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Challenges, Growth Typify
Year for MSC Team in Brazil

By Carl Hoover

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The tall, tan Brazilian girl stared intently at the two Texan teachers of her English class. The class had finished and the three were alone to talk about some of Regina's questions.

"I want to know how to know your Jesus," she told her teachers, both Mission Service Corps volunteers. "I don't have the peace in my life that I see in yours."

Danny Miller of San Antonio and Bruce Barrs of Kermit then explained how she could ask Jesus Christ into her life. There was nothing too unusual about the conversation—except that it was entirely in Portuguese, a second language for the Texans.

"I know that it was the spirit of God talking through me," Miller said. "It was only our second month on the field and my Portuguese was still rough. But I never spoke as well as I did that night. Despite all my mistakes, she understood me well enough to accept Christ."

That incident was one of several shared during debriefing meetings at the Foreign Mission Board by 19 volunteers in the Mission Service Corps, a Southern Baptist program where volunteers spend one or two years working with career missionaries at home or abroad. The young people were returning to the United States after nine months in Brazil.

Although the team was originally sent to Brazil to assist evangelism training with university students in seven cities, a series of miscommunications resulted in their taking on other jobs. And the jobs were as varied as the team members themselves: English classes, cooking lessons, church construction, exercise classes, English Bible studies, personal visitation and discipling, recreation and even letter writing were used to communicate the gospel to young Brazilians.

The project concept began as early as 1978, when Southern Baptist leaders in Texas sought ways to integrate the "Mission to Brazil," a five-year planned cooperation between Texas and Brazilian Baptists, and the then newly formed Mission Service Corps. A call went out to churches and Baptist students for U.S. volunteers, and by May 1979 a team had been chosen.

Before the volunteers left for Brazil, they underwent six weeks of intensive language and culture orientation at San Antonio's Mexican Baptist Bible Institute—the first such orientation for a volunteer project.

"I felt the language training was the best thing we did in orientation," one team member said. "Without it, I wouldn't have been able to do what work I did."

For Paul Watson of Greenville, Texas, the hardest adjustment in the beginning was inactivity. "I did very little for several months, yet that was when I grew the most," he says. "My spiritual life suffered when I started to get busy."

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The differences between North American and Brazilian churches was a tough adjustment for Bruce Barrs. Services in Portuguese, the formality of youth, contrasts in customs and attitudes—each of these things stimulated his thinking.

But for the Mission Service Corps workers, the challenges and adjustments proved to be positive ground for personal and spiritual growth.

"My eyes have been opened to be more flexible," comments Steve Romano of New Orleans. "You just can't use the programs or schedules that work in the U.S. over there."

The bearded volunteer says he's "learned not to be so confined or restricted with what I can or could do—if you don't have a dog, hunt with a cat."

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Carl Hoover of Jackson, Miss., a University of Texas at Austin journalism graduate, was among the Mission Service Corps volunteers to Brazil.

Big Visitation Starts
Good News Campaign

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NORTHBOROUGH, Mass. (BP)--Southern Baptist churches in the six-state New England Baptist General Association visited more people in their region March 22 than they had ever reached in a single day to kick off the Good News New England campaign.

Over 2,000 prospects were added to church files from the 5,085 homes contacted on that one Sunday of mass visitation.

Churches in Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont, 53 in all, started a four-day Sunday school growth emphasis week in their churches with the visitation program.

"The effort was successful beyond anything we had hoped for," said Al Riddley, director of church development for the Baptist General Association of New England and coordinator of the Sunday school effort.

There are about 75 Southern Baptist churches, chapels and fellowships in New England. "Without a doubt, more people were contacted than on any other single day," said James Currin, executive director of the association. "But importantly we had more of our church members out visiting than on any other day."

"It is an excellent beginning for the Good News New England program," Currin continued. "We have seen God move this year in great ways in New England--with record baptisms at churches, record attendances and new church starts."

The Good News New England program will continue the week of May 11 with more than 65 churches holding revivals throughout New England.

One of the primary goals for the Good News New England effort is to start 20 new church-type missions which will almost double the number currently in operation.

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Ichord Donates Campaign
Chest to Southwest Baptist

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BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP)--Congressman Richard Ichord, D-Mo., will donate his entire campaign fund of \$117,473 to the National Center for Business and Community Leadership located on the Southwest Baptist College campus in Bolivar, Mo.

Ichord, veteran Missouri law maker for 20 years, will retire when his current term expires in January 1981. Under federal Election Commission rules, Ichord, as a retiring congressman, had an option of retaining his unused campaign funds for his personal use or donating them to any purpose of his choice.

Ichord has long maintained a close association with Southwest Baptist College, through his church activities in Missouri, and personal participation in campus events. He has worked personally in recent months to help establish through private support and financing the National Center for Business and Community Leadership which Ichord sees as a needed innovative academic center for responsible economic education.

Southwest Baptist College's National Center for Business and Community Leadership will be an educational clearing house for a renewed emphasis on economic study of the free enterprise system and the proper role of limited constitutional government. Through the National Center all Southwest Baptist College students will be required to take courses in business, economics and finance in order to acquire a better understanding of an appreciation for America's free market system and its importance to American democracy.

The National Center will develop opportunities for Southwest Baptist College students to gain practical experience in business and community life and will also provide forums, seminars and workshops for primary and secondary teachers as well as business and community leaders. The National Center will also actively engage in extensive research in public policy areas pertaining to business and economics.

Southwest Baptist College doesn't accept federal assistance through grants and loans for instructional programs, personnel or facilities, and is relying on private support to establish the National Center. The National Center is working to raise \$1.8 million to develop facilities and programs.

Ichord says he plans to devote a considerable part of his future time and efforts to accomplishing the objectives of the National Center.

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Bryant Foundation
Leader President

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (BP)--Glenn Bryant, director of endowment and capital giving for the Louisiana Baptist Foundation, was elected president of the Association of Baptist Foundation Executives during the association's annual meeting in Albuquerque.

Approximately 100 foundation executives and others from Southern Baptist Convention agencies heard addresses by John Laflin, estate and tax planning specialist; Hollis Johnson III, executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Foundation, and Wayne Cherry, controller of the Baptist Foundation of Texas.

Other new officers are: Frank Denton, executive secretary of the Missouri Baptist Foundation, vice president; and James Stewart, vice president of computer and special investment services for the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma, secretary-treasurer.

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Retirement Announced
For Underwood, Gray

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--The retirement of two longtime administrative staff members was announced during the April meeting of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Joseph B. Underwood, consultant on evangelism and church development for the past 17 years, will retire on Jan. 19, his 64th birthday.

Ione Gray, international writer and editor, will retire Oct. 1. Miss Gray, who will be 64 on Sept. 27, has been on leave of absence since last December.

Underwood, who with his wife served as a missionary to Brazil from 1943 to 1956, came to the board's home office staff as associate secretary for promotion in 1961. He assumed his present post in 1963, coordinating special projects in evangelism, stewardship promotion and church leadership training in Southern Baptist mission fields.

In recent years, Underwood has designed and promoted plans for major city evangelization that have involved hundreds of Southern Baptists in efforts to win the people of some of the world's largest cities to Christ.

Sixteen projects are now under way, with major campaigns planned this year in Korea and Brazil. About 1,000 volunteers are expected to be involved in this year's programs and as many as 2,000 next year.

This would equal the peak number of 2,000 involved in 1970, when Underwood coordinated special projects in more than 25 countries.

In 1971 Underwood was elected chairman of the "World Mission for Reconciliation Through Jesus Christ," a project of the Baptist World Alliance. The project envisioned the involvement of Baptists around the world in special evangelistic efforts, 1973-75, and in a variety of ministries of reconciliation. In connection with this responsibility, he traveled to eastern European countries and visited Baptists in many countries in addition to Southern Baptist mission fields.

While a missionary Underwood led in the first simultaneous evangelistic campaign related to Southern Baptist mission work overseas. It was held in the Brazilian state of Pernambuco in 1950 while he was executive secretary of the state Baptist convention.

Before his missionary service Underwood was pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Albuquerque, N.M., and after returning from the field in 1953 was pastor of First Baptist Church, Clovis, N.M., for more than two years. He became secretary of evangelism for the Baptist Convention of New Mexico in 1956, later serving as secretary of promotion and stewardship.

Miss Gray, a member of the board staff since 1950, in recent years had done on-the-scene writing on mission work overseas and had performed various writing and editing responsibilities at the board headquarters.

Before taking her current post she was director of press relations for 10 years following a nine-year stint as managing editor of The Commission, the board's monthly magazine.

Miss Gray's writing has won the highest awards given by the Baptist Public Relations Association and the Religious Public Relations Council. She has lectured on communications and held writing workshops in the United States and in several foreign countries, including Switzerland where she taught creative writing at Baptist Theological Seminary, Ruschlikon.

Before beginning her assignment with the board, Miss Gray taught school in her native Arkansas and served as assistant editor of the Arkansas Baptist in Little Rock. She also was editorial assistant in the division of publications for the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee in Nashville, Tenn.

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(BP) photo of Underwood mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

New Bill Asks Delegate
For Overseas Citizens

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WASHINGTON (BP)--A bill to provide U.S. citizens residing abroad representation in Congress by a delegate to the House of Representatives was introduced here by U.S. Rep. William V. Alexander, D-Ark.

In introducing the bill, Alexander charged the particular needs and interests of the one percent of the American population living in foreign countries are increasingly "ignored or neglected by their elected representatives."

Under the proposed bill, U.S. citizens residing outside the United States would have an option. They could continue absentee registration and voting in federal elections for Senate and House members in the state of their permanent residence or vote in the election of the delegate to the House of Representatives for U.S. citizens abroad.

Alexander contends that Americans living abroad "are so far removed from contact with their elected representatives at home, they are virtually voiceless in the political arena."

Like present delegates in the House, the delegate for U.S. citizens abroad would not have voting privileges, but would have the right of debate and other privileges granted a representative by the Constitution.

Among U.S. citizens who would be directly affected should the bill become law are about 3,000 overseas personnel of the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board. The bill has been referred to the Committee on House Administration.

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