

September 23, 1974

Southern Baptist Busy
In N.Y. Social Ministry

74-48

By Tim Nicholas

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (BP)--Kitty Blissit, a Southern Baptist US-2 missionary, began a Friday morning preschool program so that neighborhood mothers here could get away from home and children for a few hours.

But the mothers would stand in the church kitchen peeking through the door into the children's workroom, talking and waiting for the morning to end.

Rather than scratching a program as non-productive, Miss Blissit, a native of Athens, Ga., and her supervisor, Nelson Tilton, pastor-director of Rochester Baptist Church, decided to begin another activity.

Tilton's wife, Glenda, volunteered to begin an activity program called the "Mothers' Second Cup of Coffee Club," while Kitty keeps the children.

While their offspring are sipping Kool-aid, the mothers pour themselves another relaxing cup of coffee and engage in Bible study, in crafts or an occasional shopping trip together.

Another of Kitty's and Tilton's experiments in neighborhood ministry is Lose Weight Together, a winter carry-over from a fall sewing class whose members wanted to do something else together when the class ended.

The first two weeks, the ten women enrolled lost a total of 20 pounds. They read books on exercising and weight control and took lessons in low calorie cooking. A church member who is a nurse taught them good nutrition.

After school on Thursdays, about 25 first through sixth graders come to the church for Kitty's Sunshine Club. The children have a couple of hours of refreshments and light Bible study.

Wrapping up a busy Thursday, Kitty teaches a charm course for teenage girls with basic lessons in conversation and posture.

The flurry of community-church activities began after an evaluation of church ministry. "The church had been here twelve years and only had 50 active members," says Tilton. "We discovered we had never met needs of our immediate community."

"Now that Kitty has come and we've become involved in the community, we've had more baptisms in the last few months than in the last few years," Tilton adds. And church attendance has risen to 80.

Kitty came to Rochester for a two year term of service with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board after her graduation from the University of Georgia at Athens.

A degree in music education has helped her with the children's choir she leads at the Spanish Baptist Chapel, "but I'm still learning Spanish," she says.

"Kitty has made a total integration into the community," says Tilton.

She lives in an upstairs apartment a couple of blocks from the church which is "fringe inner city, fringe suburb," and heavily Italian Catholic. "Her greatest asset is her willingness to do most anything to help," Tilton adds.

Being from Georgia and bringing with her at least a rudimentary access has helped Kitty with initial contacts.

"You came all the way up here just to work in a church?" she's been asked, and "No churches down there?"

"I'm still not sure why I came here," she admits. "I can verbalize Christian social ministries better than I can do it."

"You can't reach people with a program, but on a one-to-one basis, you have a chance," says Kitty. And she spends the first part of each week concentrating on developing relationships with individuals.

Through vocational rehabilitation, she's helping a man with an artificial leg find work, and she's been helping an alcoholic woman dry out.

The church is working in many directions in community ministry. Two recent Sunday afternoons Tilton and members helped paint for and move two welfare families in the area.

"Everything one girl owned was in paper bags which we moved into an unfurnished apartment. She had two children," says Tilton. Rochester and Bayview Baptist Churches bought furniture for her.

A Royal Ambassador group led by Bill Morris, a church member, meets in the local YMCA. All but one of the ten active members are Catholic.

Says Kitty, "Being a Southern Baptist never meant much to me until I came up here and saw what a minority I was in."

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Adapted from the October 1974 issue of Contempo, monthly Woman's Missionary Union magazine for Baptist Young Women.

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers and others on request.

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Good News/Bad News
At Sunday School Board

9/23/74

NASHVILLE (BP)--Good news and bad news has followed the first quarter of computerized handling of church literature orders at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here.

The good news is that the computerization makes possible faster and more accurate order filling and gives easy access to information related to the more than 65,000 orders handled each quarter.

The bad news is that when something goes wrong, it goes wrong in a big way--like in September when 1,100 orders on tape were processed and filled twice.

The board has advised that churches receiving duplicate literature orders for the October, quarter, send one set of the materials back right away--collect.

Churches who ordered late may find that some substitution will have to be made in the order, board spokesmen said.

Most regular orders that were received on schedule will be filled, according to Allen B. Comish, director of the board's Church Services and Materials Division. The ability to fill late orders in some cases will depend on how quickly duplicate orders are returned. He said some items are being reprinted, but not all items in every curriculum and for every age groups are expected to be available for all churches.

"We will do our best to work with each church to iron out problems," said Comish, "so that no church will be without materials. Churches which have received duplicate orders can help others by returning the excess material promptly."

In the meantime a lot of people are working extra hard to minimize the possibility of this kind of bad news cropping up again, Comish noted.

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PLEASE NOTE:

THE PREVIOUS SCANNED
DOCUMENT(S) IMAGE QUALITY IS
DUE TO POOR DOCUMENT QUALITY.

**Missionaries Aid Victims
Of Hurricane in Honduras**

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries in Honduras and Guatemala responded to immediate needs resulting from Hurricane Fifi after winds reaching 160 miles per hour struck the Caribbean coast of Honduras, British Honduras and Guatemala.

"The worst hurricane to strike the coast of Honduras this century" was how a spokesman for the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Fla., described the storm, which struck September 19.

According to initial reports, there were almost 4,000 confirmed deaths resulting from the hurricane with an estimated 50,000 homeless. Honduran authorities estimated the death toll might be as high as 10,000.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board released \$5,000 of relief funds. Part of the money was used for medical supplies to be shipped September 23, according to Charles W. Bryan, board secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean.

"Calls are coming in from persons wanting to know what they can do to assist in relief efforts," said Bryan. "The Foreign Mission Board stands ready to channel any relief funds received directly to the missionaries in Honduras."

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) also responded to needs in the disaster area, sending \$2,000 from their emergency relief fund, according to Carl W. Tiller, BWA associate secretary.

All Southern Baptist missionaries were reported safe three days after the storm. Foreign Mission Board officials report that 24 missionaries are stationed in Guatemala and 19 in Honduras.

All missionary men in Honduras were helping in relief efforts in San Pedro Sula. Missionary physician W. David Harms offered his services to the government. He began by helping disaster victims waiting to be picked up by government helicopters.

Helicopters from the Panama Canal Zone had been unable to reach Honduras earlier because of the storm, an American Embassy official told Mrs. Harms.

Missionary nurse Frances N. Crawford and missionaries S. Wayne Wheeler and C. Grady Nowell gathered medical supplies but highway traffic had been interrupted by the storm. The road to San Pedro Sula, previously cut off, was finally open, and they were able to get through.

The Bay Islands off the coast of Honduras received much of the effect of the storm, according to A. Clark Scanlon, board field representative for Middle America.

"Only 14 houses are left standing on the Island of Utila," reported Mrs. Harms.

The Guatemalan port town of Puerto Barrios was hard hit with many people from poverty sections forced to evacuate their homes and move to a gymnasium. The Guatemalan government sent earth-moving equipment and relief supplies to the town.

Members of the Guatemalan Baptist Mission held a meeting Sept. 20 to plan help for the victims. Bryan said he was waiting on reports of damage to Baptist churches as well as about the safety of church members.

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**Baptist Work Continues
In Troubled Mozambique**

9/23/74

LORENZO MARQUES, Mozambique (BP)--The conflict between different political groups here may cause difficulties as independence comes to this nation, but Baptist missionaries see no reason that their work, with its new freedoms, can't continue.

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A major change occurred in April when a military coup took place in Portugal. Mozambique, an overseas state of Portugal, immediately gained full freedom as did the people of Portugal.

"We have so much more liberty to carry out our work now," Mrs. G. Ernest Harvey, Southern Baptist missionary in Mozambique, said recently. "In fact, there are no limitations at all that we have found."

Soon after the coup, Baptists in Mozambique met in an open air service for the first time in the history of Baptist work. It was previously not allowed.

Mrs. Harvey said that with the new freedom in April many people began to demand and receive higher wages and "certainly most of them needed raising." The result was people were laid off to compensate for the higher salaries and thus a raise in unemployment created new problems.

One of the most important industries, tourism, has been hurt by unfavorable publicity. "Prices continue to go up, too," Mrs. Harvey said, "which has pretty well eaten up the raises realized in April and May."

In spite of economic problems, Mrs. Harvey said she feels Mozambique is lucky to have been spared the violence experienced in other Portuguese states. Although a number of small bombs and grenades have been exploded, according to Mrs. Harvey, there were, as of late August, directed at parked cars, buildings, etc., not at people.

"It is interesting that many, if not most, of the white people seem to be in favor of a black government providing they will be allowed to stay and continue their lives here," Mrs. Harvey said. "Frelimo has promised that they can."

"However, as is always the case, many others are afraid and are leaving. A large number from the First Baptist Church here and the Malhangalene Baptist Church have gone. Some are hoping to return if circumstances permit.

"I think the prevailing spirit is one of optimism," she continued, "particularly among the African people. Unfortunately, many of them hope for a miracle from one day to the next and I hope that disillusionment will not cause serious difficulties in the future."

"Certainly our work has been affected and will continue to be so," she said.

"Of great importance for the future, is the probable opening of our work in the north above Beira. The war had kept this area closed, but as soon as a cease-fire is arranged, the only thing that will keep us out is lack of personnel.

"What we need now are missionaries. The country is ripe for the harvest," Mrs. Harvey concluded. "But with six ordained pastors and nine workers, including missionaries, we can't begin to reach the people."

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CORRECTION

In Baptist Press mailing dated 9/20/74, the correct spelling of NBC's vice president of public information officer's last name is "Rukeyser" (instead of Rukseyer). See graphs 3, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17. Thanks.

--Baptist Press