

August 7, 1974

Missionaries Know: 'You Meet
The Nicest People on a Honda'

74-26

By Jim Newton

DOTHAN, Ala. (BP)--He stands only 5' 4" and weighs only 115 pounds, but when Clyde Townsend, a motorcycle dealer from Dothan, Ala., mounts his 350 cc Honda, he is as big as any bruiser who ever rode a bike.

And when it comes to supporting missions, Clyde Townsend, a deacon and active member at Southside Baptist Church here, is one of the biggest men around.

Townsend has ridden a Honda through 10 countries on three continents, and everywhere he goes he tells Southern Baptist missionaries he and other laymen like him love them and pray for them daily.

So far, Townsend has given three motorcycles to missionaries to enable them to travel to remote regions they might otherwise be unable to reach with the gospel.

And he says he is just getting started. His goal is to give a motorcycle to every one of the 77 countries where Southern Baptists have missionaries.

God has been with him in sickness and in health, the modest Townsend says, and has led him to the place in life where he wants to give all he can to support Christ's work in the world.

Fifteen years ago, Townsend lay flat on his back suffering from tuberculosis. For nine months he lay in a hospital, struggling to recover.

He says he has had almost every imaginable kind of health problem and countless broken bones from motorcycle falls. He's had some narrow escapes from death and feels God has allowed him to live and blessed him financially so that he can give more in return to support missions.

Missions really came alive to Townsend four years ago when he decided to ride his Honda CB350 from his home in Dothan, Ala., all the way to the Panama Canal Zone and back.

During the two month, 9,500 mile trip he crossed borders of countries in Central America 26 times without trouble, knowing only one sentence in Spanish: "No hablo Espanol." (I do not speak Spanish.)

He made another trip last year to visit missionaries in the interior of Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa. A number of areas he rode through teemed with wild game, but he was careful to give lions and elephants and other large game a wide berth, since most have never seen a motorcycle.

In his adventures Townsend combines his great loves in life--his love for motorcycles and riding, his love for Christ and His Church and his love for missions.

"You know, when a layman like me rides up on a motorcycle, meets a missionary for the first time on the field where he serves, tells him that you love him and pray for him every day, that missionary really believes you mean it," Townsend remarked.

A jack of all trades, Townsend puts his love into action once he is on a mission field.

"Clyde can do anything," his pastor, Ken Harrison, said. "He can do carpentry work, he is a mechanic and even an electrician of sorts."

On the trip to Central America, he helped repair the roof and electrical wiring at the Baptist camp and the Spanish language institute in San Jose. In remote mountains on Honduras he did carpentry work and put a new roof on a church building.

On his second trip to Ecuador, Townsend rode his cycle to Cuenca, where missionary Archie Jones started the first church in the city of 100,000. During the month he was there, Clyde helped break ground and begin construction on the new church building. He also did a lot of electrical wiring and mechanical repairs for the missionaries.

"Missionaries really have a problem about mechanical breakdowns overseas," Townsend observed. "They can't get parts, and if they can, there is no one to repair American-made equipment and appliances." In addition, the missionaries are so busy, and often do not have the skills, to do the repairs themselves.

Townsend still had time to fish for rainbow trout in the mountain streams of Ecuador and to spend time with the missionary kids.

"One of my strongest ministries," he said, "is in talking with and playing with the MKs, and taking them for rides on the Honda."

The trip to Africa last year was the highlight of Townsend's missionary experience as a layman. He went first to Nigeria to help his pastor lead a series of lay evangelism schools,

While his pastor taught the Nigerians in the classes on lay witnessing, Townsend handed out the materials and tracts, did his own personal witnessing and repaired broken appliances and equipment for the missionaries.

Going on the mission trips is just one part of Townsend's experience as a layman. Almost as vital is what he does when he returns home, his pastor said.

Missions has come alive to the people of Southside Baptist Church in the last four years, primarily because of the example and testimony of Clyde Townsend and his wife, his pastor said.

This summer the church is sending 16 young people and the Townsends to the Leeward Island of Antiqua between the Atlantic and the Caribbean, on a singing, witnessing, puppet show, and Vacation Bible School-conducting trip.

Two years ago, Mrs. Townsend went on a mission trip to seven countries in East Africa. It was her excitement on her return that inspired her husband to want to go there too.

"She is even more missions minded than I am, because she has studied missions through Woman's Missionary Union," Townsend explained.

In addition to going, doing, and praying, Townsend has led his church in missions giving.

"The Lord has blessed me financially and spiritually," he said. "He's given me far more than I'll ever be able to give His church and to missions. I'm just a common old boy who loves the Lord, and I want Him to get the credit, not me."

Townsend said he hoped other laymen would see the challenge of missions, and seek not only to increase their financial and prayer support, but to visit foreign mission fields through the Foreign Mission Board's short term missions projects coordinated by Eugene Grubbs, consultant on laymen overseas.

"If people just knew what a layman could do by going to a country overseas for just a few weeks to really help the missionaries there, they would respond," Townsend said.

Few laymen, however, can go the way Townsend does.

For it is a rare breed who is big enough to mount a motorcycle in freezing weather, tighten up a black leather jacket, and ride 9,500 miles round trip over rugged terrain--on a motorcycle!

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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
480 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234
Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

August 7, 1974

**Seminarians Reel Under
Cost of Living Increases**

74-26

By Eloise Wright

FORT WORTH (BP)--With this summer's spurt of inflation taking even larger bites out of the purchasing power of the average income, seminary students here are feeling their paychecks being eaten away by the nation's hungry economy.

Like everyone else Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary students in Fort Worth watched their real spendable income or what's left after adjustment for inflation and taxes, fall by three-tenths of one per cent in June to a level 4.5 per cent below a year ago. This was the eighth time in the last nine months that real earnings have fallen. And with July came a 4 per cent increase in the cost of food, as compared with June.

"It gets a bit discouraging after awhile. You keep cutting back and all you're doing is just maintaining the status quo. You never seem to get ahead," said Richard Byrd, a master of divinity (M. Div.) student from Statesville, N.C., married and the father of two.

As a single seminarian, Bill Bowen, M. Div. student from North Little Rock, Ark., has especially felt the pressure of gasoline price hikes due to his traveling 240 miles a weekend in connection with his pastorate in Mound, Tex. "I was figuring my gas prices the other day and they've more than doubled since last year. Now I'm spending \$60 a month on gas. I was spending \$30 this time last year," the young pastor said.

Bowen, who gets a flat weekly salary from his church, is like most of the 1,000 seminarians who serve as pastors of churches within a five-state area.

"One of the biggest factors about seminary students is that churches have not been giving the cost-of-living raises. Like my church is still paying me what they did a year ago, and I know of very few students who have received a raise at all. And so we're living on a budget that's meant to cover prices that are 50 per cent higher than what they were then," Bowen said.

The Arkansas native said he realizes that since offerings in his church have not increased during the past 12-month period, he doesn't expect a substantial raise any time soon.

"Other people are feeling the crunch besides me and I know our offerings are not increasing because the people feel the money is more necessary in their homes," Bowen said.

The young pastor said an outside job during the week is his only financial alternative to offset further price hikes even though he can't conveniently afford the time for it along with seven classes scheduled for the fall.

"But I'd just have to manage it somehow if the financial need arises," he said.

Byrd's wife Christine checks out food prices weekly in the newspaper to find out the sale items so that she can gauge her menus accordingly.

"I just buy exactly what I have on my menu, except for something like some cookies for the children, but when you get to the store and staple goods have gone up you really can't seem to win," she said.

By going to the grocery store just once a week, planning menus, watching for specials and tips listed in the media and cutting non-essentials like desserts and paper plates, the Byrds have cut grocery spending by \$10 a week.

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But even the Byrd's rigid budget tactics haven't cut the necessity for them both to work fulltime jobs with conflicting hours. She works an 8-to-5, 40 hour week on campus in the accounts-payable section of the business office. He works for a wrecker service at night, 72 hours a week.

"We do have our evening meals together. I get off at five and he goes to work at 5:30. So Saturday night is his only night off," she said.

Byrd also uses the extra time between semesters to work on campus during part of the day with the seminary's maintenance department.

"We were getting along fine until an accident in May with our son Gray's eye. The medical bills have put a strain on us. At the same time we've had the medical expense, our car has started to give us trouble," Mrs. Byrd said.

While many outside expenses crop up, the seminary indirectly helps students curb spending by offering on-campus dormitory living for singles and near-campus housing for families at rates lower than in the community.

"If I was living in an apartment, not seminary-owned, it would be impossible for me, with what my income is now. Whereas most housing has increased its monthly rent over the past couple of years about 33 per cent, the seminary has only increased its monthly rent by \$2.50, and you can't gripe about that," Bowen pointed out.

Other ways the seminary indirectly helps its students includes the campus clinic with its medical help at reduced rates and medicines for near-cost prices.

Mrs. Tom Johnson, an expectant mother and the wife of an M. Div. student, has bought all her pre-natal medicines and vitamins at the clinic's inexpensive prices.

"The pharmacy has been extremely helpful because we would have been paying almost four or five cents more per pill at most drug stores," her husband said.

Another helpful facility offered on campus is the kindergarten located in the newly opened Naylor Children's Center where for \$15 a week children of seminarians can participate in learning activities, plus be provided with a nutritious lunch.

But even this financial crunch that has swept the country has prompted some positive response from some seminarians:

"This cutting down on sweets is a lot healthier for our family. I guess a lot of things we're doing because of inflation is really for our benefit," said Mrs. Byrd.

"Sometimes it's hard to wait if your children need clothes and you know they need them ...but if you can just put it off sometimes for a few weeks until you can get the money together then you're a whole lot better off. I guess our biggest asset has been not using charge accounts," Byrd said.

"It's an unusual thing about being a Christian in that the Lord always does seem to provide. One day last year I received a \$100 gift. I walked into the business office and was told that a check had been held for me anonymously. The Lord always seems to provide money at a time when I really need it," Bowen said.

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Baptists Form Only
Small Part of World

8/7/74

By Connie Kirby

PORTLAND, Ore. (BP)--To be a Baptist, in most parts of the world, is to be in the minority.

More than 6,220 registrants from 54 countries at the 8th Baptist Youth World Conference (BYWC) here have explored and explained why.

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Some areas of the world contain a high concentration of Baptists. One South Indian state counts 25 million Baptists in a population of 60 million, and in parts of the southern U.S. 70 per cent claim to be Baptist. On a world scale, though, Baptists, with nearly 33 million members worldwide, comprise but a fraction of the population.

Tony Teo of Malaysia says Baptists there work in an ancient cultural setting where the national religion for centuries has been Islam. In a population of 10 million, less than 3,000 are Baptists.

Baptists are relatively new to Malaysia, having been there only since the early 1930s. "Baptists came from the China mainland," Teo says. "When the missionaries had to leave China in the communist take-over, they came to Malaysia. Because we are so few, we must show ourselves as true Christians and practice what we preach," Teo says.

Sylvia Chan Tam Peilin says that in Hong Kong only one person in 100 is a Christian. There are many Protestant denominations in the city, and Baptists are a small part of that Christian witness. Mrs. Chan said many "varieties" are found among Baptists there. Some hold to Baptist doctrines faithfully and are distinctive, while others are not much different from other Protestant denominations.

Many missionaries fleeing Communist China came to Hong Kong to serve. The problems facing the church in Hong Kong arise from secularism in society. "Many people are 'Sunday Christians'," Mrs. Chan says. "We are crowded--just like in New York--and there are many temptations put on the people if they try to live a Christian life."

An Australian delegate to the BYWC, Allison Austin, explained Baptists there have basic beliefs but each church, and in fact, each individual, expresses his or her faith in a personal way.

"The Australian ideal is to get a wife, set up a home in a suburb and have a family and good job. It is a 'get' society, more than a religious one," she says. Only 2 per cent of the population are Christians and that includes most of the "mainline" religions, she adds.

Living the life of a Christian in West Africa means being involved in a simplistic religion compared to others dominant in the country, according to Elizabeth Eghage of Nigeria.

"West Africans are involved in much ceremony. They believe in ancestor worship and make carvings. I think they believe in God, but their way is different," she says.

Baptists hold many top positions in the government of Nigeria, Ms. Eghage says. "They believe they should be an example to others by living the Christian life among their friends in government."

Timothy Sunarsana says Baptists are famous in his country of Indonesia. "We have begun to grow rapidly in recent years," he says. "Part of this is due to the fact that people have been afraid of communism. Back in 1964-65 the communist threat was strong and people became afraid. They flocked to our churches.

"But now a little peace comes, and the people grow cold. So it is our responsibility as young people to make a personal witness to others. It is more important to live a good life." Out of a total population of 150 million, 12 per cent are Christian, with 3 per cent of those who are Christians professing to be Baptists.

Hanna Schwarz and Karin Braun live in Bonn, West Germany, a city of 300,000 which serves as West Germany's capital. "We have only one Baptist church there which has 400 members," the young women reported.

The German young people are surprised that even in small towns in the U.S. there are so many Baptist churches.

"I came from a Christian Arab family and live in Israel," Rhadia Shurrush says. "It is very obvious if you are a Christian there. If you are Jewish, you identify with everything the state does, but if you are an Arab, from the political setting as well as your subculture you are a different person."

There are also more Moslems than Christians, but Christians are divided into many denominations. "Being a Baptist is unique," she says. "There are only 250 in all of Israel, although there are many diplomats who come in our country and stay for awhile and I am not counting them."

This number does not include the Baptists in Gaza. "Gaza also has Baptist work, but it is separated from Baptists inside Israel," she says.

"We are not accepted as a religion by the government. So, in a way, it is good because we have to belong to a church in order to meet. Our activities are within the walls of the church--we can't speak outside."

Christiane Jean Marius knows more about Baptists in the USA than in her home country, France. She has completed her master's degree in New York City on "U. S. Civilization and the Place of the Baptist Church in the Communities." What led her to choose this thesis was experiencing Baptists in Harlem, a section of New York City. "I went to a Baptist church and was impressed and really moved," she says.

"Now, when I go back home in just a few weeks, I will try to find a Baptist church in Paris where I can be baptized. Maybe then I can learn more about Baptists in France."

The south part of India is an exception to the minority status of Baptists. In the state where J. Chiranjeevi lives, 25 million people are Baptists. Chiranjeevi came from a poor family. His father died when he was eight years old and he was raised by missionaries from America.

"People are interested in religion in India. Though it is dominated by Moslems, many religions are represented," he explained. Baptists have been in India many years.

Faiz Haddad is a delegate of the youth conference from Jordan where, he says, "Baptist--just the word--means that a person has Jesus Christ as his Savior."

"In Jordan we have only five Baptist churches with maybe 15 or 16 members in each church. Baptist work is just beginning in my country but we can witness, sing, pray and talk to anyone we want to about our faith."

The Philippine Islands have long been evangelized by Baptists although the Baptist constituency numbers only about 20 per cent. "In former days we had opposition from the Roman Catholics," Fred Lacuesta says, "but now there is a new day when dialogues are being encouraged between Catholics and Baptists."

"Nuns and priests are frequenting our bookstores--mainly to get a copy of "Good News For Modern Man"--a contemporary language version of Scripture."

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Connie Kirby, a staffer with the American Baptist division of communications, Valley Forge, Pa., served on the newsroom staff of the 8th Baptist Youth World Conference.

SBC Cooperative Program
Continues to Surge Ahead

8/7/74

NASHVILLE (BP)--Giving through the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program unified budget continued to rise, registering a 12.99 per cent increase through the first 10 months of the 1973-74 fiscal year.

Cooperative Program funds flowing from contributions in SBC churches through state convention offices have totaled \$31,714,946, more than \$3,645,000 above the same period last year, according to John H. Williams, director of financial planning and assistant to the treasurer for the SBC Executive Committee.

In July, Williams said, Cooperative Program figures totaled \$2,944,777, which amounts to 9.49 per cent more than the \$2,689,628 received in July, 1973.

Gifts designated outside the Cooperative Program in July totaled \$735,534, 11.55 per cent over designations of \$659,405 last July.

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For the year to date, designated receipts have totaled \$31,939,747--almost the same as the Cooperative Program figure. That's a 13.18 per cent increase over \$28,219,785 designated at the same point last year.

The largest portion of the designated receipts is reflected in increases in both the SBC's special missions offerings for work of the Foreign and Home Mission Boards.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions increased 13.08 per cent. It has received \$21,989,236 to date, compared to \$19,445,037 last year, Williams said. The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions increased 17.21 per cent, rising from \$6,473,019 at this point last year to \$7,587,050 this year.

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Southern Baptists Continue
To Lead ABS Contributions

8/7/74

NEW YORK (BP)--For the 10th consecutive year, the Southern Baptist Convention, according to 1973 statistics, has made the largest contribution to the American Bible Society of any of the 70 denominations, churches and agencies which regularly contribute to the ABS.

ABS statistics, released here, show Southern Baptists gave \$133,529 of the \$1,308,125 contributed. That amounts to 12 per cent of the ABS's \$11,400,000 budget.

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