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God Uses 'The Least Likely'
To Work With Rio's Wealthy

By Bob Stanley

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)—The scene could decorate an airline travel poster—sparkling beaches and scenic mountains surrounding a fast-developing beachfront on the Atlantic Ocean.

Called the Barra da Tijuca, some of Brazil's wealthiest people are moving there to escape Rio de Janeiro's traffic and noise. The Barra (pronounced Bah-ha) gets its name from the Portuguese word for sandbank. For years it was better known for its motels where prostitution flourished than for the natural beauty of its beaches.

Now, land on the Barra has become the hottest real estate item in Rio. For a Christian worker, it's not an easy world to break into. High walls give the kind of privacy that only the very rich can afford. Maids or guards further isolate the owners.

Into these affluent surroundings came, not a sophisticated missionary, but Elizabeth Oates, a girls' school administrator who admits she's "the least likely person in the world" for such a task.

Approaching 50 and a little taller than many Brazilian men, she's not comfortable for long on the beach. "I've had cataract surgery, wear contacts, and the sand and wind won't let me sit out there as much as I'd like to," she says.

And yet, working on weekends and in the evenings after she finishes her duties as director of the Baptist Institute of Religious Education in Rio, Miss Oates and her students have started five home Bible study groups in the past two years. She thinks it won't be long until believers from these groups join to form a church.

When Dona Thelma, a contact from one such Bible study group, accepted Christ, she began to help Miss Oates. She and her husband own several bus lines, and when a special children's activity was planned they sent a bus to carry the children across the mountains to the zoo.

As the work on the Barra grew, Miss Oates enlisted several Mission Service Corps volunteers from the United States to help two students from her school and two seminary men who were already involved in the project.

Robert Doyle, 21 year-old son of Southern Baptist missionaries Lonnie and Janelle Doyle of Manaus, Brazil, and Eva Cheatham, 22, a graduate of Wayland Baptist College in Plainview, Texas, often took a frisbee or a football with them to the beach.

Because the frisbee is still new to Brazilians, some would come over and ask about it, or join in tossing it. Then some would sit down and talk—that was the volunteers' opportunity to witness to them or invite them to an English-language Bible study.

Miss Oates first became interested in the Barra a number of years ago when she took visitors to the beach area and wondered why Baptists didn't do something there.

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Some attempts to begin Bible study groups were made and one group made up of maids and children was almost successful. But none had lasting success until Miss Oates became convinced that the Lord wanted her to try.

With cards from an earlier census, Miss Oates and her students visited from house to house, following up all possible leads, until they found people interested in learning more about the Bible and willing to open their homes to study groups.

Now that the work is moving along well, the missionary hopes a small church building soon can be constructed on the fan-shaped lot which was purchased years ago as a possible church site. She had earlier wanted to rent a house to meet in but it would've cost \$1,000 a month.

With the encouragement of the sponsoring Memorial Baptist Church across the mountain in Rio, the property has already been transferred into the name of the "First Baptist Church" of the Barra.

Miss Oates knows the project has reached a stage where a pastor is needed. She's praying for someone who can "mix with the very poor and the very rich, somebody that's evangelistic and who will be willing to work for almost nothing."

It's a big order. But with skyscraper apartment houses sprouting all over the Barra and experts predicting its population will reach a million by the 1990's, she has the faith to believe that God has the right person in mind.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Denver Campus Director
Grabs Purse Snatcher

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DENVER (BP)—Rudy Antle, director of Metro Baptist Campus ministries in Denver, foiled a robber near Central Baptist Church, Aurora.

Antle saw a senior adult woman walking on the sidewalk when a young man rode by on a bicycle and grabbed the woman's purse.

Seeing what happened, Antle chased the culprit in his car. The robber got less than a half block before Antle caught up with him.

Antle turned in front of him. The young man lost control of the bike, and it slid out from under him. Antle jumped from the car, grabbed the man's arm and twisted it behind him, and held him on the hood of the car until police arrived.

Two other men who saw what was going on helped to hold the man and one of them called the police. The man was taken into custody by police.

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Bennett Named Search
Committee Chairman

CHICAGO (BP)--The search committee seeking an executive director for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs named Harold C. Bennett as chairman in a meeting in Chicago.

Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, said the committee hopes to have a nominee to present to the Oct. 6-7 meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee in Washington.

Grady C. Cothen, president of the SBC Sunday School Board, previously headed the search committee, but resigned from the committee because of ill health. William G. Tanner of the SBC Home Mission Board replaced Cothen on the committee.

James E. Wood Jr., current chief executive of the Baptist Joint Committee, has resigned effective May 31, to resume a teaching post at Baylor University. Porter W. Routh, retired executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee, will serve as interim leader of the Washington-based agency until a successor is picked.

Bennett, who said the committee already has 28 names under consideration, urged that no more names be contributed after June 1 to give the committee adequate time for proper and prayerful deliberations.

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Ethnic Women Learn
Potential Help Source

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5/8/80

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Ethnic women can start churches, assist the pastor, visit and win non-Christians, sing in the choir, teach Sunday School, and cook fabulous feasts. Everybody agreed on those points.

But the question put before 31 participants in the first conference for women in ethnic churches in the Southern Baptist Convention was, "Can ethnic women motivate their young churches to become actively involved in Southern Baptist missions?"

The answer, after three days of prayer, study and discussion was a qualified "yes."

"Yes, but we need literature, and more training, and guidance, and time."

Leading women of ten ethnic groups attended the sessions in Birmingham sponsored by the Woman's Missionary Union and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. They were Chinese, Indian, Laotian, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Romanian, Hispanic, and deaf Baptists from Hawaii to New York and Florida to Oregon.

For some, the meeting was an introduction to Woman's Missionary Union, a 1.1 million-member auxiliary which teaches and promotes missions for the Southern Baptist Convention.

"We've been doing the wrong things for the right motives," one amazed woman said. "We have been trying to do the work of WMU without knowing the right name or methods for what we did."

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For others, the meeting was a translation experience. They had been WMU leaders in native lands of China and Korea, and wanted the American counterpart organization to flourish in their churches. Cherry Chang, a Chinese woman who is church growth consultant for the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, was president of WMU of China and considers her whole life and work a product of WMU.

Most of the women came from churches which already want to organize women for ministry and evangelism. All are desperate for literature and plans of operation.

Doris Diaz, director of WMU's Language Department, and Oscar Romo, director of the Language Missions Division of the Home Mission Board, told the women that WMU would help them. "Korean and Chinese churches are the fastest growing element in our convention," Romo said. WMU can help them grow and achieve full participation in the SBC.

After an intense discussion about the need for WMU literature to be translated into Korean, Chinese and other languages, the Korean women assembled themselves for an all-night prayer meeting. Then they promised to do the necessary translation work. Mrs. David Kim of Rockville, Md., volunteered to coordinate the project.

Miss Diaz unveiled a special new edition of the Baptist Women Manual written in simplified English. It is to be used by all women who speak English as a second language until translations can be published.

The women shared ways to use regular English WMU literature in spite of language difficulties. They learned the history of WMU, and then asked for an overview in simplified English. They studied the lives of Annie Armstrong and Lottie Moon, WMU pioneers for whom the special offerings for home and foreign missions are named. Then they arranged to translate their biographical sketches for distribution to others.

Pastors' wives were predominant in the group. Most had worked closely with their husbands in starting fast-growing new churches, and most are recognized as leaders of women in their congregations. One woman, Faith Kim of Santa Ana, Calif., and her physician husband, had begun a church in their home. Now only four months old, the church is self-supporting and conducts services in both Korean and English.

The women want their churches to focus on missions. They are keenly interested in organized missions that focus on their native lands. They liked WMU's programs of mission action and direct evangelism. Indian women see ministry and witness to others in their community as a central function of WMU.

Hispanic women in the conference told of the 25-year struggle to get sufficient missions literature in Spanish. WMU and the Home Mission Board now publish a monthly magazine and approximately 40 other books and manuals in Spanish. "Take us just one day at a time. Don't be discouraged or frightened. God will provide the literature you need. He will provide guidance for you. He will give you strength you need to be a leader," advised Mrs. Mary Oralia Godsey of Plainview, Texas, former president of Latin American WMU in that state.

"Women sense the need of the newcomer," explained a Korean participant. "They can gain entrance to homes. They help women and children adjust to new situations. It is no wonder they are believed when they tell the story of their faith in God."

A Chinese woman answered, "After many years of worshipping many idols, when we find the one true God, our joy overflows to others."

Gas Conservation Priority
For N. Carolina Baptists

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--Energy prices have so stretched the budgets of several eastern Baptist state conventions, they have snapped back with plans to save.

Staff members of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, in their 60 cars, drove 1,509,341 miles last year. With an average of 16.5 miles per gallon they used 88,189 gallons of gasoline. That adds up to a lot of money and a large slice of Cooperative Program revenue.

"With the fuel situation the way it is, scarce and expensive, we decided that, as good citizens, we would try to do something to cut down on our use of gasoline, at the same time trying to maintain the same level of performance as far as the staff is concerned," says Roy Smith, associate general secretary.

After discussion, division directors decided to try to use 20 percent less gasoline than last year. If successful, the convention will save over 17,600 gallons of gasoline in 1980. At \$1.25 per gallon, that's over \$22,000.

To accomplish the goal Smith and General Secretary-Treasurer Cecil Ray strongly encourage carpooling when staff members go to meetings across the state. To facilitate pooling, a chart is in the staff's coffee break room. Staff members list their destination and time of departure and return, to see if anyone else needs to go in that direction.

In addition, the convention will replace mid-size cars with smaller ones when trade-in time comes.

In one experiment, Ray's car has been equipped with a propane tank to test the feasibility of running fleet cars on it. If successful, a large propane tank may be installed at the Baptist building.

Also, the convention encourages employees to use the Raleigh city bus system by purchasing books of tickets in bulk. The five-ticket books, which cost \$1.50 each, are sold to employees for \$1. Says Smith, "If everyone in the building who could, would use the bus just one day a week, it would save a tremendous amount of fuel."

Agencies and institutions affiliated with the North Carolina convention are making their own efforts to save fuel. Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina is using the WATS (Wide Area Telephone Service) line to eliminate unnecessary trips. Meredith College for women has begun using golf carts instead of cars for on-campus errands and security patrols.

In the South Carolina Baptist State Convention, special efforts also are being made to encourage staff members to carpool to meetings.

Also, convention employees are being asked not to accept one-time engagements in one church, unless they have other engagements in the area. This allows them to make one trip do the work of several.

Richard Stephenson, executive secretary of the Baptist General Board of Virginia, says that his staff has an unofficial goal of reducing miles driven by 10 percent this year. To further reduce gas consumption, all eight-cylinder fleet cars are being replaced by six-cylinder cars.

According to Smith in North Carolina, the effort to save gasoline and money is just a way of being good stewards of God's resources and of Cooperative Program funds.

Will the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina be able to reduce gasoline consumption by 20 percent? "I don't know," says Smith, "but we know we're going to use less, and we think it's worth the effort."