewel? Magic doesn't brush on fresh paint or strip seven layers off wooden front doors or landscape lawns. Miracles don't move mounds of trash. No incantations unclog plumbing or repair roofs.

So you won't see dramatic overnight change in Inman Park. Yet change occurs.

You don't believe me, you should have seen it ten years ago, when Robert Griggs bought his house. That's it up ahead—on the left—the red one with beige trim. It's Queen Anne style, I think. Majestic. Gables and decorative shingles and stained-glass windows and even a turret—or it it a tower—or a cupola? Oh, that's right, the cupola's the dome above the tower, isn't it? (I'm new on the tour, and if I make errors in describing, please forgive me.)

Let's begin now with the Griggs house. . . .

Before we go, a final word: to be honest, I'm not altogether sure of our route. It's my first tour, you see, and I suspect diversions will occur. Some rambling about, you know may occur. But Inman Park has only about 20 very-unsquare

Continued

blocks and maybe 300 families, most friendly. Also, if you'll look behind you, down Edgewood Avenue, you'll see clearly the golden dome of the Georgia state capitol.

With a landmark like that we shouldn't stray far. So if you'll just follow me. . . .

A neighborhood is an open space where the human spirit can soar.

Revival sweeps America's inner-cities. Code words of the faith are restoration, renovation, rehabilitation: "rehab." This is urban renewal with savoir faire. Make no mistake: today's movement learned from the past. Spanning the continent, the revival of the '70s births a process of neighborhood revitalization in which little is torn down, much is salvaged. An American renaissance, the movement seeks its converts carefully: the aging brownstone; the sagging Queen Anne rowhouse; the elegant old Victorian—ah, there's the regal *piece de resistance*: those wildly grand, eccentric structures of portico and gable, of witch's cap and flashed glass and balustrade: of—well— character, a character never to be repeated in American architecture.

Ministers of the gospel of rehab?

The young. Energetic. Imaginative. In the first "urban pioneer" wave, many singles; as the movement matures, more families. And largely—*very largely*—middle class. *Upper* middle class.

A new generation of urbanites, they're coming back into the cities—pushed, or pulled?, by the contrast between the style and flair of a Victorian home and their childhood's suburban "ticky-tacky boxes, sitting on the hillside," in folk-singer Pete Seeger's words. Rebels against "the predictable life-styles of their parents (birth-suburbia-death)," Charles Little describes them in *Smithsonian*.

Evidences of the revival can be found in every major city. Atlanta's Inman Park is but one example. Looking for others? Walk the streets of Columbus, Ohio's Germantown section; visit Washington, D.C.'s Capitol Hill community; look at Richmond, Va.'s Fan District.

Want more? Try Bolton Hill in Boston, the Brownstone Crescent in Brooklyn, Cincinnati's Mount Adams neighborhood, Chicago's Old Town, the East Dallas area—almost the entire residential inner-city of Seattle.

And *all* of San Francisco.

Go ahead. Counter with census data: sure, I've seen it. I realize more people are bailing out of the city than are moving back. So don't look to me for statistics: maybe somebody's measured size of the movement—at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), they're arguing whether it's a flood or a flow, a trend or a trickle—but I've not found anyone with figures.

Yet the movement exists. Says L.J. Davis, a writer of the "urban scene": "I am aware the future has a funny way of making fools of us all, and that it is dangerous to generalize from particulars, but I suspect the time has come when it is safe to say the return of the middle-class [to the inner city] is not a passing fad, nor a sign easily ignored."

A HUD official predicts the vigor of the movement may flip-flop the racial composition of several inner-cities. By A.D. 2000, he says, "You can have an all-white Seattle. An all-white Washington. Today's suburbs will be slums.

"We—the government—have subsidized the middle-class to move from the cities," he admits. "Federal Housing Authority loans, city services—you know—but we can't afford to keep doing this. Money's getting tight. And it's going to get tighter. And tighter. The dream of a house for every family is becoming unrealistic. It's going to frustrate people. Today's homeowners, their children aren't going to be able to own a home.

"Compared to income, the price of housing is out of sight.

"That means keep the old place, fix it up; that means buy a dump and renovate."

A savings and loan officer, whose institution has pioneered loans for inner-city restoration, agrees: "As interest rates continue to climb, as construction costs mushroom, more and more middle-income people are priced out of the new home market. Renovation is the wave of the future."

And comments a young city planner in Baltimore: "Listen, five, six years ago, we were just holding on. I mean, we were just *holding on*, trying to get through another summer—my gosh, another day—without going down the drain.

"You know what my main problem is now?" he asks, grinning. "Figuring out how to cope with all these new people."

And the movement rolls with the fervor of a 19th century revival: bubbling, joyful, spontaneous—a highly unstructured revival whose objects of conversion are the old: old homes, old stores, old parks, old neighborhoods. . . .

Neighborhoods.

Remember the word? We'll be using it often in the next few pages, so perhaps we'd better discuss it.

In *Dynamics of Neighborhood Change*, a HUD report, "'neighborhoods' are believed to have all, or most, of the following characteristics: shared ethnic and/or religious character; neighborhood pride or community spirit; neighborhood school identification; shared patterns of leisure activity; shopping and recreation; and defined geographical boundaries."

A better definition, for our purpose, may come from the National Commission on Neighborhoods, a presidential task force studying future of neighborhoods in the United States. "A neighborhood is an open place where the human spirit can flourish because the scale is human; where people can feel that their environment is not beyond their control. . . .

"In a working neighborhood," the commission continues, "rich or poor, transactions are likely to be personal rather than institutional. It is a place . . . where people look after each other's children, where the local policeman is somebody's cousin; where you recognize your neighbors and storekeepers; and where solutions to local problems are the product of local wisdom and energy rather than bureaucracy."

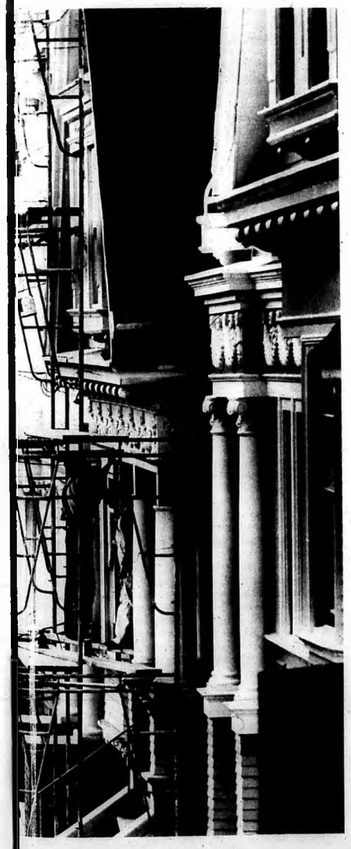
Oh, *that* neighborhood.

When's the last time you lived in—or wandered through—a neighborhood fitting that description? (Congratulations, if it's been since your tenth birthday.)

And why does it matter?

"Neighborhoods are the building blocks of cities. If neighborhoods die, cities die."

The speaker is Geno Baroni, a Roman Catholic priest now serving as undersecretary of HUD. He—with endorsement of President Jimmy Carter—promises the agency "will be putting more money into rehab of neighborhoods. That's one of the areas that's going to have a lot more." His new program, he jokes, will be named in honor of the President: "born-again neighborhoods."



A simple, only slightly inaccurate illustration, may have value here: Urbanologists sometimes describe metropolitan growth as a succession of circles—ripples in a sea of people—whose core, the spot where the rock dropped and began it all, is the downtown business district.

The second ring outward represents the city's first developed housing, usually dating to the 1800s.

The next ring contains housing built before World War II and the next—a wide, ragged band—post-WW II homes, jerry-rigged in the rapid expansion of the veteran's-return decade. Those two rings contain most of today's transitional communities, the second ring having already "trans-ished."

After that fourth ring, the ripples roll outward and outward, in wave after wave of grinding suburbia construction.

Though few cities—for geographic, economic and/or social reasons—actually develop exactly that way, the rippling ring analogy offers understanding of revival: generally speaking, the target area is the second ring. Or, if not that, at least the ring containing the city's oldest housing.

There, lurking under faded paint, leaking roof and cracked windows; beneath rotting boards on the porch, dark alleyways called halls, creaking spiral staircases as colorless as Charles Addams' cartoons, you'll often find a Victorian masterpiece, surviving by being divided and conquered, cubby-holed into apartments that await the imagination, dedication and perspiration of the renovator.

"You have to have a lot of extra energy to live here," says Sharon McEachern, who spent her first six months in Inman Park hauling away trash.

"Here you're fighting almost on a daily basis to keep some things in the neighborhood and some things out—but you're fighting together, there's a real spirit of community.

"You don't want to be hassled, you move to the suburbs.

"I enjoy it here. I'm one of those people who likes to work—to get physically exhausted. I like working on the house—it's nice to take a dump and turn it into something people enjoy looking at."

I'm for the middle class. But we have to ask: Who pays the price?

In the two years McEachern has been in Inman Park, she and others in the movement have gone from "urban pioneers" to "new gentry," as urban strategists discover the revival, like so much, offers both boon and bane. "The middle class return to the city is one of the best things to happen in decades," says Geno Baroni of HUD. "I don't think cities should just be reservations of poor people, or end up just being black, brown and broke. I'm for the middle class; I want them to move back in. "But we have to protect against who pays the price: are the middle class moving back at the expense of the Poor? Are the poor being moved out?

"Maybe some poor should have a chance to stay. We

ought to give them some options. You can't leave it up to market forces—they run crazy. Market forces don't have quote gospel concerns. So you have to intervene with quote gospel concerns.

"Can we allow our cities to once again be all white, all middle class? Push out the blacks, push out the ethnics. Shrink the ghetto, as San Francisco has done.

"Sure, I'm for rehab. It's better than tearing down. Urban renewal destroyed more houses than it built. I mean the old-fashioned urban renewal. So we're talking about neighborhood revitalization. But with minimum displacement. Minimum displacement.

"Born-again neighborhoods, you know?"

Talk about accelerating housing costs!

When the movement began, individuals could buy into an inner-city neighborhood for a song. Twenty-room homes sold for $10, $12,000. Another $30,000 in renovation, plus your own sweat and a few battered thumbnails, and you had a mansion worthy of a turn-of-the-century millionaire.

No more.

In Atlanta, Inman Park's success, coupled with renewal of other sections, spawned an inner-city housing boom. Few cheap homes remain in any neighborhood remotely salvageable.

In San Francisco, you can't touch a Victorian for less than $100,000—pre-renovation. Add another $120,000—*minimum*—for that, say planners in the city's redevelopment agency. "Everyone sees himself in one of these Victorian jewels," says Christine Randle. "Rehab's a very emotional issue here."

So the "back-to-the-city" movement becomes "gentrification," a term not altogether complimentary, and you find an undercurrent of wonder: "How can we save the city from the new urban elite?"

In San Francisco, Seattle, Baltimore and other cities, local and federal officials have tried to reduce displacement using a variety of programs, most under the umbrella of the significant Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

They have also encouraged (when they weren't overwhelmed by) community organizations with strong local support.

In other cities—such as Dallas and Atlanta—new residents have expressed social conscience in individual efforts to relocate persons being displaced.

But degree and importance of the displacement issue vary, from the rather drastic displacement of an elderly ethnic—"Grandmother has lived in this neighborhood for several generations"—to the unnoticed displacement of a transient renter: he pays for a week, stays for a month before being kicked out for another who pays for a week. . . .

Perhaps you folks are curious about Inman Park history.

In the late 1880s, an Atlanta visionary—and youthful entrepreneur—named Joel Hurt created a subdivision for persons who could plunk down the princely sum of $3,000 to $5,000 for a good-sized lot and a fine Victorian house.

A man with exceedingly good taste, Hurt insisted on large homesites, curving streets and open park space. . . .

All right, back together now? Where was I?

Because Hurt's "garden subdivision" was two miles east of downtown, Hurt pioneered a rapid transit system—the South's first electric streetcar—to whisk his neighbors to their jobs in the central business district and home again to their countryside surroundings. The development flourished.

But Hurt didn't envision later developments—like motor cars, newer suburbs and relaxation of zoning restrictions.

Nor did he reckon with development of an attitude of "progress" that permeated the culture: you know, "The old neighborhood of our childhood isn't good enough; Dad improved himself and I've got to do the same. Moving up means moving out. Bigger means better. Newer means neater."

Joel Hurt never envisioned the disposable environment; the no-deposit, no-return society; the throwaway mindset that urges: "Use it up, wear it out. . . we can get another."

All those factors—and who am I to rank them?—combined to ease Inman Park onto the skids. By the mid-1940s, Victorial homes had been chopped into makeshift slum-cubbyholes; parks were overgrown with weeds; streets strewn with junk cars. Absentee landlords siphoned off what they could and left the community to languish.

Then the blighted neighborhood was shocked by a grave challenge. City planners drew an expressway and a tollway through the community. Homes began falling before the bulldozer. To quote an Inman Park resident, "Gradual decline had been tolerated, but the sight of instant wreckage sparked an awakening. . . ."

The outward movement spawns an inward depression mentality.

Everything changes, especially neighborhoods—and for numerous reasons, not least among them the fact that one in five American families moves each year. But we need to realize neighborhood change is triggered and fueled by the decisions—or indecisions—of individuals, groups, institutions. Remember the neighborhood of your youth. Consider its condition today and people who made it what it is: your lenders, who loan—or refuse to loan—money for repair as the neighborhood ages; developers wanting cheap property so they can slap up a condo; highway trusts wanting to cut a 400-yard wide slice through your backyard; public officials wanting to take the old corner park and put up a high-rise not to mention all your neighbors who moved to suburbia.

"It's the same the country over," says L.J. Davis, the urban writer, "a threnody of decay on the lips of editorialists . . . the government blitzing the landscape with a fine, unholy glee; the rural poor pouring in from all directions; and the people who pay the bills heading for high ground. . . ."

The exodus accomplishes many things. In retrospect, few of them seem to benefit the city.

It deflates the city's tax base, reducing revenues while demanding expanded and extended services. As neighborhoods age, schools close; others become little more than ghetto daycare for ages six through 18—awkward and ineffective centers of learning, hardly aided by the flight—largely white—that accelerated the process of decay and neglect after the Supreme Court ruled against segregated schools.

As the city follows money outward, it forgets neighborhoods bypassed in its efforts to spend millions to keep up with the millions of dollars moving out.

Perhaps most importantly, the exodus of whites—and money—leaves behind a derelict, depression mentality that permeates the remaining core of inner-city residents (who also want to move out, but cannot afford to). They feed on it, perpetuating conditions of their existence.

Into this cultural milieu, whose epitome may be something approaching—ugh!—a marriage of New York City and Los Angeles, the 1970s tossed a few spitballs: energy crises, inflation and suburban malaise.

About this time, we began to face a scarcity of resources—land, energy, materials, capital—and, time—which we need to husband.

Suddenly, for increasing numbers of people, taken-for-granted urban/suburban conditions became evils, blights on the cityscape that kept the spirit from soaring, that limited creative expression: who needs an hour's drive in traffic—one way—five days a week? A wrecker's ball smashing an old house to make way for a liquor store? A sloppy housing project that tears away more home-units than it builds? Rezoning to allow a factory—or porno bookstore—to move next door?

Suddenly highway rights-of-way became wrong ways: who needs another six-lane parking lot?

We'll cut across this path, folks.

Perhaps you don't realize we're walking on Inman Park "freeway." This wide swath of grass and trees and birds and squirrels is a monument to the callowness of highway planners. If they'd had their way, you'd be dodging autos right now—and breathing exhaust fumes. Inman Park hopes to put a park here—part of Atlanta's "Great Park"—proposed for the old bulldozed route of I-485.

The highway moguls—bless their souls—won't turn loose the land yet. But we stopped the freeway, maybe eventually we can put the land to worthwhile use.

That was some fight. It's not done often, stopping a freeway after land has been purchased and cleared. But Atlanta was ripe for it. Somebody down at city hall had discovered that 67,000 persons were displaced between '55 and '65 by urban renewal and highways alone. That's 15 percent of the city's population.

We were about to lose Atlanta: housing was worse, social organization destroyed; racial tensions exacerbated.

The effort to save the city became a campaign to save the neighborhoods; the emerging common cause linked races, at least long enough to pound out a new charter which set up a neighborhood planning process and developed a forum for shaping specific neighborhood relationships.

Inman Park already had formed Inman Park Restoration, Inc., its neighborhood organization, in 1970. With other organized neighborhoods, it gained clout from the new charter. Together they fought the expressway.

And won!

It was a victory belonging to a lot of people, including Mayor Maynard Jackson, who'd led in shifting power to neighborhoods. And it proved that concerned citizens—with private and public backing—can change the course of events; can, in fact, shape their own destinies.

Course you see by now that's what Inman Park's all about.

We'll break up the tour in a moment—up there at Inman Park Methodist Church. It's our last stop. Sort of the community church, been here since 1898—only one to survive the highway massacre, by the way. The Presbyterian and Baptist churches were demolished by freeway bulldozers.

Oh, there's Lissie Chapel, too; it's the black Baptist church, but few of its members live in the community. They come mostly from across the railroad tracks—don't laugh, it's true—just over there—where the housing is all black. Inman Park's integrated, but remains predominantly white.

Well, here we are at Inman Park Methodist Church.

I guess most Inman Park folks consider this "their church," whatever their background. I've a friend—a Baptist—who comes here. It's in walking distance and he likes that.

Association meetings are held here, too. And each Sunday morning the church used to sponsor a come-as-you-are breakfast and discussion for people working on their homes.

Inman Park Methodist has been an integral part of the community from the beginning, you could say. Joel Hurt went there; lot of other prominent Atlantans, too. And even though the church declined drastically—as Inman Park itself declined—I believe from 1,500 to 300 persons over the years—perhaps it will reflect the revitalization of Inman Park and be revitalized itself. Who knows?

Actually, I don't go to church here. I don't go anywhere, to tell the truth. I mean, haven't you seen all the work these houses need? How am I going to find time—how are any of us in Inman Park going to find time—for church?

For a church with a Jerusalem vision, the choices were hard.

During the year or so I've piecemeal collected information for this article, an incident happened in Athens, Ga.—"the Classic City"—which seems relevant, though exactly how I'm not sure. Nor am I assessing its significance in the overall picture of church responsibility in the rebirth of the inner city. I repeat it only if you'll promise to make your own applications (and so I won't have wasted bus fare to Athens). On a spring Sunday of '78, members of Prince Avenue Baptist Church, a downtown congregation in a "classic neighborhood," were surprised by 100 picketers.

The picketers marched 'round the church, carrying signs saying things like: "Save souls *and* homes." "Have you no social conscience?" "Make grass, not parking lots."

At issue was the fate of an old home, being demolished to make room for a church parking lot.

As a 66-year resident of the neighborhood, Prince Avenue had been in the Cobbham section longer than most of the picketers. Like many inner-city churches, it had experienced peaks and valleys. But under pastor Bill Ricketts, Prince Avenue had grown rapidly. Says Ricketts, "Every downtown church has to have a vision larger than its nose. Our Jerusalem is Athens."

In the process of becoming a metropolitan church, Prince Avenue ran out of parking space. Believing street slots and its 250-space lot inadequate, the church bought the old home and began tearing it down.

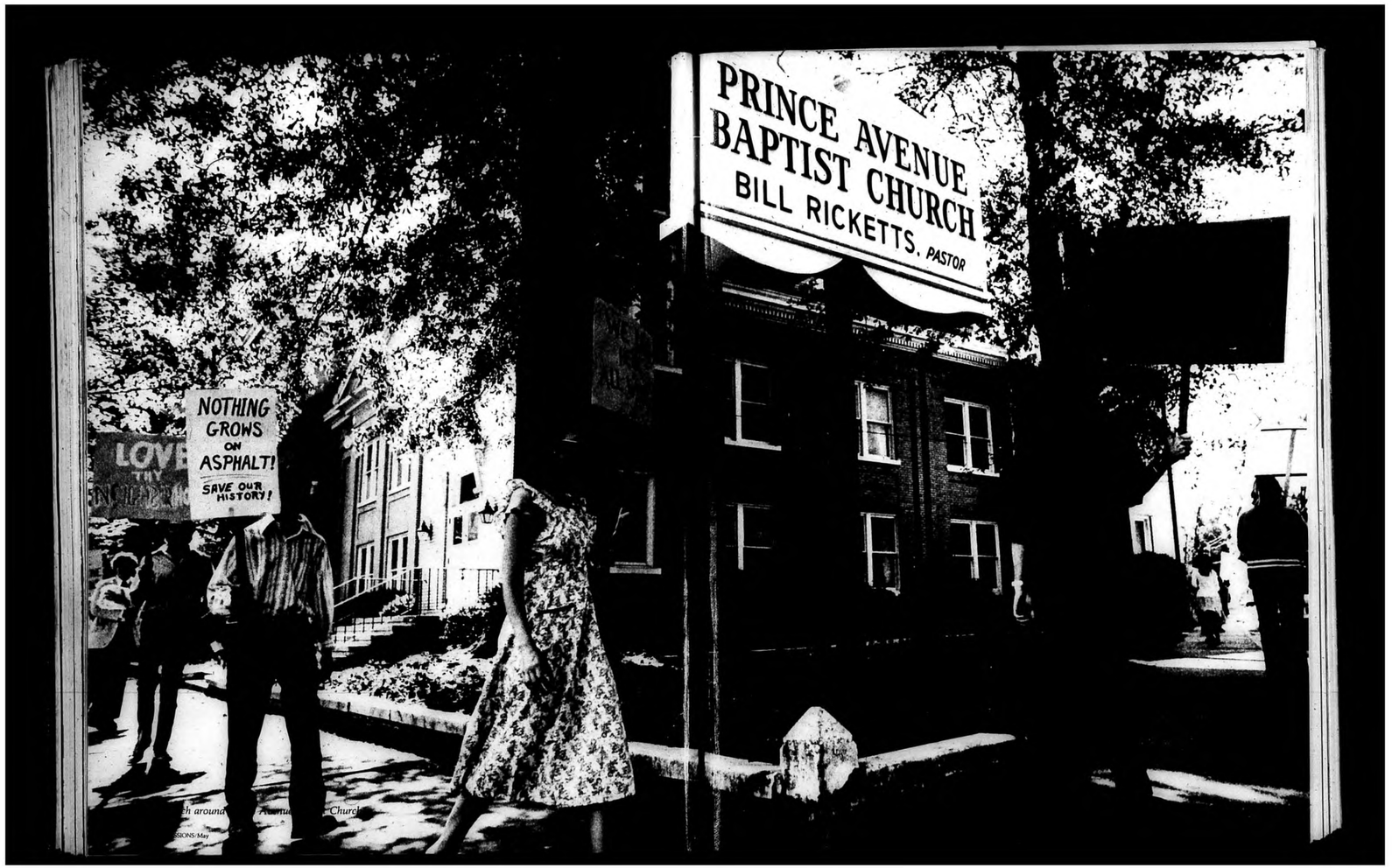
This was not the church's first home purchase; others had been converted to classrooms and day-care facilities.

This was the first to feel the bulldozer.

Cobbham residents reacted. They urged a halt.

"We had only three choices," recalls Ricketts. "Stop grow-

Text continues on page 54



...h around ... Avenue ... Church

...SSIONS/May

ing—an option totally unacceptable. Move, which we didn't want; we had no place to go where we wouldn't be in the shadow of another Baptist church. Or buy property and continue as we were."

When the church persisted, Cobbham residents picketed. Three Sundays, picketers—mostly University of Georgia students living in Cobbham's subdivided homes—appeared.

The church reexamined the house, Ricketts says, but decided restoration would be too expensive. "We've tried to be good stewards," he adds. Demolition began again.

Cobbham residents slapped a court injunction on the church; it had violated a minor zoning regulation concerning parking space and residences.

Ricketts recalls the frustration. "They never proposed any reasonable alternative. They suggested things like we could stop growing. They acted like they'd rather have had another donut shop along here. But we've been good neighbors."

Jonathan Schroder, one of the students, asked, "If Prince Avenue Baptist Church's only arrogant concern was to save the souls of suburbanites who needed parking lots at the detriment of an inner-city neighborhood, then who will save Prince Avenue Baptist?"

Ricketts counters: "God's doing a work. Miracles occur here. I believe Satan would like to stop that. You let a church start reaching out and loving people, taking a stand and preaching the Word, and Satan's going to rock the boat."

Eventually, after appearances before the zoning board, the church was allowed to continue.

The conflict died quietly.

Now the house is gone; its lot awaits asphalt icing.

White flight may cost more than we realized when we moved out...

Metropolitan churches seem Southern Baptists' standard pattern. If they have downtown churches at all, especially in southern cities, they often are huge monoliths which stress metropolitan emphases. The Home Mission Board, as well as state conventions and local associations, occasionally subsidize an inner-city congregation. But most SBC churches, like their members, became suburban long ago. "Unlike some denominations," says James Hamblen of the HMB metro missions department, "we've not held our property in the cities. We've been part of the white flight.

"Now it's going to cost us to find places to worship and minister in the cities. But we left never suspecting we'd have any reason to return to the inner city."

In San Francisco, A.L. McDaniel tries to focus his metro congregation on local people. He hopes Dolores Street will continue to attract persons from all over the city, but believes its primary emphasis has to be in becoming to the community "a landmark of caring, loving, accepting people."

The church, McDaniel says, can accelerate the process of community, creating "a sense of belonging so desperately lacking" in Dolores Street church's neighborhood.

A.L. McDaniel examines his "born-again" neighborhood.

McDaniel, a Christian social ministries pastor/missionary, has seen the pain of displacement: "One of our members lives about two blocks from the church. He's been here a number of years. He makes his own living. But he lives alone—he's got no family, no one to love him. That's what brought him to Dolores Street [church]. Now he may have to move, because the cost of living in this area has gone up so much.

"When he told me about it, he literally cried."

Baroni of HUD hopes churches in revitalized neighborhoods will become "catalysts, conveners."

"I'm not saying the church should send out Xeroxed pieces of paper, saying do this. Different circumstances, different gifts. I think the Spirit will provide in time. If the church encourages, observes, collects facts. Out of that comes action."

Baroni wants churches involved in the plight of the disinvested, too. "They should speak for the poor—they need to ask, 'Who pays the price of this movement?'"

At Inman Park Methodist, pastor Will Berkner knows the course isn't easy. Plucked from a growing church and dropped into a moribund situation, he had to overcome his own impatience and reticence of members to become a "community church" for a community they didn't understand.

"We learned," he says, "that most of the people moving into Inman Park were not traditional churchgoers—they were the generation that felt the church as an institution had failed. But we also learned they needed a ministry."

The neighborhood changed, slowly, infused by new talent and new intellects; by creative people with abundant skills. But it was a struggle to adapt church mentality from tradition into the patterns and concerns of its neighbors.

"We had to learn to examine ourselves," Berkner says. "We had to love and serve and let the grace of God have its transforming influence, its transforming power.

"I'm not sure we've learned all yet. But we're trying." •

A new day dawning?

By Walker L. Knight

A series of national and international events have involved Southern Baptists with today's world on more than a peripheral level and point to broad new interests tempered with political realism.

Most of these events have occurred within the past six months, and any one of them taken separately would not justify my conclusions, but when they are all taken together, I feel they signify a shift by the denomination.

First, SBC President Jimmy Allen gained an audience with Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel, during which Allen voiced concern with the anti-bribery law which makes it illegal to offer or receive material or other benefits to change religion. Southern Baptists fear a strict interpretation of this law could severely curtail religious freedom in Israel. Allen met with other officials also, and from all he received encouragement that the law would not be interpreted in this manner. Allen also encouraged officials to spell out such freedom in a new law.

On another occasion, Baker James Cauthen of the Foreign Mission Board, Porter Routh of the Executive Committee, and Jimmy Allen met in March with the People's Republic of China's ambassador to the United States to start the process of once more establishing a Christian witness within China. Ambassador Chai Tse Min told them the Chinese government permits freedom of religious belief but also permits opposition to it, and the government is committed to Marxism.

The third event occurred last November, in response to a resolution approved by the SBC. The denomination's first convocation on world hunger was held. The convocation adopted recommendations to the SBC and its agencies, and many of these have been or are in the process of being implemented as a more appropriate response to world hunger.

The fourth action came when the FMB recently offered the use of its campgrounds in Luzon, Philippines, and $50,000 in hunger relief money to ease the plight of 2,000 Vietnamese refugees aboard the freighter Tung An in Manila Bay. Texas Baptists and the FMB have also taken quick and significant action to aid Brazilians suffering from that nation's worst flood in history.

Finally, the first Southern Baptist convocation on peacemaking and the nuclear arms race was held in February in Louisville, attracting nearly 400 persons from about 20 states. The convocation which endorsed the SALT II agreements, was supported by a wide spectrum of Baptist leaders.

Put them all together, and these events and actions have significance beyond themselves. They indicate a new awareness by the denomination of both its power and its responsibility as the largest Protestant denomination in the United States.

These are not the divisive issues of the late '60s and '70s, but most are issues which a few years ago would have been classified in the social action category. Now they are supported by both those labeled liberal and those labeled conservative.

Take the convocation on peacemaking as an example. Kenneth Briggs, religion editor for the *New York Times*, suggests that the drive among American churches for international disarmament is taking the place in church life that was once occupied by civil rights and the antiwar movement. The Louisville convocation was the first of its kind ever held by Southern Baptists, and the organizers built on key endorsements from President Jimmy Carter, Billy Graham and W.A. Criswell.

What is bringing about this apparent shift with Southern Baptists? Is it our size and the maturity which comes with recognition and acceptance? Is it due to having a Southern Baptist in the White House? Is it due to having an activist who both expresses and exemplifies strong social and evangelistic concerns as the president of the SBC, that is, Jimmy Allen?

It is deeper than all of these. As we moved to overcome the prejudices and injustices of the past concerning race and social action, a counter force began building which often took the rallying cry of evangelism. An attempt was made to pit one group against the other, and both suffered. One can look back now and see that in fact some of our best years in terms of numbers baptized came when social action was at its most publicized heights.

Today, no one has to justify efforts to feed the hungry, to give refuge to thousands without homes, to confront governments with their oppression or threats to religious freedom, to respond with disaster relief in the United States or Brazil, or to call on Christians to be peacemakers with definite statements about political questions.

Can a new day be dawning? A day when Southern Baptists trust each other. A day when the labels don't fit any longer. A day when we realize that God gives us different gifts, but they all fit together into a significant whole—some to be evangelists and some to be social activists. Sometimes we will be working on different projects for the Kingdom, but sometimes we will be joined in the same effort.

If a shift has occurred, I for one applaud it. •

30

30 has long been the journalist's designation for "the end." It's the symbol written below every story, indicating the article is over.

Beginning this month, 30 will be our "the end" column, a wrap up of each issue. It offers you insight into the production of HOME MISSIONS: pieces and bits that might not make it into regular articles; dangers encountered by our intrepid writers/photographers, harrowing moments when machines break down at deadline time (causing, quite often, editors to break down shortly thereafter).

30—the column and its location are part of the redesign of HM. As we hope you've noticed, HM begins differently; the cover is a new, heavier paper, to better reproduce color photographs; also better able, we think, to survive the mails without damage.

Table of contents and regular features also have been redesigned, to tie them to their counterparts in "notebook," HM's alternate format.

If you like HM, why not tell a friend? If you don't . . . well, either way, we'd like to hear from you.

* * *

We promised this column would tell of events at HM; usually these relate to articles within. . . . But we had an event of such historical consequence recently we thought we'd tell you about it:

A poem by Walker Knight, HM's editor, was quoted by President Jimmy Carter at the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.

The poem, *The Peacemaker* (Dec. 1972 HM) embodies the thought that "peace, like war, is waged." The President was so intrigued by the idea he built his entire speech around it.

Only an hour before the speech Knight discovered he'd be part of history. After his initial "wow!" when Press Secretary Jody Powell explained what was coming, Knight floated around the office for awhile. But he alighted on earth relatively quickly.

He was immediately beseiged by reporters, among them a local TV crew, who wanted to interview him "about 4 o'clock." As befits his celebrity status, Knight calmly replied: "Ask them if they can come by a little earlier, I usually go home about then."

And that's 30.

letters

Referendum and statistics

The article featuring the pastor at El Dorado First Baptist (HM Feb. '79) . . . seemed to glorify a ministry of numerical decline. The great commission does not say that quality is more important than quantity. . . . Also . . . [regarding] the pastor who supported a liquor-by-the-drink referendum, the reason [for better schools] could not hold water. Strange to want men delivered from the bondage of prejudice and segregation and support a drug that has 10 million in its bondage and affects another 30 million in hurtful ways.

Clay Frazier
Mount Carmel, Tenn.

On page 8 in "Facing the Music in El Dorado" the words which upset me were, "[. . . he supported a liquor-by-the-drink referendum because he believed it would help the community." The impression I got from this was that sin is all right for the Gospel's sake.

Another article which disappointed me was "The Baptism stats." I was in agreement until he started promoting the virtues of social gospel, as if to say that nothing can be done for the Lord unless social action comes first. Let us never neglect or negate the Gospel.

George Wertman
Fruita, Colo.

I appreciated the article "The Baptism Stats" which stated reasons for the baptism decline . . . not altogether negative but with suggestions as to what can be done in the future.

An approach not discussed yet is . . . consideration for the "meaningfulness" of the conversion experience of each one baptized. A rise of baptisms is not necessarily good and a decline is not necessarily bad. It all depends.

There seems to be little among us of a "Christian world-view" that would deeply motivate us and awaken emotional passion for the Lord. Without this we rely too heavily on "methods" so that when we have "statistical problems" we are not called to repentance and renewal but to search for a new method or technique to reverse the trend.

Carmen L. Conner
Albuquerque, N.M.

Update 79

The photography, layout and design, quality of writing, art work and color separations, printing and mixture of papers, selection of subject matter, combined to make a fantastic magazine (HM Mar. '79). It must have cost a bundle, but in my opinion it was worth every penny.

Printing has been my hobby for nearly twenty years, and I have learned just enough to be critical of poor work. My feelings about this issue were so positive I needed to tell someone.

Bill Affolter
Fairview Heights, Ill.

Knight and Day, you are the ones—
The cleverest editor and promoter under the sun.

The Update 79 is a work of communications' art. It's a fine sequel to your 1978 triumph, "One Day in the Life of Southern Baptists." It was particularly good to know that the bottom line of the issue was the 1979 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering allocations. Surely anyone would be pleased to have a contribution to such inspiring works.

Mrs. Lee N. Allen
Birmingham, Ala.

HOME MISSIONS has come a "far piece" . . . I read it as a child. I'm afraid though our constituency has become upper middle class and affluent that the March Update is more of a hybrid between National Geographic and a doctoral dissertation than a communication to our average Baptist, including the leadership. It comes across as too formidable to try to read. I believe you'll communicate more with shorter articles. The February issue was much more communicative, and obviously cheaper to produce.

Elwood Orr
Lynchburg, Va.

No superlative is super enough to describe "Entering New Frontiers." Words, pictures, layout—everything is beautiful!

Eljee Bentley
Birmingham, Ala.

Correction

In "Looking Backward" printed in Resource Guide for 1979 Home Missions study, page 17, you list JOHN Lewis Shuck. His name is JEHU Lewis Shuck.

Rees Watkins
Richmond, Va.

in passing

When failure was victory

By William G. Tanner

Southern Baptists once set out to raise $75 million over a five-year period. Within six months of formulating the goal, the effort was in high gear. In only a few more months the goal was oversubscribed to the tune of $92 million pledged.

Everyone was so jubilant they began spending the funds before they were in hand, but a depression hit and many were unable to meet their commitments. Only $58 million was raised, and it was seen as defeat. But that $58 million was far more than Southern Baptists had ever given in a like period, and the lessons learned in cooperative effort proved even more valuable than the money raised. The effort was actually a marked victory from today's perspective.

As the campaign of 1919-24 came to a close, the denomination was ready to work together on a permanent basis. The next year the Cooperative Program was born, and from that time until this, millions of members and thousands of churches have pooled resources for the mission, education and benevolent work of Southern Baptists through their state conventions and the SBC.

The 1980 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention will mark the fifty-fifth anniversary, and not many of those who will attend were involved in the birth of the Cooperative Program. That first year $8 million was raised, but it will not be long now until $300 million will be given through the Cooperative Program.

Our state, home and foreign missions programs must be among the largest and most extensive of any evangelical denomination in the world, and the Cooperative Program undergirds it all with a constancy that allows us to plan ahead, assured that the funds will be there.

We have been challenged through Bold Mission Thrust to be bold in our giving. Some state conventions are even challenging their people to double their giving within a short time.

Executive Director Harmon Moore of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana reports that the state's executive board called for a doubling of Cooperative Program gifts by 1982, with 1977 as the base. They expect to accomplish this feat. They are on schedule to date, and with a 15 percent increase each year will reach the double figure.

Moore's suggestions to the church to double the 1977 amount includes 1) teaching and preaching the biblical basis of Christian giving, 2) planning to increase Cooperative Program giving at least 15 percent each year, and 3) sharing with the church members what they are accomplishing through the Cooperative Program.

Needs for increased mission work have never been greater. There are more people than ever in both the United States and in the world. More than double the population of the 1920s. More people, more non-Christians, more complex and baffling social, moral and spiritual problems than ever—this is our day of need.

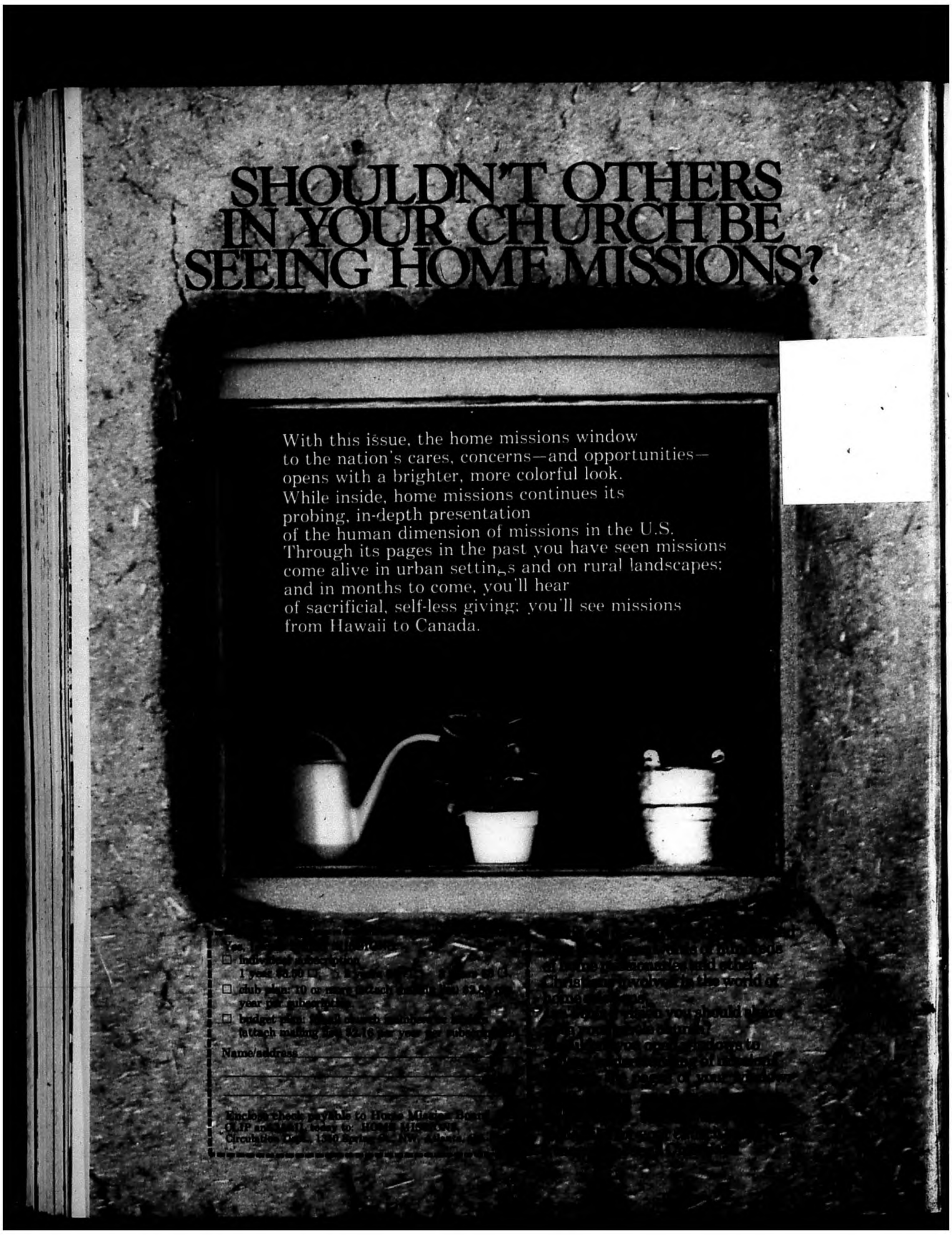
Our giving is one way of meeting those needs, and during the past year our churches gave a total of nearly $2 billion, an astounding figure. However, as this represents the giving of 13-plus million, the per capita figure is only about $150. Of course, this figures in a lot of missing people, and if you count only those enrolled in Sunday School, the per capita jumps to $252. If an average household contains three people, then we give a respectable figure of nearly $750 per household, but still far short of our ability and our tithe.

Such figures do not mean a lot, except they reflect one way of assessing the level of our commitment to financing the work of the kingdom.

Through the Cooperative Program we can carry the Christian gospel out to thousands of persons and hundreds of places where we cannot serve personally. That is what the Cooperative Program is all about. Needs are so great and so many doors of opportunity are open that business as usual will not do.

I do not hesitate to ask that each church take a look at the missions section of its budget, and plan this fall to increase the percentage going to the Cooperative Program. All of our work will be strengthened.

Bold giving through the Cooperative Program is our opportunity to join together in an important forward thrust in sharing the gospel with the millions in desperate need of Christ, both in America and around the world. •


SHOULDN'T OTHERS
IN YOUR CHURCH BE
SEEING HOME MISSIONS?
With this issue, the home missions window
to the nation's cares, concerns—and opportunities—
opens with a brighter, more colorful look.
While inside, home missions continues its
probing, in-depth presentation
of the human dimension of missions in the U.S.
Through its pages in the past you have seen missions
come alive in urban settings and on rural landscapes;
and in months to come, you'll hear
of sacrificial, self-less giving; you'll see missions
from Hawaii to Canada.
Name/address