

April 18, 1973

**Baptists Seek Ministries  
To Help Victims of Crime**

By Tim Nicholas

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--It was Christmas, the season of cheer and happiness; but for a former Navy man who had just returned from Vietnam, it was a time of trouble when no one seemed to be able to help.

He suffered from temporary amnesia from a blow to the head, after being beaten and robbed on the streets of San Francisco.

The man could not get help from local social service agencies, all of them swamped with heavy case loads during the Christmas season.

First Southern Baptist Church here, however, validated the man's story and contacted an organization called Christian World Liberation Front. Together, they obtained for the man a bus ticket back to his home in West Virginia. Two mental health officials were so impressed with their efforts to help that they gave \$10 each to buy food on the man's trip home.

The ministry by First Southern Baptist Church here is one of several similar efforts by Baptist churches across the nation to help the victims of crime.

There are only a few churches with really active and organized "victim ministries," and most of them are part of a total program of social work or referral system aimed at helping others in need.

Few such ministries, like the plight of the victim, are publicized much. The victim, as well as efforts to help him, often remain in the shadow of the spotlight, as the police pursue and the courts try the criminal. It is crime, and the criminal, the grabs the headlines. The victim often does not want anyone to know of his or her predicament.

Churches like First Southern Baptist here, however, are trying to help.

"It would be impossible to try to reproduce in the church the services of many government and public agencies, but we should be able to tell people where they can get help," said George Torney, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church here. "This is why churches need good referral systems," he added.

Torney, applying insights from his research in working for his doctor of ministry degree at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary nearby, has compiled a complete referral guide noting services available from such groups as Traveler's Aid, Salvation Army, Episcopal and Catholic agencies, mental health organizations, and the suicide prevention center.

A former staff member of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Torney has also initiated a mental health program at the church here called "The Winner's Circle."

"I can't think of one of the 35 to 40 people in this weekly program who hasn't been robbed or molested in some way," Torney said.

A few of them bring it on themselves, by not taking precautions, he noted. The church tries to help them in preventive measures, and make them realize what makes it happen, "Some women will invite men to their apartments and actually not understand why they are raped," Torney said.

In Minneapolis, the incidence of rape has risen so high that a group of churches, including several American Baptist congregations, has joined together to sponsor a center to minister to the victims of rape, according to a report in Religious News Service.

Services offered by the Minneapolis center, operating out of a neighborhood involvement program health clinic, include counseling services, a self-defense class, housing and free medical and dental help.

First Southern Baptist Church here is participant in a smaller mission coalition organization which offers loans to people after their homes have been vandalized, and helps get fast action from police after crimes have been committed.

Torney is on the board of directors of the San Francisco Council of Churches and recently, after a young black man was shot in the city, the Baptist pastor met with the chief of police for four weeks, negotiating for better patrols in that particular neighborhood.

David Moseley, missionary director of Telegraph Center in Oakland, Calif., said his center has an emergency food pantry program. "About 75 per cent of the users are victims of some kind of crime," said Moseley. Usually either their Social Security checks or their food stamps are stolen," he observed.

About once a month members of the community around the center get together to discuss ways to protect each other. Moseley described the typical mugging victim as a senior citizen, dressed up to go shopping right after welfare check time, pulling a shopping cart. "These people obviously have money and are no match for a young mugger," said Moseley.

He suggested that a church could use its buses during the week to transport elderly people shopping in groups, giving them both protection and fellowship.

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Historical Commission  
To Add Staff Member

4/18/73

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--New interest in Baptist history and plans for intensified work with state conventions in preserving their histories, were revealed in the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Society and the Historical Commission, SBC, meeting here this week.

Lynn E. May Jr., executive secretary of the Historical Commission reported that membership in the Historical Society has doubled since last year. There are now 866 paid members. Plans call for tripling this figure by next year.

Meeting outside of Nashville for the first time since 1956, the two organizations are meeting at Samford University in recognition of the sesquicentennial celebration of the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

May called the Alabama Baptist Historical Society and the special collections library of the Samford University one of the finest societies and collections in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The meeting in Birmingham was also an attempt to work more closely with and create interest in the state societies, according to May.

The Historical Society voted to increase its membership fee and approved a special membership campaign with awards to be presented at the next annual meeting on the basis of accumulative enlistment.

Beginning January 1, 1974, fees will be as follows: \$5 annual membership, \$2.50 for student membership, and \$75 for life membership.

May reported that there is much interest in oral history and the Commission will conduct a national oral history workshop in 1973 and feature the role of Baptist oral history at the 1975 annual convention.

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In other business, the Historical Commission changed the title of its research director to assistant executive secretary.

A projected budget includes funds for the addition of another professional employee of the Commission.

Following the business session, members of the two societies heard the chairman of the Historical Commission, Robert A. Baker, professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, call the years between 1917 and 1931 "the magnificent years for Southern Baptists."

Baker reminded the group that these were the years of the stock market crash, financial problems resulting in the Southern Baptist \$75 Million campaign, the great depression, and embezzlement of Home Mission Board funds by an employee.

"Paradoxically," he said, "this period has proved to be one of the most creative and progressive eras in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Baker said the tensions of these years proved to be the testing grounds of the convention structure as it is now.

He contrasted the convention-type of structure adopted by Southern Baptists in 1845 as opposed to the separate societies used by other Baptist bodies between 1814 and 1845.

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Baptist Youth Stage  
March for Missions

4/18/73

MEMPHIS (BP)--A march for Baptist mission work in America netted sponsors here \$2,060 to eclipse a similar effort in Atlanta by \$20.

The unusual approach to missions giving saw 98 teenagers and adults trek 11 miles through Midtown Memphis, escorted by two motorcycle patrolmen with a police helicopter overhead.

The march was arranged by Kenny McCullough, 14-year-old Royal Ambassador, and his counselor, Tim Fields, both of Union Avenue Baptist Church.

Billed as an RA-GA-Acteen Hike for Home Missions, it attracted walkers from 16 churches in the Shelby Association. Walking for the most sponsors --39--was Sharon McGehee, a Union Avenue Acteen.

Three Acteens from rural Forest Hill Baptist Church received almost \$75 for their efforts, matching the giving effort of the total church membership. "Our goal was to beat the Atlanta marchers, and we did," Fields said.

The hike ended with a picnic and a home missions rally, featuring a puppet show and a missions challenge by Tim Sledge, minister of youth at Union Avenue.

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Evelyn Blount Named  
WMU Youth Supervisor

4/18/73

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--Evelyn Blount of Atlanta, Ga., has been elected supervisor of the youth department of Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Miss Blount has been Acteens director for the Woman's Mission Union of Georgia. She begins her new duties May 15.

The Georgia native will direct the national planning, editing and field work for Acteens, the WMU organization for junior and senior high school girls.

A graduate of Georgia College at Milledgeville and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, Miss Blount previously served as a church director of education and as an instructor in health and physical education.

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