

October 5, 1971

Pakistani Rickshaw Helps Mission Talks "Come Alive"

By June P. Carter

RICHMOND (BP)--A battered 1960 Ford pickup truck sat in the parking lot of Southampton Baptist Church here. Perhaps no one would have given it a second look except for its tall, gaudy passenger: a Pakistani rickshaw.

Charles A. Beckett, the Southern Baptist foreign missionary who is on furlough from Pakistan and who owns both vehicles, was pondering how to get his rickshaw inside the church.

The only entry wide enough to accommodate it led straight down the carpeted aisle of the sanctuary past a row of potted palms. Beckett, accustomed to seeing rickshaws cycled through the mud of Pakistani streets, could not bring himself to take the colorful vehicle through the sanctuary until persuaded to do so by a bystander.

But Beckett felt it was worth the effort. He often uses the rickshaw to help his messages on Baptist mission work in Pakistan to "come alive" to the audiences.

He decided on his last furlough to the States that he needed something to show his audiences that would typify his adopted country.

Just before leaving Pakistan, he decided on the rickshaw. At first, his wife thought he was joking. But she believed him when he pedaled up on one, took it into their living room in Feni, East Pakistan, and began to dismantle it for crating and shipping to the United States.

The passenger portion of a Pakistani rickshaw is made by hand and attached to the cycle portion, which is imported from mainland China. Beckett says he could have reduced the cost by buying only the rear portion and improvising the rest from a bicycle when he reached the States, but he wanted it to be authentic.

He paid about \$125 for the custom-made vehicle. The craftsman who assembled it was delighted that it was going to America, but he expressed surprise that rickshaws were virtually unknown here, "since America is so advanced."

"How do you get to market?" he inquired. "Do you walk?" To advertise his shop in America he decided to put its name and address on the back of the rickshaw--in the Bengali dialect.

One expense Beckett hadn't bargained for was that of relining the brand-new rickshaw. Barely completed by packing time, it had been crated with the bamboo braces for the canopy still green. Moisture from the bamboo, confined within the crate, had deteriorated the fabric of the interior.

Beckett then had two problems: to find a bolt of cloth in Richmond with a Pakistani appearance, and to find an upholsterer who would know what to do with it. After he located the cloth, a friend of his telephoned a local upholsterer, who listened incredulously before expressing his candid opinion that the inquirer was drunk.

Persuaded at last that there really was a rickshaw in Richmond that needed relining, the upholsterer, who had never seen a rickshaw, accepted the challenge. He did a creditable job and became so enthusiastic in the process that he later drove it down Richmond's Broad Street as a publicity stunt. Beckett's friend was so enthusiastic that he paid the upholsterer.

The rickshaw seems to delight churchgoers, old and young. Beckett is happy to have children swarm over it, and he is willing to pedal them around church parking lots and social halls as long as there are any who wish a ride.

For school and church appearances the missionary usually dons a lungi (LUNG-ghee), and he asks for volunteers to wear one too. The garment is a wide "skirt" or fabric tube worn over a man's trousers. It is wrapped and rolled at the waist to hold it in place.

The rickshaw is Beckett's attention-getter, and after it has done its job he talks with ease about Pakistan, from its ancient history to its current events.

His photo slides illustrate life and customs of Pakistan and show Baptist work that is in progress in "his" country. When Beckett says "home" he does not mean Richmond or his home town of Chase City, Va.; he is talking about Feni, East Pakistan, where he and his family have lived for four years.

After violence erupted in East Pakistan, his talks became tinged with sadness; looking now at a slide showing a happy group of boys in Dacca, he wonders aloud how many of them are still alive.

Beckett has taken his rickshaw as far as Roanoke, Va., where he appeared on the program of a missions conference. During the 150-mile drive, gusty winds whipped the tarpaulin off and tore at the pickup's unwieldy cargo, but again Beckett says it was worth the effort. Besides being a conversation piece for the conference, the rickshaw appeared on a local television program with three missionaries.

With Beckett's furlough almost over, the odd couple will soon be separated. The pickup will be sold, and Beckett will mothball his rickshaw in a relative's garage until furlough time comes again.

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Hardee Named Associate Of SBC Seminary Extension

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NASHVILLE (BP)--J. Ralph Hardee of Louisville has been named associate director for home study education by the Seminary Extension Department of the six Southern Baptist theological seminaries.

Hardee, 36, is a candidate for the doctor of education degree at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and is teaching at the seminary this fall while Professor Findley Edge is on sabbatical.

According to Raymond Rigdon, director, Hardee will be responsible for promoting enrollment in correspondence courses and other kinds of home study sponsored by the department, and for helping plan, edit, revise and evaluate curriculum materials used by the department.

Rigdon said also that Hardee, a native of Conway, S. C., will assume the position effective Jan. 1. He was elected to the position by the department's administrative committee, composed of the presidents of each of the six SBC seminaries.

Before entering Southern Seminary in 1968, Hardee had been minister of education at West Lynchburg Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Va., and at Temple Baptist Church, Newport News, Va. Earlier, he was associate pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Colonial Heights, Va.

In Louisville, he has been minister of education at Southside Baptist Church; a fellow to Ernest Loessner, dean of the School of Religious Education at Southern Seminary; and a special instructor in religious education at the seminary for two semesters.

A graduate of Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N.C., and Baylor University, Waco, Tex., Hardee earned the master of divinity and the master of religious education degrees at Southern Seminary. He expects to receive the doctor of education degree in December.

His appointment fills one of two staff associate positions in the national office of the Seminary Extension Department. The department recently reorganized to provide national services in two main areas: extension centers for continuing education, and home study. An associate for extension center work in continuing education is yet to be named.

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Nearly \$1.5 Million Raised In Arkansas College Drive

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Arkansas Baptists have raised cash and pledges totalling \$1,478,000 in a fund drive for two Baptist schools in the state, the leaders of the campaign announced in the first meeting following the beginning of the drive, July 1.

Alvin (Bo) Huffman Jr., director of the campaign, said that the gifts came from 14 of the 122 churches in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention with annual budgets of \$50,000 or more and comprising the "advance division" of the campaign.

The gifts will aid Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, and Southern Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, Ark.

Huffman said he hoped the total goal of \$4 million can be pledged by the end of the current calendar year.

During the meeting, Arkansas convention executive secretary Charles H. Ashcraft said the board of directors for the Arkansas Baptist Foundation will recommend to the state convention in November that undesignated earnings of the foundation for the current year be given to the fund campaign.

At almost the same time, the foundation announced that Mr. and Mrs. B. C. Baker of Wynne, Ark., had given \$50,000 through the foundation to benefit both Arkansas Baptist colleges, as well as Union University, Jackson, Tenn., and Wynne Baptist Church, Wynne, Ark.

Baker operates a butane gas business in Wynne, Ark. Mrs. Baker, now an invalid, is a former financial secretary for the Wynne Baptist Church.