



-- FEATURES
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'Community' of Alcoholics
Lives in Florida Swamp

By Jim Newton

OKEECHOBEE, Fla. (BP)--Flying blind in a driving Florida rainstorm, Mickey Evans didn't see the power lines as he tried to land a Cessna 172 on a paved farm road near Venus, Fla., and crashed.

His back was broken, and his ministry as director of Dunklin Memorial Camp, an alcoholic rehabilitation center near here, might have ended there. For almost 12 years, Dunklin Camp, in the heart of the Everglades, had evolved around its founder, "Brother Mickey."

But miraculously, he survived a crushed lumbar and broken back and was back working toward rehabilitating the 25 alcoholics there within three months.

The painful recovery, and another close-call plane crash, forced Evans, a former "workaholic," to slow down. The main thing the crashes did was teach him and others at the camp to share responsibilities--to work in and as a "community."

The community is larger, however, than the present 19 alcoholics and seven staff persons involved in the rehabilitation program. It includes 1,267 "alumni" (alcoholics) who have been through the three-month program. It also includes Christians throughout Florida involved in a personal ministry to alcoholics, through Dunklin's example, also thousands of laymen of all denominations who support the camp because of its connections with lay renewal in South Florida.

Two closely-related organizations have their headquarters at Dunklin--Laos Institute and Laymen's Landing. Laos Institute is a program, place and fellowship to provide deeper spiritual growth and training for Christian laymen of all denominations who have been "turned on" by the renewal movement.

Southern Baptists in the Laymen's Landing program mostly fly to denominationally-oriented lay renewal weekends, coordinated by the Florida Baptist Convention's evangelism division. Many of Dunklin's alcoholics have joined lay renewal teams, sharing how Christ has taken away their need to drink.

To participate in the Dunklin program, the alcoholic must make a commitment to stay three months minimum. Each participant daily attends two hours of Bible classes and two hours of assigned homework; each lesson deals with spiritual truths applied to the practical problems of life as experienced by alcoholics. Evans designed the curriculum, wrote the textbook and teaches the Bible classes.

Participants are also required to spend 30 minutes each morning in daily prayer and "quiet time," and are to keep a "Daily Moral Inventory," ranking their own daily spiritual condition. In addition, they get plenty of food, lots of rest, and at least six hours of hard work daily by doing camp chores.

Dunklin Camp, easy to reach by small plane, is an isolated area eight miles from Lake Okechobee in the Everglades, about 50 miles northwest of West Palm Beach, Fla. The camp is named in honor of Baptist missionary, E.S. Dunklin, who served in that part of South Florida, and who Evans knew from his own boyhood.

Evans, the son of alcoholic parents, had been deeply concerned about the alcoholic's plight for years. While he was pastor of Dunklin Memorial Baptist Church in Indiantown, Fla., about 20 miles from the camp site, he became convinced God wanted him to leave the pastorate and establish an alcoholic rehabilitation center--on faith.

When the camp was begun 13 years ago, it was a swamp--full of mosquitoes, alligators, frogs, palmetto, sawgrass and weeds.

During those early years, Evans and the alcoholics he was trying to help carved the camp out of the swamp. Every building now in the camp was built by the alcoholics, with the supervision of Evans and Ray Boggs, a "dry" alcoholic and construction contractor who has assumed many of the camp's administrative responsibilities. Evans is responsible now for the community's spiritual growth.

What was once a swamp is now a beautiful lake, with an island prayer garden and gurgling fountains. Except for a long-range plan to build a swimming pool, camper-trailer park and additional recreational facilities, most construction has been completed, Boggs said.

The camp has a 700-seat tabernacle, a 200-seat cafetorium, a bookstore and library area, print shop, several cottages and homes for staffers, two dormitories, a canteen area, recreation center, barns, and workshops.

The men grow enough vegetables, fruit and other crops to meet most of their own needs, plus provide some extra income for the camp. They raise cattle and hogs to provide all their own meat. The camp has its own slaughterhouse, supervised by Evans--a former butcher by trade--and his son, and it has a plant nursery.

The Laos Institute facilities are also on the site, with conference rooms and motel-type living accommodations for up to 60 persons who come for weekend spiritual growth sessions. The institute is the brainchild of Reid Hardin, who directs renewal evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (HMB).

Hardin and Evans pooled resources and efforts in establishing the institute in 1971, before Hardin left the insurance business to join the HMB staff. The institute trains laymen inspired by the lay renewal movement and helps the "Laos" (literally, the people of God) to find the ministry God has called them to, and to recognize and utilize gifts he has given them for ministry. In recent years, the institute has focused also on marriage enrichment and marriage counseling.

Many reformed alcoholics from Dunklin have left the camp to become active and respected members and deacons of South Florida churches. At least two alumni have become ministers. It is difficult to know how many are actually "cured," Evans said.

To help with alumni follow-up, Evans and Boggs have helped organize "Good Samaritan Clubs" of alumni and Christians in South Florida who are concerned about alcoholics' problems.

The camp's program emphases include helping alcoholics develop a better self-image, to realize God loves them, and to recognize they have a greater power in Jesus Christ. Not all the men who complete the three-month course make decisions for Christ, but many do, Evans said.

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Adapted from the Nov. 1976 World Mission Journal
(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

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Commission Compiles List
Of Oldest Baptist Churches

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CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--While most of America is focusing its attention on the country's 200th anniversary, a Baptist church here is nearing its tricentennial.

First Baptist Church, Charleston, the oldest church in the Southern Baptist Convention, will celebrate its 300th birthday in 1982. The historic church is included in a list of 108 Southern Baptist churches which are 200 years old or older.

The list, compiled by the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, includes 94 churches which have passed the bicentennial mark in their history and 14 now observing their bicentennial.

While complete accuracy is extremely difficult, the commission utilized several sources to make the list as precise as possible, including 1975 Baptist state convention annuals, selected Uniform Church Letters and volume one of the "Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists." Three state Baptist historical authorities also helped verify the information.

The list, published in the October issue of "Baptist History and Heritage," publication produced by the Historical Commission, are located in five states. Virginia has the highest number with 59, followed by North Carolina with 25, South Carolina with 20, Georgia with 3 and Maryland with 1.

Fredericksburg Baptist Church, Fredericksburg, Va., established in 1767, has the largest current membership of the 108 churches, with more than 1,700 members.

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**Church Closes in Laos;
Warns Thai Christians**

CHACHEUNGSAO, Thailand (BP)--The Laotian government has followed through on its warning that a Baptist church here would be closed.

The church held its final services, including communion, the day before the government's deadline date for closing, according to Maxine (Mrs. Robert) Stewart, Southern Baptist missionary press representative. "The next morning government officials took over the building for other purposes," Mrs. Stewart reported.

"This move on the part of the government is not unexpected," commented William R. Wakefield, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Southeast Asia. "It is in keeping with patterns set by the Communists in China," he added.

But for Christians, he said, "It is a signal that we need to redouble our efforts in prayer on behalf of our Christian brothers and sisters in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam."

The Laotian church leaders sent word to Thai Christians to take note that such tragedy could easily come to them, and that they should seize the opportunity to witness for their faith while there is freedom, Mrs. Stewart reported.

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**Medical-Dental Fellowship
Organizes; Names Officers**

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ATLANTA (BP)--The Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship was organized here as Baptist physicians and dentists from across the nation formally adopted a constitution, elected officers and carried on a first business session.

The organizational meeting followed several meetings of a steering committee.

The fellowship--currently made up of Southern Baptist physicians, dentists, medical students and dental students--will welcome other physicians and dentists who accept Southern Baptist practice and beliefs, a fellowship spokesman said.

Purposes of the fellowship include providing Christian professional fellowship; additional opportunities for sharing, worshiping, ministering and witnessing; opportunities for educational experiences; and additional opportunities for expanded Christian service through mission support of home and foreign efforts, disaster relief and personal involvement in mission service "as members are led by the Holy Spirit," a spokesman said.

Local chapters in communities, regions and states will be established in order to carry out the purposes and intents of the fellowship.

Officers elected include Dr. John McCall, physician from Memphis, Tenn., President; Dr. Joe Pipkin, dentist, Orlando, Fla., vice president; Dr. Tim Pennell, physician, Winston Salem, N. C., program chairman; Dr. J. V. Jefford, physician, Spartanburg, S. C., membership chairman; Dr. Franklin T. Fowler, medical consultant for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., service chairman; Dr. John Bryan, physician, Bluefield, W. Va., finance chairman; and Harold E. Hurst, associate medical consultant for the Foreign Mission Board, as executive secretary.

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

OBU Names Interim President;
Hultgren Heads Search

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--William E. Neptune, academic vice president, has been appointed acting president at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) here and a search committee has been appointed to find a replacement for William G. Tanner.

Tanner, OBU's 11th president, who will become executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta, Jan. 1., joined the Home Mission Board staff, Oct. 1, to work with retiring chief executive, Arthur B. Rutledge.

Warren C. Hultgren, pastor of First Baptist Church, Tulsa, and a trustee of OBU, will chair the search committee. It is the third time Hultgren has served as chairman of a search committee for an OBU president. Other members include five trustees and representatives from the faculty, student body and alumni.

Neptune has been on the OBU staff since 1954. He has served as assistant professor, associate professor, and professor of chemistry. He was named dean of liberal arts in 1961 and appointed academic vice president in 1973.

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National Advisory Panel
Slated for Acteens

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BIRMINGHAM (BP)--The Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) has instigated plans for an Acteens National Advisory Panel to be composed of six exceptional high school students in the WMU's Acteens missions program for girls.

"The Acteens National Advisory Panel will give visibility to the organization and will highlight opportunities for older Acteens in missions," said Beverly Sutton, WMU Acteens consultant.

Panel members will serve the dual purpose of planning for national Acteens programs and officially representing Acteens when possible.

The advisory panel will be chosen from a slate of Acteens nationwide who have submitted applications and who have met the requirements established by WMU.

Charter members of WMU's Acteens National Advisory Panel will be chosen prior to February 1, 1977, and will serve until December 1, 1977, when a second slate of panel members will be selected.

Other responsibilities of the panel will be serving as hostesses for WMU's annual meeting, June 11-14, 1977, in Kansas City, Mo., and perhaps writing for Accent, WMU's magazine for girls, grades 7-12.

"We will be involving the older Acteens who are sharp girls actively participating in missions and our 'Studiact' activities," added Sutton.

Six panel members and three alternates will be chosen from the applications of Acteens who must face rigid requirements for panel consideration.

"Our premise is that girls can plan, without undue guidance, to give suggestions for overall Acteens programming and for the format and content of Accent (which contains application forms for the advisory panel in its October issue.)

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