



-- **FEATURES**
produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Craig Bird, Feature Editor

October 11, 1982

82-144

Cliff Temple Provides
'Nest,' God Gives Food

By John Rutledge

DALLAS, (BP)—It started when Ginger York noticed neighborhood children begging for the leftover food from the Meals On Wheels program at Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas.

"I mean, those meals are good when they're hot, but when they're cold, it's terrible—like a cold TV dinner," she wrinkled her nose in a way that said, "Yech." "I said I was going to do something about that if I had to serve them Campbell's soup out of a cup off my desk," said York, director of weekday ministries. "I couldn't imagine Jesus not doing something."

With \$3,000 in "seed" money from the Home Mission Board, "lots of small donations" from Sunday School classes and help from the church hostess in stretching refreshments left over from church receptions the AGAPE (Aid Given All People Evangelistically) kitchen opened June 7. Meals were served at 11:30 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to an average of 115 persons a day. Almost 6,000 were served over the summer.

To get the word out, York met with the principals of two nearby elementary schools where 96 percent of the students participated in the free lunch program. School was ending and because of government cutbacks those lunches would not be available in the summer.

That was the way AGAPE kitchen began—one need led to another. Now, since school has begun again, the kitchen has modified its ministry to "a crisis-type" situation. During the summer the food was aimed toward children's tastes—macaroni and cheese, hot dogs, pizza. This fall the menus are more "adult." "Beans and cornbread, casseroles and lots of different soups are our main courses now," York said. "Next summer we'll go back to the children's tastes."

Other families found out about the program from the Aid for Dependent Children office across the street from the church. Word of mouth brought in others.

Most of the families that came to the kitchen (a large fellowship hall) were Spanish speaking. York had several Spanish-speaking volunteers on hand to help in communication but she speaks only English. "The only Spanish phrase I know is 'sit down and shut up,'" she said laughing. It was a line that came in handy when dozens of children decided they'd rather run and play outside than eat.

Actually the children liked to come in out of the heat to the cool dining room. One volunteer, Lyndelle McClennahan, played the piano and seven or eight children tried to sit next to her and sing along as she played "Jesus Loves Me." Later in the summer a Vacation Bible School was held for the children. Sixty children attended and there were twelve professions of faith.

The mothers enjoyed the lunches as well because, for many, it was an air-conditioned respite from a day of 100-degree heat. "I decided we could have an English-as-a-second language class here afterward," York said. "It's cool so why should they go back outside?"

Perhaps the most interesting ministry is the Mother's Club. Neighborhood mothers are provided free child care to meet once a week and learn tips on nutrition, grooming and taking care of children. The effect is to help them gain a positive attitude about themselves and to realize they have value to God.

The church began a food pantry in 1947 and a clothes closet in the mid-60s. York is the Oak Cliff chairman for Meals on Wheels and is responsible for driving a route two weeks a month. Another ministry called Love in Action consists of a potpourri of community services including home repairs, literacy and tutoring aid, deliveries and transportation for those who need it, grief sharing and a "listening to teens" program.

About 90 volunteers help with the various ministries. Part of the training session stresses you can't tell someone "God loves you" until you can say "I love you" too. Some of the volunteers aren't ready to say that yet, York admitted. But the experience of working with those in need changes their attitudes.

The volunteers are learning to appreciate the people in the neighborhood, "and in turn the people have learned to love Cliff Temple. It's not a forbidding, frightening castle to them anymore."

Some of the families that come to the AGAPE kitchen have nothing else to eat. Others are trying to stretch what money they have. Everyone signs in at a desk set up by the door giving the date and the names in the family. No worship service is conducted but volunteers try to talk with those who come, telling them about other services the church provides.

One family is now "camping out" in the church's parking lot. "The father is working part-time out of the labor hall. By camping out in their truck and a tent they don't have to put any of their money in a motel bill. If they had to pay for a place to stay it'd take all his pay and they'd never be able to get ahead. They can use our showers and eat here," York explained.

The weekday ministries also include helping members of the church's Spanish, Vietnamese and Korean congregations in job interviews, apartment hunting and other areas where they might have difficulty.

Although the ministry is evangelistic, it is not so in the classic sense. Many of the people are from Catholic backgrounds. "They were afraid they would have to become Protestant to get a hot dog," said York. A few families have visited Cliff Temple but don't seem to really "feel comfortable." The church family has no problem accepting them but "they seem to have trouble feeling comfortable in the 'fancy' surroundings and with the 'fancy' people. We are trying to find a building to use as a store-front mission." They have a man who will serve as a bivocational minister.

"Sometimes you can hear a sermon in a loving touch better than you can hear one from the pulpit," she said. "Dr. Griffin may not agree but I'm as interested in that kind of sermon as the other." Pastor Dan Griffin, of course, does agree. The kitchen and the other weekday ministries are ways of "preaching the gospel to the poor," he said. The kitchen is dependent on donations because the church had not budgeted any funds for that ministry although Griffin said it would be included in the new budget. But money comes in and "there is never an excess, there's always enough. It's miraculous."

York recently received a degree in social work from Dallas Baptist College and plans to attend Southwestern Seminary in January while continuing her work at the church.

The motto on her desk reads "God gives every bird its food but he doesn't throw it into the nest." York said several people have asked her about the sign. She explains it: "God provides you with the ability to provide for yourself. If you don't use these abilities God won't do it for you. Birds have to go get their own grain."

-30-

(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist papers by Baptist Press.

Church Raising Equals
Great Vacation For Texans

By Beverly R. Scheland

MIDWAY, Texas (BP)—The Reynolds family of Midway and Huntsville, Texas, held a reunion this summer in a town none of them lived in, at a church building near collapse.

Three days later, the Reynolds clan had done a lot of visiting and Lindrith (N.M.) Baptist Church had a new, pre-fab building.

-more-

Four Texas brothers—Reed, G.G., George and Buddy—their wives and children, a brother-in-law and their 76-year-old mother volunteered to spend their summer vacation replacing Lindrith's 40-year-old facility which was "unsound and not worth repairing," according to pastor Martin Kennedy.

The men started on the church at 7 a.m. Monday with the help of inexperienced but eager church members. By Wednesday night they were through.

"Even we were impressed with the speed with which we put up the building," Reed admitted. He attributed the success to "a small but strong church membership which wanted to see that building up. They handed us the hammers, fixed dinner for us every day, gave us a place to stay and kept the coffee pot on," he said.

Reed, owner of a sheet metal construction company, and his wife Betty volunteered for mission service through the Home Mission Board three summers ago. They quickly learned of the need for church construction in rural areas where it's "30 miles to the nearest loaf of bread and 15 miles to a bag of Fritos," Betty explained.

Along with their children Sam (13), Amy (11), Tom (8) and Rachel (5), Reed and Betty responded by spending that summer vacation constructing a sheet metal church in Wells, Nev., with the assistance of church members.

The following year, G.G. (who is also in construction); his wife, Nita, and daughter Sherry (10) led the construction of a similar church building in Lake Tahoe, Calif.

This past summer the Reynolds brothers and brother-in-law Allen Cross decided to build a church together.

Not to be left out of a family project, "Miss Annie," the brothers' mother, packed up her tating, climbed into the pickup and came along for moral support.

The fun of doing a missions project as a family is available to everyone, not just the Reynolds family, Betty pointed out. "I wish I could get through to more people that missions is something any family can do. Doing it as a family is what makes it for us."

"This is the only way to take a vacation," Reed added. "We've already put our names in the pot for next summer." His advice to other families: "Sign up at the Home Mission Board and they'll put you to work."

-30-

New Sunday Schools
Top 1,000 Last Year

Baptist Press
10/11/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The number of Southern Baptist Sunday Schools started in the year ending Sept. 30 topped 1,000 for the fifth consecutive year, according to reports compiled in the Sunday School Board's Sunday School department.

A total of 1,027 new Sunday Schools were reported during 1981-82, making a total of 6,212 new starts since 1976, the year a renewed emphasis on new Sunday Schools was begun.

Texas led all states last year in the number of new starts with 264. Florida was second with 82.

James Lakey, Sunday School growth consultant, estimated 40 to 50 percent of new Sunday Schools begun last year were among ethnic persons. Also, he noted that in new convention states many churches are beginning Sunday Schools in small communities with no Southern Baptist work, with a goal toward eventually establishing churches.

Lackey said a recent survey showed an average of 10 baptisms are reported among new Sunday Schools the first year. "This is the most important reason for emphasizing new starts," he said.

-more-

Since 1977, Lackey noted, 1,332 churches have been constituted, many of which began as Sunday Schools. Among the churches begun in 1977 is Prestonwood Baptist Church of Dallas which in 1981 was cited as having one of the fastest growing Sunday Schools in the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1976-77, 566 new Sunday Schools were begun. Totals for the next five years were 1978-79 (1,273), 1979-80 (1,094), 1980-81 (1,078) and 1981-82 (1,027).

-30-

'Minute Of Silence'
Ruled Unconstitutional

Baptist Press
10/11/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Tennessee's "minute of silence" in public schools has been declared unconstitutional by U. S. District Judge L. Clure Morton. The law, which passed last spring, requires that a moment of silence be observed at the beginning of the first class each day in public schools "for meditation, or prayer, or personal beliefs."

Morton's Oct. 8 ruling came on a lawsuit filed in June which charged the law violated the First Amendment right to freedom of religion. The suit, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union, charged the primary purpose of the law "is the advancement of religious instruction."

The defendants, who include William Leech, Tennessee attorney general; Robert L. McElrath, state education commissioner; and Governor Lamar Alexander, argued that prayer is not prohibited in public schools. "There has never been any prohibition against the single student silently praying to him or herself in public schools or anywhere else," the state argued.

The state charged the plaintiffs have not shown that teachers are encouraging prayer, rather than meditation or the reflection on personal beliefs.

In his written decision, Morton observed, "It is difficult to escape the conclusions that the legislative purpose was advancement of religious exercises in the classroom. The overwhelming intent among legislators supporting the bill was to establish prayer as a daily fixture in the public classrooms of Tennessee."

Morton noted that the legislation did not provide any guidelines for implementing the law, and as a result, "some teachers might simply call for a moment of silence;...and some in straight common execution of the legislative intent, might instruct students that time is being provided for them to pray."

The state can appeal the U.S. District Court's ruling, but the decision on whether or not to appeal had not been made as of Oct. 11.

-30-

Fire Guts Jerusalem Church,
But Baptist Witness Enriched By Elizabeth Smith and Bill Webb

Baptist Press
10/11/82

JERUSALEM (BP)— More than 1,000 people who turned out for worship on the grounds near the blackened remains of West Jerusalem Baptist Church Oct. 9 contributed more than \$12,500 toward rebuilding the arson-gutted building.

The congregation, three times the normal attendance, included several visitors in town to attend a Christian conference and many Jewish neighbors and friends saddened by the chapel fire, which had been set less than 48 hours earlier.

"It was an opportunity to tell the people that we did not blame the incident on the Jewish people in general," said Robert Lindsey, a Southern Baptist representative in Israel and pastor of the church.

After the service, congregants from the nearby Jewish reformed synagogue came to bring greetings, express their sorrow for the fire and offer their facilities for Baptist meetings.

-more-

The fire, set about midnight Oct. 7, destroyed the 49-year-old chapel and its furnishings within an hour. Fire, smoke and water damage to Baptist House, a two-story stone structure attached to the church was estimated at \$8,000. The center functions as a bookstore and reception area for Baptists, and houses classrooms where the church holds Sunday School.

Lindsey said Oct. 11 in a telephone interview that two men have been arrested and are awaiting arraignment in the arson case.

The fire drew sympathetic response from virtually all levels of government in Israel, including Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who condemned the suspected arson as a "malicious crime".

"Many of the local papers are carrying stories about the church, who Baptists are, what they believe and what they do," Lindsey said. "It gives us a rather great opportunity for witness.

"What is being said again and again is that we are not a missionary group," he explained, then added, "and that is a very big thing because their word for 'missionary' here is someone who pays money or gives somebody the opportunity to leave the country or do something negative toward the country.

"Baptists do not have such a name and this is being widely trumpeted, which means that we are given a greater opportunity to be ourselves, which means greater freedom," said Lindsey, who has been associated with the church 43 years.

People from throughout the Jewish community where the church is located came to express their regrets, many of them offering money to assist in rebuilding. The Municipal government has set up a fund for contributions toward a new building, Lindsey said.

A temporary block building would cost \$150,000, he estimated. A permanent structure would cost considerably more.

All day after the fire, Baptist House was filled with Baptist crews coming from as far away as Haifa and Tur'an in Galilee to help clean up and repair damage to the center. One neighborhood youngster faithfully carried jugs of drinking water to workers and another pledged to help in the construction of a new chapel.

Vandalism is nothing new at the church and at Baptist House. A few years ago, the center was damaged by firebombing and a few windows are broken out each year.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board holds the title to the property. The board, which owns properties in most of the 96 countries where it has work, acts as its own insurer and does not carry insurance on overseas structures.