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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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95th Mission Field
Becomes Evans' Home

By Anita Bowden

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Brunei (BP)--For four years Bob Evans has spent 10 days a month in a tiny, oil-rich country most people have never heard of.

As of Aug. 15 he and his wife, Dorothy, began calling the little country in Southeast Asia "home."

Brunei, the 95th country or territory where Southern Baptists have residential mission work, sits on the northwestern coast of the island of Borneo. A self-governing sultanate under British protection, its 2,200 square miles are surrounded on three sides by Malaysia. The South China Sea is to the north.

The population, estimated at more than 200,000, is primarily Malay and Chinese. Most are Muslim.

Evangelistic work began in Brunei in the late 1950s after an Australian bush pilot missionary, C.T. Robinson, who had made a favorable impression on the sultan, received permission to begin Christian work. When a health condition forced him to return to Australia in 1974, he petitioned the Baptist Convention of Hong Kong for someone to carry on the work. The convention supported a missionary until 1976 when he couldn't get another resident visa.

Bob and Dorothy Evans, Georgians who had been missionaries in East Malaysia for nine years, wanted to move to an area where their four teen-age children would be closer to a good school. When West Malaysia, their first choice, denied them visas, they heard about Brunei and applied there. After six months had passed with no word, they applied and were approved for a visa to Singapore.

Two and a half months later the Brunei visa came.

But they already were settled in Singapore--the children in school and the Evanses involved with the mission's Bible correspondence course. Moving was out of the question. On the other hand, they couldn't bear to let that visa go to waste. So Evans began spending two weekends a month, plus the intervening week, working with the two established churches in Brunei.

Evans carefully points out that these are not Baptist, but interdenominational churches ("fast becoming Baptist") and that he has governmental permission to work only with the non-Muslim population of Brunei.

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The church in Seria, the country's oil capital, was established 22 years ago. Its diverse congregations include people who speak English, Malay, Mandarin Chinese and Korean. Sunday's schedule is carefully worked out so each group has time for worship. Sunday School for children begins at 2 p.m. and because of space limitations includes classes under the trees and on the church's front porch. Though the clouds have threatened, Sunday School has never been rained out in the years Evans has been there.

The younger church, a mission of the Seria congregation, began 12 years ago in the nation's capital, Bandar Seri Begawan. Just last summer the 30 or so Malay members moved their meeting place from a cramped apartment they had rented since the church began to a three-bedroom house purchased for the church.

Besides working with the churches, preaching, training Sunday School leaders and counseling, as he has done since May 1977, Evans also will continue working with a group of theological education by extension students in both cities.

For some time the Evanses had thought they eventually would move to Brunei. They weren't sure when the time would be right, but they were sure it would come. This summer it did. Their two youngest children, twins, graduated from high school. After careful evaluation, the correspondence course they had handled in Singapore since 1977 was placed on a back burner in that city-nation's urban strategy. The visa for Brunei was in hand.

The time finally was right.

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Bowden, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board news editor, visited Evans' work in Brunei during a tour of mission work in Asia.

(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Foreign Mission Board.

Association, Church Leaders
In East Honored by Home Board

By Walker Knight

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) —Mission directors from Huntsville, Ala., and Gainesville, Ga., a North Carolina church and a consultant from Virginia were honored during Home Missions Week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Hugh Chambliss, director of missions in Madison Baptist Association in Huntsville, Ala., and William Crowe, director of missions in Chattahoochee Baptist Association in Gainesville, Ga., were named directors of missions of the year for the eastern half of the nation. Chambliss was cited for leadership in strategy planning and Crowe for outstanding work with bivocational pastors.

The HMB associational missions division also honored Phillip Rodgerson of Richmond, Va., as PACT consultant of the year for the eastern United States; and the Green Memorial Baptist Church of Charlotte, N.C., as PACT church of the year.

PACT is an acronym for the Home Mission Board's "Project: Assistance for Churches in Changing Communities." The project involves consultations and recommendations by trained consultants who work with local Baptist churches which are struggling with change and transition.

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The Green Memorial Church, in a state of decline for nearly 20 years according to Pastor Ralph E. Holt, "found the neutrality of racial transition could be used in a positive way. We began to dream a new dream and formed afresh in our minds and hearts a biblical basis for being. We sought to make our transition a springboard for new ministry. With a renewed sense of mission, we began setting up specific goals and action plans."

Consultant for the Green Memorial Church was George Bullard of Atlanta, Ga., who related that the church allowed a neighborhood housing service to use church facilities, the pastor gave leadership for a community task force on transients and the church had a 10 to 15 percent increase in attendance.

"Above all I believe that this church has completely changed its attitude," Bullard reported. "The laity of the church had been having guilt feelings over their desire to leave, but now many families have found a renewed sense of mission and purpose."

Rodgerson, cited for leadership as a consultant, serves as the director of missions for the General Board of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

The citation noted his leadership with more than 11 churches, the writing of a study on "The Local Church in Urban Ministry," the field testing of the project, his service on the group which produced the national PACT Consultation Kit and Planbook, and the adaptation of his manual for Town and Country Churches in mission strategy planning.

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Rural Attitudes
Won't Win Cities

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press
8/21/81

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The rural-oriented mindset which has so typified the heritage of Southern Baptists will not be adequate to win the cities of the world, according to Larry Rose, director of the Center for Urban Church Studies.

The Center for Urban Church Studies was established this year by six Southern Baptist agencies to provide demographic and other statistical analyses to the Southern Baptist Convention for use in evangelizing cities. The center implements no ministries, but makes recommendations to agencies based on trends discovered through research.

"Southern Baptists soon will have a generation of people raised in urban settings," Rose said. "The rural preaching and ministry style will have to be changed in many instances to be effective."

One of the major problems Southern Baptists encounter in trying to minister in major cities is that they do not understand the culture or know the people, he said.

"The dramatic implication for Southern Baptists is that the denomination is still 95 percent middle and upper class, and white," Rose said. "The problem is that no city is white and upper-middle class."

Cities frighten Southern Baptists, Rose said, because they are big, unmanageable, and can't be controlled. Even cities in the South are losing in the ratio of Southern Baptists to population.

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"That is not the way we have always done it" is one of the biggest roadblocks to Baptist effectiveness in ministry to cities, Rose says.

"The days of selecting a location and building a church are just about over," Rose explains. "People can meet together to worship in a lodge, movie theater or other building which is unused on Sunday for little or no capital cost. The traditional way is no longer a possibility, so we've got to look at other ways."

Cultural differences and socio-economic structures in cities raise serious questions about the ability of Southern Baptists to minister effectively there, he noted.

"We need daring kinds of efforts in our major cities to establish ethnic, cultural and blue-collar churches to reach different types of people," Rose said.

The need for Southern Baptists to begin work in cities is supported by the fact there are 250 cities in the world today with population of one million or more. In 1956, only one city had five million people; today there are 30 cities with populations of five million or more.

Rose said radical changes and innovations are needed in the Southern Baptist Convention to prevent an erosion of effectiveness of the witness of the denomination. New tactics must be devised through planning for each city where Southern Baptists want to make a Bold Mission Thrust impact.

Approximately 50 cities with population one million or more in the United States will be under consideration by the Center for Urban Church Studies. Sponsorship for the center comes from the Home Mission Board, Sunday School Board, Foreign Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood Commission and the six seminaries.

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Child Care Facility
Sold for \$12 Million

Baptist Press
8/21/81

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — The Oklahoma Baptist Children's Home property in northwest Oklahoma City has been sold for \$12 million, said to be the highest price ever paid for a similar tract in Oklahoma.

Sale of the 37.5 acre site at Northwest 63rd and Pennsylvania Streets was approved by the board of directors of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma last week.

"The Oklahoma City property became so valuable that it was not good stewardship to remain here," said Lowell Milburn, director of child care.

"The profits from the sale will enable us to expand the child care ministry to other areas of the state," he added. "It is a beautiful campus and a splendid facility, but such a location is not necessary to carry on a good child care ministry in this area of the state."

The site, which will be used for luxury condominiums, offices and retail stores, was sold to Irish Realty Corp.

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John Kennedy Jr., one of the partners in Irish Realty, told Oklahoma Baptists the \$12 million is the highest price in history paid for a tract this size in Oklahoma.

The sale is contingent on zoning approval but is expected to be completed within a year.

The children's home, which was established in 1906, will be relocated in Moore, a suburb of Oklahoma City, on property donated by the late Mrs. Ida Mae Tubbs.

Officials said new facilities are expected to be constructed within the year, allowing the 64 children currently living in the home, to relocate directly to Moore.

The sale of the property is expected to greatly extend child care ministries, Oklahoma officials said, because planning includes construction of new, smaller group homes in Duncan, Clinton, Woodward and McAlester.

Estimated cost of building a new home in Moore and cottages in four parts of the state is \$3.5 million. The remainder of the sale price will be placed in endowments and income from those endowments will be designated for operation of the facilities.

In addition to the Oklahoma City location, the child care ministries currently has homes in Owasso and Madill, as well as a Boys' Ranch Town in Edmond.

The ministries also work through foster homes, adoption services, unwed parent and family aid programs.

Joe L. Ingram, executive director of the BGCO, noted sale of the home will enable the child care department to double the number of children being served—to an estimated 500—and to provide better services to families in times of crisis and to improve ministries to deprived children.

Ingram said: "By 1985, when we get these child care facilities throughout the state in operation, we'll be spending \$4 million a year on child care ministries. This money (from the sale) will help us do it, but it is going to take this money, plus the gifts of all Oklahoma Baptists to make it a reality."