

(BP)

-- FEATURES
produced by Baptist Press

January 13, 1983

83-6

Black SBC Pastor
Breaks Stereotypes

By Phyllis Thompson

SAN JOSE, Calif. (BP)--Willie Gaines is pastor of the largest church in the San Jose Southern Baptist Association but Emmanuel Baptist is 98 percent black while only 10 percent of the city's 40,000 residents are black.

"Obviously we're not really a local church," Gaines said. "I guess you'd call us a regional church. When a black person chooses a church, he doesn't necessarily choose it by location; usually he's more interested in finding a service he likes."

Gaines' members apparently like Emmanuel's services. The sanctuary holds 400 and every seat is filled at the 8 a.m. service. For the 11 a.m. service, aisles, hallways, even outside windows and doors are jammed with people. Even Gaines' wife, Alice, knows if she's late she'll be standing outside. "Of course, I want to hear Willie preach, so I get here early," she said.

Gaines accepted Emmanuel as his first pastorate after graduating from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in 1977. The membership was then 1,700, now it's 4,000. He initiated the early service when the auditorium reached capacity, but since both services are now full the church plans to build new facilities.

The 50-year-old Gaines creates excitement just by standing behind the pulpit. "Y'all having fun out there?" he booms. "Amen, Willie." "Preach it, Brother."

"I'm going to start by preaching to you women a little while," Gaines begins. "You'll never win a husband if you're a nag. Ladies, I'm warning you. You might be foxy outside, but if you act like that, you is missing somethin' inside. Another thing I wanta tell you, you're not gonna like too much. You can't sleep around and expect to have a Christian purity. God ain't gonna send you no one-night stands. He'll send you somebody that's gonna stay while."

"Yeah! Yes sir! All right!"

"OK, I don't want you men gettin' too comfortable. I gotta few things to say. Why is it every dude, even if he looks like homemade sin, thinks he deserves a gorgeous chick? And why is it that every dude, even if he's poor, thinks he deserves a rich chick?"

Gaines paces the pulpit platform throughout his sermon, as he attempted to relate the Christian faith to the contemporary struggles of his church members.

Said member Cleo Sayles, "He speaks the language of the people. He knows our lives; and he gets down and tells us what we need to know."

"Before you try to understand my sermons," Gaines pointed out, "you've got to understand where I'm coming from. Over half my congregation is single. They're part of a very transient society, a very liberal society." Emmanuel is in the Silicon Valley, where the party atmosphere is enhanced by an abundance of money.

Yet Gaines believes a straightforward gospel is best. "I can't gloss over what the Bible says," he explained. "In a setting like this you have to learn to step on people's toes without scuffing the shine."

But the significance of Gaines' ministry goes much deeper than preaching, according to Sam Beene, Emmanuel's associate pastor and Home Mission Board Christian social ministries director for the San Jose association. "In the black church, traditionally, there is one pastor who does everything," he explained. "It says a lot they were willing to accept, not only an associate pastor, but a white associate pastor."

-more-

The change didn't come overnight, Gaines admitted. "It took four years of waiting, fighting, crying" to change attitudes about his role as pastor. "I don't believe in building dynasties," he declared. "I believe in developing gifts of all members. If a church is built around a pastor, what happens when the pastor leaves? The church is lost. But if a church is built around members and their talents, it will survive."

"Throughout the association," Beene said, "we view Willie as one of the heroes. His decision to remain loyal to the Southern Baptist Convention makes him unpopular with some black ministers who think he should be more traditional and with some white ministers who think he is trying to usurp their territory. But he takes the risk.

"I wouldn't describe Willie as a black pastor; I'd describe him as a pastor who happens to be black," he added. "He wants his worship services, his church programs as a whole to follow not only Southern Baptist doctrines, but Christian principles."

Gaines has begun seminars to train church teachers and leaders; even Sunday School outreach leaders attend a two night course. Several have opted for seminary training.

"I see my ministry," Gaines said, "as equipping church members so they can go out and help others. It's not a ministry of miracles. But every now and then I've been able to help somebody."

-30-

(Adopted from Nov.-Dec. issue of Missions USA, published by the Home Mission Board, SBC.)
(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist papers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press

Columbian Resistance Leader
Now Texas Bi-Vocational Pastor

By James Masters

Baptist Press
1/13/83

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Persecution and repression were familiar faces in Columbia, South America, in the late 1950s. Hugo Ruiz was one who decided those faces were out of place in his world. He stood to do something about them.

For the past 17 years, Ruiz has lived in Fort Worth, Texas, creating programs for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and pastoring the Central Spanish Church.

Ruiz writes, directs and produces "Momentos De Meditacion," a 15-minute religious program heard on 445 stations in the United States and Latin America countries and "Control Central," another quarter-hour show heard on 170 stations. He also writes for "Horizontes," a 30-minute musical show.

Such a career in the United States seemed unlikely to Ruiz as a youngster.

But as a 13-year-old on his way to the movies he heard singing coming from a building. Curious, he went inside.

"The missionary there was reading the second commandment," Ruiz said. "I started to recall all the idols we had. I wondered how come. I stayed to ask him."

Ruiz got the first Bible he had ever had from the missionary who explained what it was. The boy took it to his priest and was told the Bible was for the church and Ruiz wasn't part of the church. He was told to stop asking questions. He couldn't.

He had problems with his family, problems with his church and problems with his school. He was removed as an altar boy and thrown out of his home for a short period. He went back to the mission and studied the Bible with the missionary.

"Six months later I accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. I wanted to be baptized and that brought another struggle in my home. I was locked in my room but I went out the window to be baptized," Ruiz remembered.

-more-

At 14, Ruiz began preaching. He still had problems with his family and at school and church but it would be years before the Catholic Church would take much notice of him again.

In the meantime, sports occupied most of his time. He was on the state team in baseball, soccer and track and played on the national team in basketball. He could have had a future in sports but chose another road.

"I felt I needed to prepare myself to preach so I had to make a decision," Ruiz explained. "I left sports and went to the Mexican seminary. Basketball would go on without me. I wasn't needed there. But I was needed in the ministry."

After study in Mexico and at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Ruiz preached and taught in Cuba then moved back to Columbia. In 1957 the young pastor and seminary and university professor in Cali, Columbia, was forced into his role as a leader of the underground movement against Columbian President Rojas Pinillas.

"The Catholic Church here can't conceive of the things that happened there, but they're true," Ruiz insisted. "The church, in trying to repress the growth of Protestants, or Evangelicals as they were called, resorted to physical violence. Churches were burned, schools were closed and many people were killed."

It was after members of his own congregation were killed that Ruiz became more actively involved. He wrote manifestos against the government because it did nothing to stop the persecution. He drove the streets of the city at night secretly broadcasting against the government from a radio in his car. Just before Pinillas' fall, Ruiz had 25,000 people armed and ready to enter the city at his command.

Fortunately pressure being exerted on banks and businesses forced Pinillas to flee before that command came.

Ruiz suffered no repercussions for his involvement in Columbia. He had been in the shadows of the movement for the most part, operating in secret. In 1965 he came back to the U.S. to live.

Problems still exist today in Columbia, he said, but he doesn't think there is actual physical persecution of Protestants because so many political fronts are attempting to move into positions of power.

At 56, Ruiz's lifestyle has changed from those underground days, but his long hours of work continue at his job and at his church.

"My work (at the Commission) is part of my ministry and I enjoy it," Ruiz said. "It's not a burden to me to have to come here late at times and work. I do it for the Lord gladly."

-30-

(James Masters is a reporter for the Fort Worth Star Telegram.)

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist papers by RTVC

HMB Slates 83
For Mission Positions

By Patti Stephenson

Baptist Press
1/13/83

ATLANTA (BP)--Members of the Home Mission Board executive committee approved 83 persons for assignments in 24 states and Puerto Rico during their January session including 12 missionaries, 18 missionary associates, and 53 persons who will receive pastoral aid.

Those appointed missionaries were Eliu and Carmen Camacho of New Orleans, La.; Dwain and Marilyn Gregory of Montrose, Colo.; David and Judy Kim of Rockville, Md.; Charles and Bettie McClung of Sunland, Calif.; Josias Jr. and Elizabeth Robledo of Port Hueneme, Calif.; and Edward and Jennifer Smith of Mammoth Lakes, Calif.

-more-

New missionary associates were Bynum and Sybil Akins of Dallas, Texas; Ronald and Carol Climer of Pinedale, Calif.; Homer and Glenda Davis of Tifton, Ga.; Donald and Dolores Hall of Oceanside, Calif.; Bradford and Ruth Hartt of Bensenville, Ill.; Malcolm Mathis of Louisville, Ky.; Keith and Lorena Moore of Wheeling, W.Va.; Charles Reynolds of Rescue, Calif.; Edward and Elizabeth Richardson of Louisville, Ky.; and Alvie and Irene White of Picayune, Miss.

The Camachos will move to Largo, Fla., where he will be a catalytic language missionary. He is a graduate of Pepperdine University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and has been pastor of Spanish congregations in Georgia, the Canal Zone, Mississippi and Louisiana.

The Gregorys will remain in Colorado to begin a new church at Telluride. A graduate of University of Tulsa, Southwestern seminary and George Washington University, he has been a campus minister in West Virginia and Virginia, and minister of youth in Oklahoma and Colorado. She is a graduate of George Mason University and is employed as a nurse.

The Kims will move to California to begin work in language missions. He has been pastor of First Korean Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Md., since 1974 and was previously pastor of the Korean Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. He earned degrees from Soong Sil College in Korea and Howard University. She has worked as manager of Free State Press in Silver Spring and has been a member of the Korean Women's Legal Society.

The McClungs remain in California where he is associational director of missions for the San Fernando Valley Baptist Association. A graduate of California Baptist College and Golden Gate seminary, he has been pastor of Mountain View Baptist Church in Sunland since 1969 and has been church training director of San Fernando association since 1975. She holds a degree from California Baptist College and is employed by the state of California as a proctor.

The Robledos will also stay in California and continue work in catalytic language missions. He was pastor of Templo Bautista in Fresno and graduated from California Baptist College and Golden Gate seminary.

Edward and Jennifer Smith will remain in Mammoth Lakes where he has served as a pastoral missionary since 1980. He holds degrees from Ouachita Baptist University and Golden Gate seminary and she is a graduate of Samford University and Southwestern seminary and has served as education director of First Baptist Church, Mammoth Lakes, since 1980.

The Akinsees will stay in Texas where he will assume duties as an Asian catalytic missionary. He has been pastor of several Texas churches and is a graduate of Howard Payne University and Southwestern seminary. She also graduated from Howard Payne.

The Climers will remain in California where he becomes a family services consultant in Fresno. He has been director of Christian social ministries for Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association since 1976 and is a graduate of California State University. She has been employed as a secretary/bookkeeper by Mid-Valley association since 1975.

The Davises stay in Georgia as he continues as a new work consultant for south Georgia. A graduate of the University of Alabama and New Orleans seminary, he has been pastor at six churches and served as associational missionary. She is employed by Precisionaire of Georgia.

The Halls will continue work in California as he becomes director of associational missions for Crescent Bay association. He has been pastor of Service Memorial Southern Baptist Church since 1973 and is a graduate of California Baptist College. She is employed by the Vista school district.

The Hartts will remain in Illinois as he becomes language missions director in Chicago. He was pastor of First Baptist Spanish Church in Bensenville four years and Latin American Baptist Church in Tampa, Fla., 17 years. She is a former missionary to Cuba.

Mathis has been appointed as a church planter apprentice in Peggs, Okla. He is a graduate of Mercer University and Southern seminary.

The Moores will continue to live in Wheeling where he serves as a church planter strategist. A graduate of Southwest Texas State College and Southwest rn seminary, he was pastor of in Ohio and Texas before coming to West Virginia as a church planter in 1981. She is a graduate of Carson-Newman College and Southwestern seminary.

Reynolds has been appointed a church planter apprentice in Cameron Park, Calif. He has been an HMB church extension summer missionary and was minister of youth in Virginia and California churches. He is a graduate of the University of Richmond and Golden Gate seminary.

The Richardsons have been appointed to do leadership training in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. He is a graduate of Mississippi College and Southern seminary, while she is a graduate of Mississippi College and Spaulding College. Both have served as HMB summer missionaries in Puerto Rico.

The Whites will remain in Mississippi where he will work as a church planter apprentice in Carriere. He holds degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi and New Orleans seminary and is a former school teacher. She has worked for Computer Sciences Corporation since 1978.

Named to receive church pastoral aid were William and Kathleen Barrasso of Gaylord, Mich.; Dana and Karen Collett of Laurel, Md.; John and Ann Crow of Richmond, Ind.; Ronald and Jean Elville of Odenton, Md.; Wayne and Gayle Glazener of Salem, Ore.; Paul and Barbara Hampton of Hom r, Ark.; Edward and Lynda Hart of Athens, Texas; John and Diana Heddy of Mill Valley, Calif.; Michael and Patsy Jackson of Jeffrey City, Wyo.

Claude and Eleanor Kleinfelter of Shamokin, Pa.; Timothy and Jill Owens of Indianapolis, Ind.; William and Andrea Price of Benicia, Calif.; John and Carolyn Reynolds of Poolesville, Md.; Larry and Holly Richie of New Orleans, La.; Tommy and Susan Stowe of Palm Coast, Fla.; William and Elizabeth Thompson of Caro, Mich.; Bruce and Ann Treece of Newark, Del.; Ollie and Thelma Trout of Plymouth, Ind.; Claude and Elizabeth Turner of Oil City, Pa.; Oswald Vater of Spring City, Pa.; David and Cathy Webb of Kansas City, Mo.; Dwayne and Bonnie Wheat of Longview, Wash.; Solomon and Deborah Whitten of Zephyrhills, Fla.; and Clyde and Denzil Stutts of North Sioux City, S.D

Approved for language pastoral aid were Axel and Judith Chavez of Dumas, Texas; Thomas and Evelyn Collins of Albuquerque, N.M.; and Gustavo and Diana Suarez of West Memphis, Ark.