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SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

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Lumbee Brewington
Second Rate No More

By Phyllis Faulkenberry

PEMBROKE, N.C. (BP)--Though he appears Anglo, Tony Brewington's life has been marked by the same stigma placed on other darker-skinned Lumbee Indians.

When he went to the movies he sat separated from the rest of the theater by chicken wire. As recently as the 1960s he was asked to leave some local department stores.

Today full-blood Lumbee Indian Brewington serves as a Southern Baptist home missionary, directing missions for the North Carolina Burnt Swamp Baptist Association, a strong band of 48 churches in an area where, until recently, blacks and Indians were pushed to society's rim.

Brewington and other Lumbees have had to prove themselves in many ways. Some researchers claim the Lumbees are not Indian at all; others refuse to accept them as part of Anglo society.

No record of Lumbee history exists. Tradition traces the tribes' beginnings to intermarriages between the Croatoan Indians and the Lost Colony on Roanoke Island, N.C., (then part of the Virginia territory) in the late 1500s.

The intermingling resulted in tribe members sharing few similar physical characteristics. Brewington's light skin and gray eyes are as much Lumbee as others' dark complexion and brown-black eyes. Neither do Lumbees have a native language, except English, and their lifestyle has been European since the 1600s. Visitors to the rural region are often disappointed to find white farmhouses instead of a reservation or wigwams.

When Brewington was 12, he attended a Baptist summer camp. "When that missionary told the story of how Jesus was despised and rejected, yet he loved in spite of it, something happened to me," Brewington remembers. "That took away my bitterness and resentment toward the other race."

Brewington felt called to the ministry in high school. He attended Pembroke University, then graduated from Furman University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He was pastor of First Baptist Church of Pembroke and worked with associational Bible schools. In 1970 he became the first full-time director of missions for Burnt Swamp Baptist Association.

The association, founded by three churches, grew large enough to apply for membership in the North Carolina Baptist Convention by 1929. Membership was not granted until 36 years later.

"The Indians were not accepted by black or white," admits Burke Holland, North Carolina director of language missions. "So as people of God they just started doing their own things."

For the 30,000 Indians in Robeson County--slightly more than one-fourth of the total population--Christianity has long been integral, drawing even closer the already-close Indian community of 12,000 church members, including 6,000 Baptists.

During Brewington's third year with the association, he saw the completion of the Burnt Swamp Baptist Building, worth \$90,000. The closeness and commitment of the community allowed the Indians to build it for just \$40,000, with each member donating \$10 and all the labor needed.

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In 1976, the community again joined forces to add to the Indian orphanage, Odom Children's Home, originally built in 1918. Members gave \$5.03 each, plus labor and some building materials, to build the \$90,000 facility, actually worth \$180,000.

Brewington has a deep love and concern for his people. He isn't patronizing. "I don't see me as trying to change or improve them; I'm a co-laborer. I feel more like a channel than anything else," he says, "a channel through which the churches can find growth, then share themselves with others on both state and home mission levels."

This attitude has earned respect from pastors, banding them--and thus the association--together.

"Tony gives the association a caliber of leadership it hasn't had before," says Holland. "He's doing a fantastic job."

The association has a lack of educated pastors; many do not have their high school degrees. When Brewington became director of missions, only two worked in churches full-time; now nine do. Brewington has helped several enroll in school.

He started a Seminary Extension class for pastors, sponsored 12 workshops, and often takes pastors on field trips.

Brewington says "I see their need because I've been there. I know the problems, the feelings they have, in the way that no white man could."

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(BP) Photos mailed to Baptist newspapers by Atlanta Bureau of Baptist Press.

Bad Food, Bad Conference
Food Service Director Says

By Roy Jennings

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--A conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center is only as good as the food that's served.

That's the philosophy of Joe Cherry, 54-year-old food service supervisor, who says, "food is the most important thing there is at a conference. If you have a good experience with food, you will have a good conference."

And Cherry goes to great lengths to avoid a dud.

Take for example the Bold Mission Leadership Conference, which attracted more than 2,000 Southern Baptist Brotherhood and Woman's Missionary Union leaders and their families. Cherry said he studied the characteristics of the prospective diners for weeks in advance.

"I started with the ages of the people who registered in advance," he said. "I was also interested in the number in each age range and the section of the country where they live. Andy Lopez, the head chef, and I planned the menu based on that information."

Cherry, who has directed the Glorieta food service for almost four years after 10 years as director of the Colorado Baptist Encampment, said he included pork chops, steak and chicken because that's what adults like.

Since most of the conferees were from Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana, Cherry also made sure the menu included grits, black eyed peas and corn bread. "People from these three states really enjoy grits," he said, "but people from other sections of the country come in and say, 'what's that?'"

Out of 2,000 registrants, Cherry found he must prepare three meals daily for about 1,400. During a six-day conference, the conferees ate 9,000 pounds of meat and 1,500 gallons of vegetables and drank 1,000 gallons of coffee and an equal amount of tea.

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Cherry, who specializes in cooking Chinese dishes, learned quickly not to advertise menus in advance. That allows last minute changes and better control of food usage. Large crowds show up for expensive meals, such as steak, and attendance drops off during a meal with less appealing entrees, he said.

Cherry likes to experiment with new foods and new ways of serving them to keep meals tasty and the diners happy. A soup and salad line added two years ago became so popular that Cherry has added a continental breakfast line. Now breakfast has become the most popular meal at the center.

Then Cherry began offering the food buffet style so the diners could get hot food in the amount they wanted, except for meat. "We found it was psychologically bad to fill up a plate and thrust it upon people. It was like saying, 'Here is your food, now eat it.'"

But success also creates problems. By moving to a buffet format, Cherry feeds 2,500 persons in 75 minutes, with seating for only 1,000. As a result, many people finish eating at the same time, creating a line at the tray and dish disposal area. Cherry doesn't like lines of any kind.

Cherry said he gets most of his ideas for new entrees from his cooks, whom he encourages to make suggestions. The cooks, many of them housewives who live in the Glorieta vicinity, eat the new food themselves before they are added to the menu.

The likes and dislikes of the diners also influence food choices. "I talk to the people at the door when they come in and try to eat my meals with them at every opportunity to get feedback," Cherry said. "We also pay attention to the letters the diners write after they have gone home. If a dish was bad or an employee spoke sharply to a guest, we take care of those problems immediately."

Cherry gets letters every week commenting on the food. The letter he cherishes most was written by a business executive from Edmond, Okla., who called the Glorieta food service "the finest I have ever experienced in all of my travel to conference and convention centers."

Cherry indicated he will go to unusual lengths to keep that kind of mail coming in. "We will do whatever we need to do to make the people happy within our financial limitations," he said. "We purposely cater to the needs of each group. We will even change the time of the meals if they wish.

"You simply can't have a good spiritual experience when the food is bad."

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ABS Announces First Balinese New Testament

BALI, Indonesia (BP)--For the first time ever, residents of the Indonesian island of Bali now have the complete New Testament in their own language.

The Scripture was published in late May, the culmination of a project which began in 1973, according to the American Bible Society. The translation, completed in 1976, was initiated by the Balinese Protestant Church, the Roman Catholic Church in Bali, the Kemah Injil Church, and the Christian Life Foundation.

Wayan Mastra, chairman of the local Protestant synod, called the publication a "historic milestone." He said, "Now the Balinese Christians can no longer be accused of being aliens in Bali, because we now have the Holy Scriptures in our own language," he said. Balinese is spoken by three million persons on Bali and in nearby areas of southeastern Java.

Earlier translations of the Scriptures in Balinese were limited to portions of the New Testament. Translation of the Old Testament is in process, with a completion date forecast for the early 1980s.

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