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Texan Was Baptist Man
Enough for Missions

By Dan Martin

DALLAS (BP)--Last summer, Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men (TBM) volunteered for a stint in missions work in Minnesota and got more than he actually bargained for, though he says now he wouldn't trade the experience.

Dixon, for the past 10 years or so, has been involved in missions in his TBM position, matching volunteers with projects and funneling workers into mission projects. He also has been charged with mission education--the how, why and where of opportunities in Christian missions.

"I had nine months of study leave accumulated" Dixon said, "and wanted to know better how to work in missions...specifically--how to help the people in Minnesota and Wisconsin."

So he asked the Baptist missions team in Minnesota and Wisconsin to "pick a place for me to work...to spend four months of my study leave."

The team picked St. Cloud, Minn., a town of 42,000 about 70 miles northwest of twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. St. Cloud had no Southern Baptist Church, but a nucleus of people there wanted one.

Dixon was asked to be the new church's pastor --which was something he hadn't counted on. "I had expected to be used in RE (religious education), since I had that background. I had never been pastor of a church before.

"We didn't know what to expect. Never having been a pastor before or having started a new church before, we didn't know what to look for. We just took it one day at a time," he added.

In late May, Dixon and his wife, Jean, left Dallas in their car and pickup truck, headed for St. Cloud. They rented an apartment and made arrangements to begin Sunday services in the Civic Building.

"We wanted to meet in another location, but the Lord knew what he was doing. He gave us a building right in the heart of town," Dixon said.

"The big factor in whatever success we had was prayer," Dixon said. "That's the secret of the whole thing. We have got to get back to that understanding in our work: The key is prayer."

Before the Dixons left for St. Cloud they contacted 100 friends and formed a prayer chain.

"We started them praying...saturating the city with prayer," he added.

The work in St. Cloud began late last year when three St. Cloud families contacted Evan Holmes, Northland Association missions director in Minneapolis, to ask about starting a church.

Each family had been involved in pioneer Southern Baptist work before--the George Connells, the Bill Bristers and the Mel Bakers.

Connell is sales manager for a feed company; Brister, publisher of the St. Cloud Daily News, and Baker, assistant administrator of the Veterans Administration Hospital in St. Cloud.

"When we arrived our little chapel was made up of three families--nine members," Dixon said. "We worked and prayed with them for about a month while we held day camps in three areas of the city."

Dixon took a "rec wagon" with him. The wagon contains equipment for basketball, baseball, volleyball, soccer and other recreational activities such as puppet shows, a public address system and machinery for making snow cones.

The wagon was operated by two summer workers: Mickey Lenamon from Fort Worth and Gardy Harvey from San Antonio. Lenamon is the son of TBM president Joe Lenamon, and a freshman at Texas A & M. Harvey is a senior at Tarleton State College in Stephenville.

They were aided by Brent Baker, 17, son of the Mel Bakers, and Mark Griswold, a junior high school student from St. Cloud.

"We found out we didn't have to try any new, innovative things, Dixon said. "The basics worked just fine. Things we learned about a church long ago worked in St. Cloud."

Day camping and Backyard Bible Clubs were used, resulting in 48 professions of faith, he noted.

"Day camps are an effective way to reach people," Dixon said. "We ringed the city with day camps, and followed them with Backyard Bible Clubs."

Dixon added: "Before we came to St. Cloud, I prayed that we would reach every area of town and every social strata. We had families ringing around the town and in the suburbs, with people in every social strata."

He talked of the executives, laborers, people in mobile home parks, a prostitute, and an alcoholic. All were reached by the ministry of St. Cloud Baptist Chapel.

"We have sown the seed, cultivated and watered. God gave us the privilege of seeing some of the harvest."

Dixon added that he was told "not to tell people we were Southern Baptists. They said it would offend them."

"Well," he explained. "Don't you believe it. We didn't offend anybody saying we were Southern Baptists. In fact, being Southern Baptists got us some people."

One family called after hearing Jimmy Carter speak about being born again, he said:

"They wanted a church where they preached salvation by grace and eternal security...they visited us and they joined us."

Dixon admits leaving St. Cloud with "mixed feelings" and says "three months was just too short a time...we were just getting to know the people when it was time to come home."

He left a church, averaging nearly 50 in Sunday School, which saw the 48 professions of faith and seven baptisms during his short pastorate.

"I learned many things in Minnesota this summer," he said, adding he already has put some of the methods and principles into practice.

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Seminary Extension Reports Enrollment Records, '75-'76

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Seminary Extension Department of the six Southern Baptist theological seminaries set all-time records in the 1975-76 academic year with 11,750 course enrollments, 8,449 students and 292 extension centers throughout the United States.

Growth percentages showed a marked increase over the 1974-75 year and have been rising rapidly during the past four years (since the 1972-73 year), according to Raymond M. Rigdon, Seminary Extension Department director.

Course enrollments increased 30.7 percent over 1974-75 and 68.5 percent over 1972-73, students went up 26 percent over 1974-75 and 70 percent over 1972-73, and extension centers rose 26.9 percent over last year and 40 percent during the past four years.

The students and enrollments represented pastors and other church leaders from 50 states and 10 foreign countries during 1975-76 and included personnel from the Army, Air Force, Marines and Navy.

A breakdown of course enrollments and students shows 9,735 enrollments and 6,689 students in extension centers and 2,015 enrollments and 1,760 students in the department's home study program.

North Carolina and Texas ranked one-two in all three categories. North Carolina recorded 1,904 course enrollments, 1,229 students and 46 centers, and Texas had 1,671, and 991, and 24, respectively.

Others in the top five included Florida, third each in enrollments (685) and students (490); Mississippi, fourth each in enrollments (581) and students (467) and tied for third in centers (18) with Ohio; and Missouri, fifth in all categories (564 enrollments, 451 students and 15 centers).

Rigdon said the department, which has gained approval of the National Home Study Institute and the National University Extension Association, has a goal of reaching church leaders not able to enroll for residence study in a seminary or return for continuing education.

"As Southern Baptists are preparing for the Bold Mission Thrust, designed to evangelize the United States and stimulate church growth, Seminary Extension wants to help back up the effort by providing continuing quality education for pastors and others who will lead in the movement. Our department is working actively with several departments at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in helping them incorporate Seminary Extension materials in the Bold Mission Thrust effort."

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Chile--'God's Country'
Steeped in Controversy

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By James Lee Young

SANTIAGO, Chile (BP)--When the angels of God had finished spreading the beauty of creation around the universe, they still had some of the best left over and were looking for someplace to put it.

They found this one out-of-the-way area behind some mountains and threw the rest of nature's best resources there, thinking no one would ever know. The land is Chile.

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You won't find it in the Bible, but the Chileans tell the story with pride. Their country is blessed with varied terrain, climate, minerals, volcanos, lakes, rivers, fertile ground, play areas, produce, beautiful mountains, the Pacific shoreline, and an international potpourri of nationals.

Chile is a country that mixes poverty with a rising middle class and extremes of wealth.

It's a blend of a USA-type Old West setting, hinting of a sleepier era when siestas were the norm and Chile had not been thrust into any kind of international limelight with modern highrises.

Now the country is steeped in international controversy, with the world trying to determine if the Chilean people are actually repressed, if human rights are being denied by a military government that says it is only trying to put the predominantly Roman Catholic country back on its feet. A rising evangelical influence is said to be taking hold in the country.

It was against a background of conflicting reports on Chile that four of us accompanied Southern Baptist missionary Miss Georgia mae Ogburn to see what Chile is like these days.

Our party included Mrs. A. Harrison Gregory, president of national Woman's Missionary Union for Southern Baptists; Beverly Tinnin, pastor of First Baptist Church, Meridian, Miss., and his wife Bobbie; and myself (James Lee Young, feature editor of Baptist Press).

Miss Ogburn, who now resides in Meridian, is retiring this year from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board after more than 35-years as a missionary to Chile. She was awarded the Bernado O'Higgins Decoration--the country's highest award to a foreigner--earlier this year, for recognition of her contributions to the moral, educational, and spiritual life of Chile.

On our tour, we talked to people--rich, middle class and poor--from north to south in Chile. Opinions ran from opposition--tempered with fear of being quoted--to an intense nationalistic view.

Our first paradoxical view of Chile came during the "Once" (Sept. 11) celebration at Santiago's Diego Portales, to commemorate the military takeover from the leftist Salvador Allende regime, Sept. 11, 1973. Thousands of children, teenagers and adults marched in the streets, cheering President Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, singing and chanting, "Viva Chile," and "Chile eres tu" ("Chile is you").

We had to agree that the smiles, enthusiasm and huge participation on a cloudy, cold day could not be legislated or dictated. It was the same in other events surrounding "Once," and Diez y Ocho (Sept. 18), Chile's independence Day celebration. Admittedly, we could not know what was in the minds of people who weren't present for the celebrations, in a city of three million inhabitants.

The Chileans, by and large, kept insisting during our two-week visit that we report not only how free they were to move, but how free we were to ask questions and go where we wanted.

We had to admit no one restricted our movement during the visit, and we were free to talk with persons of many views--so long as we could find them, and we did.

Generally, the Chileans insisted we consider their history and past government to see "how much better things are."

They cited previous conditions, such as long bread lines that began at 5 a.m. some days and people who stood in lines, only to find no bread or other goods. Political indoctrination and activism under Allende reached into the elementary schools, observers said. Strikes, fighting, near-anarchy, and black marketing were part of the conditions, they noted. Now all political parties are "in recess;" strikes are not allowed; and there is no electoral system in operation; hence, no vote. The Constitution is being rewritten.

Southern Baptist missionaries stayed with the Chilean nationals through the worst of times, and now the Chilean Baptists say they won't forget. Only one missionary family left temporarily under Allende, because they were starving.

The some 160 Baptist churches in the Chilean convention generally are small, with a few having as many as 500 members, like First Baptist Church, Santiago. Most have 100 or fewer members. The work is strongly lay-oriented. A good reason for this is that about half of the Baptist churches don't have pastors, so it is up to the laymen to carry on, including preaching, Bible teaching and much of their own training.

From the larger, more established congregation of First Baptist Church, Santiago, to the smaller, poorer, out-of-the-way Mapuche Indian Church on the reservation near Temuco, we found Baptists working under hardships and lacking many resources. Even things normally taken for granted in the U. S., such as heating and air conditioning are luxury items normally not found in Chilean Baptist churches.

Missionaries say they rely heavily on Cooperative Program (unified budget) and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions funds to keep their work going.

The missionaries find that with all the help from the United States, they are still understaffed to reach Chile's some 13 million people, a population comparable in size to the Southern Baptist Convention in the States.

The people aren't looking for handouts, but they appreciate help when it is given, we found.

The Mapuche Indians, for example, built their own small wood-frame building outside Temuco, from their own available lumber and other materials. They continue to maintain what is said to be a relatively, strong church, in spite of not having a pastor. Missionaries preach for them periodically.

We were honored guests everywhere we went. Members of Royal Ambassadors (RA) boys missions group from First Baptist, Santiago, asked us to greet RA boys across the U. S. for them. Bev Tinnin and Mrs. Gregory addressed churches and WMU groups up and down the country.

We visited schools, orphanages, and other mission work and saw the austere conditions that exist in most Chilean Baptist churches. Yet the spirit of the people did not appear to be diminished. They do a lot with so little.

Without minimizing problems we saw in Chile, the four of us--Mrs. Gregory, the Tinnins and I--agreed that a military government was not what we would choose to live under.

But the freedom to live and move, availability of goods, the people's attitude about their government and hope for the future were better overall than we had been led to believe by reports from the States.

Bev Tinnin said, for example: "A military dictatorship is not to my liking. I would certainly hate for this type of government to be in control of the U. S. But I think the new government appears to be a great improvement over the last, in terms of public safety and well being. And our Baptist missionaries feel they have complete freedom to carry on the work God has called them to and for which they've been appointed by Southern Baptists."

Mrs. Gregory noted, "From what I've seen in a short time, this government has given stability, law and order, and instilled confidence in the Chileans. Most have conveyed that the government is interested in their personal welfare.

"It may be a long process," she continued, "in bringing about economic security for the entire nation, but I think an honest effort is being made.

"People in the U. S. tend to stand in judgment on other countries and ignore the same bad conditions in our own country. Here is a South American country that is basically pro-U. S., yet, we're generally ignoring it except to be critical," Mrs. Gregory concluded.

House Kills \$3.2 Billion
College Tax Credit Bill

WASHINGTON (BP)--The House of Representatives killed a \$3.2 billion tax credit measure to aid parents with dependents in college by refusing to act on an amendment the Senate tacked on to a bill for the relief of Smith College in Northampton, Mass.

The original bill from the House would have admitted duty free 33 carillon bells produced by the Packard Bell Foundry in France for Smith College. The bells were subject to a 7 percent duty which amounts to approximately \$2,250. There was no objection in either house of Congress to this relief for Smith College.

When the bill reached the Senate, an amendment was proposed by Sen. Russell B. Long (D., La.) to allow an income tax credit to individuals for certain educational expenses paid for dependents. The tax credit would have been allowed up to \$100 in 1977, \$150 in 1978, \$200 in 1979, and \$250 in 1980.

Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D., Me.) opposed the bill which would have cost the government \$3.2 billion in loss of revenue over a five-year period. Muskie said the bill would not result in real help to taxpayers, since colleges would likely raise their tuition costs in the amount of tax credit to the taxpayer.

This tax credit plan was earlier included in the larger tax reform bill, but it was knocked out in the Senate-House Conference Committee. At that time, it was promised that both houses would have opportunity to vote on it as a separate item.

In the closing days of the 94th Congress, Rep. Al Ullman (D., Ore.), chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, brought the Senate amendment before the House. However, the House refused to appoint a conference committee and the measure (along with the relief for Smith College) died with the adjournment of Congress.

Parents of students in Southern Baptist senior and junior colleges would have received approximately \$75,948,300 in tax credits if the bill had passed Congress and had been signed into law by President Ford. This figure is based on the regular enrollment reported for the 1975-76 school year.

If colleges decided to increase tuition by the amount of tax credit allowed to parents, the beneficiaries would then have been the schools rather than those paying the tuition.

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Baptists Plan Mexico
Disaster Relief

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LA PAZ, Mexico (BP)--Southern Baptists are preparing to provide disaster relief assistance to victims of Hurricane Lisa, which killed some 1,000 persons and left 50,000 others homeless in Mexico.

La Paz and cities on the west coast of Mexico's mainland in the area of Los Mochis, north of Mazatlan, were heavily damaged, according to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The president of Mexico has declared it a disaster area.

Besides the deaths (which involved no Baptists), hundreds of missing persons, and the homeless, La Paz has no electricity and food, according to W. Eugene Grubbs, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's disaster response coordinator. Food is reportedly not immediately available in the area nor is La Paz accessible by overland transportation.

"There are two Baptist churches in La Paz and a strong association of churches on the west coast of Mexico," Grubbs noted. "Dr. Lee Baggett, Southern Baptist representative and the Mexican Baptist Mission's disaster relief coordinator, and two other doctors are making a survey of the situation in La Paz. Wyatt W. Lee, Southern Baptist representative in Mexico, is surveying needs on the west coast.

"They will render assistance as needed and survey medical, food and shelter needs. The board has authorized the spending of \$25,000 immediately. Other funds will be made available as needed," he said.

If food is needed it will be distributed to those in need through local Baptists.

"We are ready to provide anything needed in the way of assistance and have personnel, funds and food accessible and ready to move on notice," explained Charles W. Bryan, the board's area secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean.

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The Southern Baptist General Convention of California, through its disaster relief personnel and language missionaries, is also on standby, Grubbs said. Baptists in northern Mexico and southern California are ready to provide needed help and supplies.

"We, of course, will not duplicate any other organization in relief efforts," explained Grubbs. "We hope to work in coordination to supply whatever we are called upon to supply.

"The California convention and the Foreign Mission Board have been in contact with the lieutenant governor of California, who has been dispatched to the area by the United States to evaluate needs to offer assistance."