



March 22, 1976

**Rugged Ranch Life Prepared
Minister for Alaska Work**

By Walker Knight

ANDERSON, Alaska(BP)--When members of North Star Baptist Church here listed qualifications for a new pastor a few years ago, they were practical.

First, he would have to love the outdoors, because that's all there is around here.

Second, he would have to be married because it would be too lonely for a single man.

Third, the couple would have to get along with mosquitoes, which this area has in abundance.

Finally, the wife would have to be the kind of woman who wouldn't panic when she looked out the window and saw a bear eating from the garbage can.

The church's 100 or so members couldn't have drawn a better description of Jim and Linda Clark. The Clarks have been here since 1973. He serves the church as pastor, and they are Southern Baptist missionaries to Athabascan Indian villages at Fort Yukon, Venetie and Chalkyitsik, all inside the Arctic circle.

Clark, one of seven missionaries featured in a new photo-text book--"Seven Beginnings"--written by Walker Knight and photographed by Ken Touchton for the Home Mission Board is a former bronc buster, dude ranch foreman and cattle rancher. He is a marksman who totes a 44 magnum revolver along with his Bible. He has always been a man in search of a frontier.

The minister is a native of Iowa, but his parents were reared on Nebraska ranches. So, even in his earliest childhood Clark fed on their recollections of rugged ranch life. It programmed him for his future.

Clark got his first taste of the rugged life when he was 18-years-old. His parents bought 1,000 acres of hill country near Scottsbluff, Neb., and he and an older uncle set up camp there, buying wild horses from Indians. They broke some for saddle horses and sold the others for meat.

The work was long and hard. Clark and his uncle subsisted on a diet of hotcakes, fried potatoes, fried onions and pork and beans. Clark liked it, he recalled, but it "almost killed me." When his parents visited the ranch they found him emaciated and suffering from a mouth infection and trouble with his teeth.

They rushed him into town to a dentist. The dentist's assistant was a young woman named Linda Applegate. Born in the Nebraska ranch country, Linda was more at home on horseback than in the dentist's office. It took Clark six months to woo her away.

Over the next few years they moved from running the ranch--converted to a dude ranch by Clark's parents--to engineering for a Michigan firm, back to ranching in Nebraska, and finally to Florida to work with his father. Along the way, Clark began to develop an attraction for Alaska and even investigated one story he heard about raising cattle near Mt. McKinley.

Along the way, too, Linda says, "We were close enough to the Lord to know that he had a plan, a will for us and we were seeking it."

Clark even remarked once, "If I can't be a rancher, I think I would want to be a preacher." It was prophetic.

He had been converted at an early age, only to later get into a argument with an older member and go "sour" on the church for awhile. It took a minister, who accused Clark of telling his five children one thing "and showing them another," to get him back into the church.

In Florida, Clark and Linda became active in Island Baptist Church on Anna Maria Island. He was a deacon, Sunday school superintendent and gave most of his spare time to the church. He began to wrestle with the conviction that God was calling him to preach and says one night during a revival God spoke to him, saying, "I am calling you into my service."

"Others may think I hallucinated, was emotionally overwrought," he says, "but I heard the Lord's voice, purely and simply."

There were many obstacles. Clark was convinced his decision would cause Linda to leave him, and he had no college time. But he enrolled in a junior college and became pastor of Tatum Ridge Baptist Mission in Sarasota, Fla. His dedication finally convinced Linda his calling was genuine and she pitched in to help.

Clark finished junior college and then went to Hardin-Simmons University, in Abilene, Tex., where he was pastor of a small church in Blackwell, Texas. He earned a bachelor's and then master's degree in psychology and counseling.

Nearing graduation, he wrote to the Home Mission Board's church extension department and expressed an interest in pioneer missions, "where there are few churches."

Soon he received letters from two state convention leaders. One letter was from Troy Prince, executive secretary of the Alaska Baptist Convention. One line in Prince's letter jumped at them:

"The need in Alaska is desperate."

"When we got off our knees, we knew we were going to Alaska," Clark remembers.

In March, 1973, the Clarks and their children arrived in Anchorage under appointment by the Home Mission Board and Alaska Baptist Convention for church extension and language mission work.

North Star Baptist Church of which Clark is pastor, meets in two mobile units. To give him better access to nearby Clear Air Force Base he got endorsement as a chaplain and now holds services each Sunday night at the base chapel. On Mondays he works 8-10 hours there in counseling, rap sessions and Bible study.

One aspect of Clark's makeup gains instant acceptance among the rugged outdoors types of Alaska and stands him in good stead at the Air Force base. He is a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association and is probably the best marksman on the base, unusual for a chaplain, friends say.

"The chaplaincy has enhance the work at Anderson by 50 percent," Clark says. "It has given me so many more contacts."

Although the North Star congregation is fully constituted as a church, in many ways it is still a mission, dependent on the Home Mission Board and Alaska convention for Clark's service. With a high attendance of 50, the church is only able to pay \$200 monthly on Clark's salary, hardly enough to buy groceries in Alaska.

But with his direction, the church is reaching out in a missions program of its own. The members built a church building at Fork Yukon to minister to the Indians there. Clark flies there regularly, also to Chalkyitsik and Venetie for work with the Athabascans. He wrecked one plane in the effort, losing almost \$6,000 of his own money when his plane was destroyed.

Problems the Clarks face in carrying on their work include indifference, 70-degrees-below-zero cold and isolation. But they appear comfortable in the midst of their own personal "frontier." And churches are being established because they set out to conquer it.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

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March 22, 1976

**'IRS Infringes on Religious
Freedom'; Business Officers**

By Theo Sommerkamp

DALLAS (BP)--The commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) of the United States has no authority to try "to define the nature of the church" and its mission, the Southern Baptist Officers Business Conference said here.

This action of the IRS commissioner infringes on constitutional rights to free exercise of religion, says a resolution passed by the business officers group in their annual meeting. Further, they added, the state unconstitutionally defines for the churches "the nature and scope of their religious missions."

The conference is composed of business officers of churches and denominational organizations. Many of the denominational organizations whose business officers were present would be affected by the IRS effort to define an "integrated auxiliary of a church," conference officers indicated.

While their tax-exempt status would not be affected, the religious organizations would have to file copious forms with the IRS. The organizations are exempted at present from filing such materials.

Also, there is fear this would be a "foot in the door" from which IRS would push itself deeper and deeper into the affairs of churches and church-sponsored organizations.

The issue revolves around a rule being proposed by the commissioner of Internal Revenue in Washington. The IRS is seeking to require information from church-related organizations, even though the organizations are tax-exempt.

To try to head off the rule's becoming effective, an inter-faith effort is under way in Washington to have the IRS reconsider the proposed adoption of the rule. The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is taking part in this.

The Baptist Joint Committee is urging IRS to follow the standard dictionary definitions of "integrated" and "auxiliary" in interpreting an act of Congress in which the term "integrated auxiliary" appears in a religious context.

The Baptist Joint Committee echoed the Business Officers Conference contention that it is not the duty of the IRS to define church relationships on its own initiative.

Instead, various religious groups argue that IRS must take a case by case approach in dealing with church-related organizations, since every denomination is constituted along different lines.

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(BP) Photo to be mailed to Baptist state papers.

Southwestern Names Three
As Distinguished Alumni

FORT WORTH (BP)--A university president, a retired denominational executive, and a retired Baptist pastor were named the 1976 Distinguished Alumni by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

Named were William G. Tanner, 46, president of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, since 1971; W. Perry Crouch, 66, who retired this past year after 11 years as general secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention; and W. E. Williamson, 79, a retired Southern Baptist pastor in Louisiana and Texas, now residing in Waco, Tex.

Tanner was previously president of Mary Hardin-Baylor College in Belton, Tex., and served as pastor for Baptist churches in Houston, Cleburne and Wheelock, Tex. He was pastor of First Baptist Church, Gulfport, Miss., 1963-68.

President of the Oklahoma Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and vice president of the Oklahoma Independent College Foundation, Tanner is a member of the Governor's Committee on Health Planning for Oklahoma, among others.

Crouch, prior to the North Carolina post, served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C., and served pastorates in Morgantown and Fayetteville, N. C., also in Hollis, Okla.

A former member of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, the denomination's Radio and Television Commission and the Southern Baptist Foundation, Crouch has been a trustee for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N. C., Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N. C., and Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N. C. He was also director of the Biblical Recorder, North Carolina Baptists' newsmagazine.

Williamson, a 1926 graduate of Southwestern Seminary, served more than 50 years as a pastor.

His longest pastorate was Fourth Avenue Baptist Church in Port Arthur, Tex., 1944 until his 1961 retirement. His three sons are all graduates of Southwestern and are in full-time Christian work. A grandson is currently enrolled at Southwestern.

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B. A. Sizemore Jr. Dies
In Head-on Auto Crash

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--A head-on automobile collision here took the life of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Burlan A. Sizemore Jr., 42, and seriously injured four members of his family. The accident occurred on Sunday afternoon, March 21.

Sizemore and his family were on a four-lane road about two miles from the seminary, where he was professor of Old Testament interpretation and Hebrew. Their car was hit by one driven by a 16-year-old youth, who was apparently drag racing, a seminary spokesman said. The youth's condition was not known.

The Sizemore's daughter, Rebecca, 11, was "critically injured, with partial paralysis," the spokesman noted, while the other family members, including Sizemore's widow, Dorothy, Cynthia, 17, and Burlan, 16, were "seriously injured." The four were in North Kansas City Memorial Hospital. An older daughter, Sherry, 19, was traveling in Europe. His mother also survives.

A native of Centerville, Mo., Sizemore was previously on the faculty of Georgetown (Ky.) College, coming to Midwestern in 1968. He had been an instructor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, from which he was graduated with the bachelor of divinity and doctor of theology degrees. He was graduated also from Southwest Baptist College and William Jewell College in Bolivar and Liberty, Mo., respectively. Sizemore would have been 43-years-old on May 6.

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