



-- FEATURES
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November 14, 1979

79-191

Church Explores
Human Rainbow

By Julie Poole

ATLANTA (BP)--Yesterday Cheryl came home from work, changed her clothes, went grocery shopping, cooked and ate dinner, listened to the radio and went to bed.

To some this is normal, even routine.

To Cheryl, it is a new life--life she never knew as a mentally-retarded woman until she moved into the Snapfinger Home.

Cheryl is one of four mentally-handicapped women who live in the two-story, brick home operated as an outreach ministry of Rainbow Park Baptist Church in Decatur, a suburb of Atlanta.

"The church must be involved with all people," says Gene Tyre, pastor for five years. "There are many colors in the rainbow."

Three of the women have never lived in a house for any length of time. Ann, 31, Linda, 29, and Cheryl, 30, have lived in state and county institutions most of their lives.

The fourth, Enna, 34, formerly lived under her parents' care.

Now they are learning to live "more normal lives every day," says Frances Stokes, a Rainbow Park member who does volunteer work at Snapfinger.

The women do assembly-line work at a country training center five days a week. When the bus brings them to Snapfinger at 3:30 each afternoon, they are eager to spend two or three hours with their "new mother," as Ann calls Mrs. Stokes.

Mrs. Stokes plans a different activity for every day of the week.

Mondays they grocery shop, and sometimes go out to eat. Mrs. Stokes places the cart in one spot and sends each of them to various locations of the store to find the items on the list.

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays are "project" days. The women prefer housework to yard-work, but they do a little of both. "Project" days also are used to learn a seemingly simple task--such as using the calculator for shopping or applying makeup.

"I like Wednesday," Ann says. "That's time for church at Rainbow Park."

Mrs. Stokes takes the women to the church family dinner. Both young and old members speak to them, and Ann, the most outgoing of the foursome, can easily carry on a conversation with just about anyone.

Linda and Ann work in the nursery at Rainbow Park every Sunday morning. All four attend a Bible study with other handicapped women in the church. "I like Rainbow Park," Linda says. "The nursery is a fun place to be, too."

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Tyre says they are important to the church. "They have something to give. They're not here just to be ministered to, but to minister," he explains.

"The women at Snapfinger Home have been the most positive influence in our church's attitudinal change. These women are accepted as people here," Tyre adds.

"They all want to get married, have children," Mrs. Stokes says. "But all they see is couples together and their children--happy. They don't realize the responsibilities that come with a family. They have such a capacity for love. . . ."

The women enjoy music of all kinds. Cheryl passes a lot of time sitting in the rocking chair in her room with her earphones clamped on. She smiles and talks, slowly. A victim of Down's syndrome at birth, Cheryl tries hard to express herself to her "best friends, Linda, Ann, Enna and Frances."

"They're a lot like my teenage girls," Mrs. Stokes says. "They relate like sisters, in loving and in fighting. They have lots of questions, too, about moral issues. I always tell them how I feel about something. . . . I feel it's my duty as a Christian to at least tell them."

Other ministries of Rainbow Park demonstrate what Tyre calls their "missions-oriented identity."

'Funfusion,' which uses the church gymnasium to reach Atlanta's youth, happens every Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons for young people. A majority of these youths are black.

Once, nearly a decade ago, the membership of Rainbow Park tried to outrun the racially-changing community by moving to the Atlanta suburbs. Now with 55 black members, Tyre says his congregation opens its arms to any ethnic group. "They are very loving, giving individuals," he observes.

Fifteen percent of the church's budget is allocated to missions. The congregation helps support two new congregations--in Cottonwood, Idaho, and Lancaster, Pa.--by sending each \$100 a month.

Soon, Rainbow Park will sponsor "dinner table evangelism," a plan to bring non-Christians or unchurched into the fellowship.

"Evangelism is not just preaching to people," Tyre says. He believes a church must reach out in order to remain favorable inwardly. "And any church dedicated to loving their neighbors can do the same things we're doing," he urges.



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Baptist Heritage Series
Blends Facts, Insights

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Most of us know from high school history that Roger Williams was persecuted in America for his religious beliefs and that he established the Rhode Island colony that was the first to grant true religious freedom.

But how many realize the church he started was Baptist and that Southern Baptists in America can include his church in their heritage?

That fact, along with a host and handful of others, is included in "The Baptist Story for Children," one of ten pamphlets in a set called the Baptist Heritage Series released this year by the Southern Baptist Historical Commission.

Other facts about Southern Baptists that few probably know:

--they got the name "Southern" in 1845 when Baptists in the north and south split over the question of slavery, in part because the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies refused to appoint slaveholders as missionaries;

--that the first Baptist association, now a vital part of Baptist strength, was formed in Philadelphia, Pa., in 1707;

--that the landmark movement of the 1850s potentially could have prevented Baptists from cooperating in convention-wide missions ventures because it treated the church as strictly a local entity;

--or that while Baptists oppose creeds, the earliest Baptist confession of faith in America was drawn up by Thomas Gould of the First Baptist Church of Boston in 1665 to explain the faith and order of the tiny Baptist group to a civil court.

But the series is more than an amalgamation of interesting historical facts. Written by 10 journalists, historians, professors, pastors and denominational executives, the series welds facts and insights into a collection that coherently and concisely paints Southern Baptist history onto a colorful canvas.

Charles DeWeese, assistant director of editorial and research services for the Historical Commission, says response to the series has far exceeded expectations and "made us acutely aware that Southern Baptists have a real interest in their heritage."

In just five months, 84 percent of the nearly one million original printing of the series, that sells for one dollar, had been distributed.

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The series includes pamphlets entitled: The Baptist Story, The Baptist Story for Children, Baptist Beginnings, Southern Baptist Beginnings, Southern Baptists Nationwide, Baptists Affirm Their Faith, How Southern Baptists Work Together, Baptists and World Missions, Baptists and Religious Liberty, and Crises in Baptist Life. They are available from the Historical Commission, 127 Ninth Ave. North, Nashville, Tenn., 37234.

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Minn.-Wis. Fellowship
Elects Layman Head

MADISON, Wis. (BP)--Baptists in the Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist Fellowship elected layman Charles Dunning, a chemist with Kimberly Clark Paper Co. in Neenah, Wis., as president during their 10th annual meeting.

The 109 messengers adopted a \$777,918 budget of which \$135,581 will come from Minnesota-Wisconsin churches. Of that, 25 percent is designated for world mission causes through the national Cooperative Program.

Messengers learned their membership had grown to 10,310 in 67 churches and 23 chapels, including 14 begun this year, and were urged to begin work in the 114 counties in the two-state fellowship that still had no Southern Baptist work.

The fellowship anticipates up to 40 volunteers from Texas next summer in a Mission Service Corps project, where the volunteers will give one or two years to help grow and establish Southern Baptist work in the area.

The 1980 convention will be Nov. 7-8 in Eau Claire, Wis.

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Family Life Endowment
Established at Midwestern

Baptist Press
11/14/79

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Trustees of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary heard a fund-raising update, the announcement of a Family Life Endowment fund, and an address by the president of the Southern Baptist Convention at their semi-annual meeting.

The seminary broke ground in September for a Child Development Center, and \$82,594 has been pledged or given for it by 120 donors. The facility, projected to cost \$500,000, was allocated \$329,000 in capital needs funds by the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Carolyne Hester Family Life Endowment Fund was established by H.I. Hester, the first president of Midwestern's board of trustees and former vice-president of the seminary.

Income from the fund, established as a memorial to Hester's wife, will be used to fund the Carolyne Hester Ministers' Wives Conference, the Carolyne Hester Marriage Enrichment Program and the Carolyne Hester Ministry Effectiveness Workshops.

During the announcement, Hester, his voice breaking with emotion, told the trustees, students and faculty, "Let me share with you how much my dear lady loved this seminary. No one loved it more, or prayed for it more than Mrs. Hester."

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Midwestern President Milton Ferguson explained that Mrs. Hester was actively involved and interested in the young minister and his wife, as well as committed to the necessity of a healthy, growing marriage relationship. It was to this purpose that the memorial was given.

SBC President Adrian Rogers challenged faculty and students, saying "There has never been a greater opportunity to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ than this day."

"God did not call you to preach theology," Rogers declared. "God called you to use theology to preach Jesus. Your theology is the means of preaching Jesus."

Larry Baker, associate professor of Christian Ethics and director of the institutional self-study program, outlined the nature of accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association of Theological Schools. Trustees will be involved in the process of the self-study, which must be implemented every 10 years for the purpose of improvement and revalidation of accreditation.

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Hawaii Meeting
A Celebration

Baptist Press
11/14/79

HONOLULU (BP)--The 37th annual meeting of the Hawaii Baptist Convention became a celebration as messengers renewed their commitment to Bold Mission Thrust and rallied to the cause of Indochinese and Cambodian refugees.

Joe Sanders, pastor of Nuuanu Baptist Church, Honolulu, was re-elected for his second term as president and he called the messengers to greater commitment to Bold Mission Thrust, the Southern Baptist goal to present the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000.

Messengers adopted a \$792,830 budget for 1980, including a state Cooperative Program goal of \$234,000. Of that, 25 percent will be distributed to world missions causes through the national Cooperative Program.

Messengers from three new churches were seated, increasing the number of churches, missions and language congregations affiliated with the Hawaii Baptist Convention to 60. One of the new churches, the Happy Valley Baptist Church, is in Pago Pago, American Samoa.

In one session, Western Samoa High Chief Tuisuga presented the first Cooperative Program contribution from the two new Baptist missions in Western Samoa sponsored by the Happy Valley church, whose pastor is Ray Viliamu.

Messengers adopted resolutions to encourage churches to sponsor Indochinese boat people, arriving in Hawaii at the rate of 150 a month, and to receive special offerings during November for hunger relief for Cambodian refugees in Thailand. Those present gave a special offering toward hunger relief of \$4,302, including an anonymous gift of \$3,000.

The 1980 meeting will be Nov. 12-14 at Kaunakakai Baptist Church, Molokai.

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CORRECTIONS

In graph eight of story mailed 11-12-79 entitled "Ark. Sets Newspaper Trial, Challenges Messengers," delete word "open" in the first sentence and make the beginning sentence read: Communion is, with baptism, the second of only two ordinances observed in Southern Baptist churches. etc.

In graph three of story mailed 11-12-79 entitled "Brotherhood Installs Smith, Plans Regional Conferences," please change "continue the election..." to "discontinue the election..."

Thanks, Baptist Press