

**(BP)**

**-- FEATURES**  
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84-40

Baptist Chaplain Co-Member  
Of Catholic Order Of Nuns

DAYTON, Ohio (BP)--A Southern Baptist minister from Texas has become a co-member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, a Catholic order of nuns.

Allen Weimer, who was commissioned as a hospital chaplain by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1982, says he has abandoned the stereotypes of nuns he held in his youth and is at home as part of the pastoral ministry team at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio. He works in the emergency room and in the cardiac care unit.

He joined the staff of St. Elizabeth's last fall but had considered becoming a co-member for more than a year. He said a co-member is someone sympathetic with the order's ideas and establishes with the sisters a formal "covenant" relationship. The covenant means he prays for the sisters and serves as a bridge between the Catholic and Protestant communities.

The 33-year-old husband and father of two explained he was attracted to the simplicity of the sisters' lifestyle and is also drawn to St. Francis of Assisi, whom he sees as a model of gentleness and caring.

Franciscan Sister Lynn Gitzinger describes Weimer as a "very caring person who is sure of himself as a person and as a minister" whose prayers "flow out of his heart and always seems to know just the right thing to say."

Weimer is a native of Beaumont, Texas and graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He was pastor of churches in both Texas and Ohio before becoming a chaplain. He is the current president of the greater Dayton Chaplains Association.

There is usually a lot of mistrust between religious denominations, Weimer admits. But that has not been his experience at St. Elizabeth's. He says the sisters "have allowed me to be myself, as a Southern Baptist and as a person. They look at people in a very caring way and with special emphasis on the poor and needy. I like that. I like what they represent. And I'm proud to be a part of that spirit as a co-member."

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Active Baptist Student  
Murdered At Texas School

Baptist Press  
3/13/84

COMMERCE, Texas (BP)--Jerry Julian Vollrath, a junior at East Texas State University, Commerce, Texas, and recently appointed Baptist Student Union summer missionary, was killed in a shooting incident outside his apartment early Sunday morning.

Vollrath, 20, was one of three students found dead in an apparent murder-suicide. Also dead are Lisa Rene Mauldin, 20, and her estranged husband, Michael Wayne Mauldin, 28.

Vollrath was walking Mrs. Mauldin to her car when her husband appeared and shot the two before turning the gun on himself.

Vollrath, known by friends as a fine Christian young man, was believed to be counseling Mrs. Mauldin on her marital problems that evening. She had moved out of the couple's university apartment about a month ago.

It was reported Vollrath had met Mrs. Mauldin and a friend for the first time Saturday evening and after a stop at a restaurant, the two went to his apartment to watch television and talk.

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"Jerry was the type of student to think of others and try and be a friend," said Eddie Engle, BSU director for East Texas. "Jerry's roommates were at home when he and Lisa arrived, and knowing Jerry as I do, I know he was trying to help her."

In addition to his appointment as a BSU summer missionary, Vollrath was also chairman of the BSU summer missions committee, active in local mission projects, a Sunday school leader at First Baptist Church of Commerce, member of the college choir, a varsity cheerleader on campus and a computer science major on the dean's list.

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Rural Churches Strength  
Of Southern Baptist Convention

By J. Lawrence Westbury

Baptist Press  
3/13/84

OXFORD, Miss. (BP)--Rural churches, unfairly stereotyped as backward and resistant to change, are much more progressive than most individuals assume, participants at a Church in Rural America symposium have been told.

The three-day gathering, sponsored by the Rural-Urban Mission Department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, brought together representatives of Southern Baptist Convention associations, and local churches to address the issue of the rural church's ministry in twentieth century America.

Robert Wiley, associate director of the department, set the tone by dispelling the view of rural churches as antiquated and out of touch with contemporary ministry.

Drawing on facts from the 1981 Uniform Church Letter, the Atlanta resident cited studies which revealed one-third of the convention's Sunday school members are enrolled in rural churches which also account for a third of the denomination's annual baptisms.

"They are baptizing more people out of fewer possible candidates because of the less populated areas in which they minister," he explained. "More than 55 percent of new people enrolled in Sunday school last year were enrolled by those same rural churches. They are not as weak as we are sometimes led to believe."

Too often rural churches (with 300 or fewer members in a population area of 2,500 or less) are considered the runt of the litter by the larger urban churches when they are actually the strength of the Southern Baptist Convention, participants were told. The 22,260 rural churches are eligible for 44,520 messengers at the annual SBC meeting, he pointed out.

"We are a convention of small churches," Wiley said. "Nearly 67 percent, or 1,320 churches in the one-to-forty-nine-member category, are located in extreme rural areas."

The misunderstanding reaches to the denominational level where the SBC's programs and approaches also fail to grasp the special nature of the small, rural church, Royce Rose, director of independent studies for the Seminary External Education Division, said.

Rose, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on the small rural church, said a recent study showed "a significant failure on the part of the denomination to understand the small rural church. The primary areas of misunderstanding were the intense personal nature of those churches, the primacy of worship in those churches and the consistent pattern of inter-generational activities in church functions."

Royce charged the SBC, "in its infatuation with time management, organization, goals, plans and change runs counter to the nature and concerns of lay leaders in small rural churches. The denomination's preoccupation with change seems to say to the small rural church 'you must set goals and grow in number and organizational structure'--you must become a large church to be adequate and visible."

David Ray, a bi-vocational pastor of Congregational Church in Warwick, Mass., explained culture's bias against anything small, ranging from tomatoes to houses, and noted, "Size is the yardstick for excellence in our society."

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But citing scriptural parallels, the northern minister said God constantly worked with small groups for mighty tasks and pointed out the history of Israel was a cycle of a people growing larger and larger, groups becoming more prosperous and less faithful, until they declined with a small remnant emerging with a renewed faith in God.

"Members of small churches are more regular in attendance and giving than their larger counterparts. They are the right size to do what God wants them to do, without apology," Ray, pastor of a 70-member church, insisted.

The number of rural Southern Baptist churches and opportunities facing those churches has not changed significantly in the last 50 years, according to James Lewis, director of associational missions division, Home Mission Board.

Southern Baptists' 22,000 rural churches of today, like those of 1930s, are responding to concerns of self image, changing community, leadership training, stewardship and economy. This presents a challenge to denominational leaders to "capture the energy and imagination of the tremendous people and financial resources" in rural America, he said.

Dale Holloway, national consultant of bivocational ministries, HMB, told the group Southern Baptist's distribution of pastors may not be in harmony with God's plan. He reported a proportionately high concentration of ministers in some areas short changes other areas with greater needs. One ministry alternative to reverse the trend would be a greater acceptance and use of bivocational ministers--those who work a full-time secular job while fulfilling a ministerial leadership role, he explained.

Tommy Starkes, associate professor of Christian Missions and World Religions at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, urged rural pastors to continue their ministries to the poor. Government findings show 27 million Americans live in poverty, 43 percent of them in the South, he said. With 85 percent of all Southern Baptist churches located in that same geographic area, those congregations have a ready-made ministry to reach that group for Christ.

"Ninety percent of the Bible is written from the view of a weak, poor and oppressed people, and historically, Baptists have had humble lifestyles and origins. We are the first Baptists in 400 years who are becoming a people of wealth and power--I hope we do not forget our rural roots and cease to relate to the needs of the poor around us," he cautioned.

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(Westbury is associate editor of the World Mission Journal.)

New York's Metro Church  
To Buy Manhattan Property

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press  
3/13/84

NEW YORK (BP)--Metro Baptist Church has signed a contract to buy a church building in the Times Square area of Manhattan for \$1.75 million, and is seeking "creative financing" to close the deal May 1.

"We couldn't ask for a better location or a better building for the money," said Metro Pastor Gene Bolin.

The building, constructed in 1912 as a Polish church, is now owned by Daytop Village, Inc., and used as a halfway house for former drug addicts. It is located at 408 West 40th Street near Ninth Avenue adjacent to the Port Authority bus terminal.

The site is four blocks from Times Square (corner of 42nd and Broadway), one block from a proposed merchandise mart, and three blocks from the new NYC Convention Center.

If Metro is able to come up with the financing to buy the property, it will be the fulfillment of a long-time dream for an identifiable Southern Baptist worship center in mid-Manhattan, said R. Quinn Pugh, executive director of the Baptist Convention of New York and former executive director of the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association.

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"Not since the early years of Southern Baptist life in New York City has there been a congregation ready in its determination to assume responsibility for such a herculean undertaking," Pugh said.

In a letter to selected Southern Baptist pastors and leaders asking for "help in securing this property," Pugh wrote, "Without hesitation, I commend to you this urgent need of the Metro Baptist Church for your prayerful consideration."

Bolin said he and other church leaders had been in contact with several pastors of key SBC churches, and by mid-March, almost \$500,000 had been pledged, most in long-term commitments.

Metro is seeking to raise \$200,000 from among its own members. Bolin said he hopes other more affluent churches in the SBC will respond to the dream, and that by the closing date on May 1, the church will have raised \$1 million, including \$875,000 in cash. Several churches in Texas and in Atlanta, which is linked to New York as a sister association, have pledged sums ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000 to help Metro buy the property, Bolin said.

"This is a BOLD, Bold Mission Thrust commitment, an expression of the seriousness of our desire to reach urban America for Christ," Bolin said. "If Bold Mission Thrust (the SBC's plan to proclaim the gospel to every person in the world by 2000 AD) is to mean anything, it must include New York City as well, and if it is to mean anything in New York City, it must take place now," Bolin said.

He added when the church moves into the building, it will belong not just to one congregation, but to the entire Southern Baptist Convention.

In signing a contract to purchase the property, Metro put down \$100,000 in earnest money. Bolin said he and other church members had contacted financiers who would back a loan from a commercial lending institution provided Metro can prove it can pay back the loan.

The current owners have agreed to finance \$875,000 of the purchase price on a 15 year mortgage with a balloon note at the end of five years, starting at 13 percent interest.

Daytop Village, which owns the building, has outgrown the facility and is moving to new facilities in the Queens area of New York.

"The building is in A-plus condition, and we could move in and start using it immediately without major remodeling," Bolin said. "All we will have to do is get a piano and move in folding chairs."

Currently, Metro Baptist Church is renting the third floor of an office building owned by Metropolitan New York Baptist Association on 72nd Street in Upper Manhattan. About 125 attend worship regularly. "We have completely filled our current space, and there is no room for the church to grow," Bolin said.

The current building on 72nd Street does not have a high visibility factor and does not look like a church, he added.

The former Polish church, however, can be seen by 170,000 persons each day, most of whom ride the 6,000 buses which go up a ramp to the bus terminal from Lincoln Tunnel only one block from the church.

Bolin said he plans to change the large sign which now reads "Welcome to the Big Apple--Daytop Country" to "Welcome to...Southern Baptist Country."

Bolin said the church building is only one block from a Times Square-42nd Street redevelopment project that is expected to clean up that section of Manhattan, and help rid the area of crime and illicit sex.

Currently, there are only four churches in the area--two synagogues, one Catholic and one Seventh-day Adventist church--Bolin said.

The building has a full basement with a fellowship hall including a theater stage and fully-equipped institutional kitchen. Bolin said the facility would enable Metro to expand its "soup kitchen" ministry, which now operates only on Saturday, serving about 100 persons each week, and develop a community theater ministry.

The main floor, which includes a balcony for a proposed Southern Baptist visitor center, would provide space for Metro's senior citizen ministry and a sanctuary seating 600 people.

The second floor of the building would be used for Christian education space, released-time religious instruction for public school students, day care for preschoolers, a medical clinic, clothes closet, and food pantry, Bolin said. He added the church hopes to develop an urban training center for seminary students in cooperation with the denomination.

The floor would provide apartments and dormitory-type rooms for volunteers, US-2 missionaries, Mission Service Corps volunteers, seminary interns and students involved in the urban training center.

About 150 beds, plus sofas, chairs, office equipment, and all furnishings are included in the purchase price.

Bolin said Metro is committed to using the building as "a tool to facilitate caring for people outside our church family," and to "more effectively seek the welfare of the city."

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Church Recreation Should  
Focus On Evangelism

By David Haywood

Baptist Press  
3/13/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Outreach should be the number one goal of a church recreation program, according to a recent poll of church recreation leaders and ministers of education.

The survey, sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's church recreation department, polled both full-time ministers of education and ministers of recreation on their perception of church recreation. All of the more than 100 churches surveyed have a recreation facility.

Ministers were asked how they viewed recreation in an ideal church and then in their own church.

While both groups agreed outreach should be the top priority, those polled acknowledged in their own churches, recreation as an evangelistic tool ranked second or third behind providing recreation to church members and supporting church program organizations.

"Churches are not doing as much recreation-type evangelism as they think they should," said Don Mattingly, church recreation special projects coordinator who headed the project. "They are not doing a bad job; it's just they think they should be doing more.

"For years we have been saying church recreation should support the programs of the church," he explained. "Now we are seeing recreation is playing a supporting role in the churches." This was rated second and third in both the ideal situation and in reality.

The survey was designed to help the church recreation department evaluate how effectively they are communicating the message church recreation should be used to reach people and support the organizations of the church. Identifying trends in church recreation and other staff members' perceptions of recreation were two other goals of the survey.

According to Mattingly, there seems to be a trend toward charging for recreation in churches, a move away from the concept of recreation as a ministry.

"There is a strong acceptance of recreation fees," he said. "By placing a small fee on everything, churches are able to decrease the overhead of operating a recreation facility." One of the churches surveyed had generated more than \$30,000 through recreation fees.

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"Some churches have name tags for use in their recreation buildings," explained Mattingly. "When you pay for the name tag you are really paying to join that ministry." Other churches charge for some classes like aerobics and crafts to pay for outside instructors.

There was a great diversity among those surveyed as to what their recreation facility was called.

Names included gymnasium, activities building, Christian life center, family life center and recreation building. "This shows there are some fine lines of misunderstanding in the convention about recreation. This is pointed out by the variance in what we call our buildings," Mattingly said.

Another emerging trend identified through the survey was more ministers of recreation are reporting directly to the pastor than in the past.

"Ministers of recreation want access to the pastor," said Mattingly. "This represents a better understanding of what recreation can do for the total church from a ministry standpoint --reaching people both inside and outside the church in as many ways as possible."

According to Mattingly, the information obtained from the survey will be used to propose future studies and generate articles for board publications such as Church Recreation magazine.

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Missionaries Apprehensive  
About Cult Growth Overseas

Baptist Press  
3/13/84

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries in many countries overseas are finding themselves competing with Jehovah's Witnesses.

Missionaries talk of the fast-growing cult as they do of hunger, inflation, disease, or overpopulation--as one more obstacle to evangelism.

"Down the street and around the world, people are starving for spiritual help," says Joe Hewitt, a Texas Baptist pastor raised a Jehovah's Witness. "If a Christian doesn't show up soon to help them to the Bread of Life, a Jehovah's Witness will come around with cultish sawdust, and the spiritually hungry will be filled, but not nourished."

Through personal witnessing and group indoctrination at their meeting halls, Jehovah's Witnesses have built an organization that, in many countries, is much larger than Baptists'.

In 1982 Jehovah's Witnesses baptized 138,540 converts worldwide, almost as many as were baptized by overseas churches related to Southern Baptist work. That same year Jehovah's Witnesses claimed almost 45,000 congregations worldwide, exceeding Southern Baptists' 27,000 churches reported at the end of 1982.

The Witnesses are growing fastest in Nigeria and Japan. In Japan 70 percent of the members are listed as "publishers," another name for active faith sharers who buy material printed by the cult's Watchtower Bible and Tract Society to either resell or distribute free of charge. The society has written, among other things, its own version of the Bible. It is called the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures.

While Southern Baptists traditionally have affirmed freedom of religion for all groups, including Jehovah's Witnesses, that stance must be balanced with the desire to preserve Christian doctrine. And Jehovah's Witness beliefs are not Christian ones.

Jehovah's Witnesses reject the Trinity, deny the deity of Christ and misquote the Bible to prove destruction is imminent for everyone except themselves.

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Begun in the late 1800s when Charles Taze Russell organized a Bible study class near Pittsburgh, the cult is exhibiting much the same persistence in faith sharing that produced the foundations on which Baptists now build.

"The Baptists of the early period had the same type of explosive growth the Witnesses are experiencing today," missionary William L. Wagner says of the cult's growth in West Germany.

Wagner believes Jehovah's Witnesses have registered gain because they have adopted methods Baptists once used. In his book, "New Move Forward in Europe: Growth Patterns of German-Speaking Baptists in Europe," Wagner lists several reasons for gain in Europe common to early Baptists as well as present-day Jehovah's Witnesses.

Among them are a strategy using laymen as missionaries, an anti-establishment image and person-to-person evangelism with tracts. Jehovah's Witnesses' theology, however, differs greatly from that of Baptists, and it has brought grief to Baptists repeatedly when coupled with an aggressive overseas missions program.

"Jehovah's Witnesses can cause problems for Baptists, since sometimes people confuse the two," says Maurice Smith, an interfaith specialist for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. "They have a limited missionary strategy--they use the same approach everywhere, which brings them into conflict with the culture and, in some countries, with the government."

For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses' belief that Satan controls all government has created friction with leaders in many countries. In some countries, a resultant distaste for missionaries has hindered Baptist efforts to secure work permits.

But at times the movement has been even a more direct nuisance to Baptist work.

Missionary Lee Baggett reports during a 1982 Billy Graham crusade in Mexico City, Jehovah's Witnesses were among those distributing printed material designed to mimic the crusade's evangelistic literature.

And in Zambia, missionary Tom Waddill says it is not unusual to find organized groups of Jehovah's Witnesses even in the remotest areas. One byproduct of such presence is that some of the cult's doctrine has found its way into the Christian church.

In Toulouse, France, Christian evangelicals have been forced to abandon door-to-door witnessing. "If you go door to door," says missionary Frank "T" Thomas, "people say you're either a Mormon or a Jehovah's Witness, and you're automatically identified that way."

Thomas grew a beard, wears turtleneck shirts and stays away from navy blue raincoats to avoid being mistaken for a Jehovah's Witness, Mormon missionary or any other cult member.

In Guatemala, missionary Helen Hardeman takes the Jehovah's Witnesses movement very seriously. "Our challenge for the future will not be only bringing non-believers to Christ, but also refuting the false doctrines of the cults," she says.

"They are very active. We'd better recognize their threat and be prepared."

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(Condensed from January 1984 issue of The Commission, the Foreign Mission Board's magazine)  
(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Four Men Named  
 Alumni Of The Year

Baptist Press  
 3/13/84

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--A pastor, a missionary, an educator and an evangelism leader have been named Alumni of the Year at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Alumni Advisory Council announced as recipients Hoyt Blackwell, Robert L. Lindsey, Parul A. Meigs and H. Franklin Paschall.

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Blackwell, class of 1928, is the retired president of Mars Hill College; Lindsey, class of 1943, is a veteran Southern Baptist missionary to Israel; Meigs, class of 1935, is retired director of evangelism and mission, Florida Baptist Convention and Paschall is the former pastor of First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., and a 1949 graduate of the seminary.

According to Wes Wilkinson, director of alumni affairs and annual giving at Southern, the four men were chosen for the honor from nearly 75 nominees. They join 49 others who have received the award since its inception in 1972.

Wilkinson added the men will be recognized and presented with plaques at Southern Seminary's annual Alumni and Friends luncheon, June 13 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Kansas City, Mo. The luncheon is held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Building 'Home-Made' Elevator,  
Baptist Layman Lends A Helping Hand      By Elsie Taylor

Baptist Press  
3/13/84

RIVERTON, Ill. (BP)--In 1975, 17-year-old Richard Blakley Jr., was paralyzed in a swimming accident.

Six years later, Glen E. Stanton, a member of Riverton Baptist Chapel and longtime neighbor of the Blakley family, was reading a newspaper and saw an ad which read, "Help me. I'm in a wheelchair in a basement and can't get upstairs." Stanton, a machinist, answered the ad and discovered it was a doctor needing an elevator for his son. Stanton offered to build one, but the doctor purchased a ready-built one.

"I just had Richard on my mind all the time and wanted to do something for him but I had never thought of building an elevator so he could get downstairs until I answered that ad," Stanton said. "I did a lot of praying and asked the Lord to help me. When I asked the Blakleys to let me build the elevator, they agreed."

Stanton supplied most of the parts, adapting parts from automobiles and airplanes and even a piece of a saw blade. Blakley needed large buttons to operate the elevator because of his limited use of his fingers, so Stanton used two large buttons from an Atari game. When he couldn't find the proper size hoist, he built one.

He finished the elevator so Blakley could have it for Christmas in 1983. Blakley celebrated by inviting friends over for a New Year's Eve party in the recreation area of the basement.

The elevator is equipped with a telephone, and in case of power failure, can be hand operated with a crank.

"Mrs. Blakley said I could put a plaque in the elevator with my favorite Bible verse, Proverbs 3:5-6," Stanton said. "I don't believe anything has given me the satisfaction that building this elevator has."

Blakley, now 25, attended Lincoln Land Community College and earned a degree in accounting from Sangamon State University in Springfield, Ill.

He does some accounting at home, but is looking for employment as an accountant. If he isn't successful in finding a job, he may open an office at home.

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Heart Disease, Cancer  
Claim Most SBC Lives

By Ray Furr

Baptist Press  
3/13/84

DALLAS (BP)--Heart disease and cancer rank as the leading killers of Southern Baptist ministers and denominational personnel according to statistics released by the Southern Baptist Annuity Board.

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Seventy-three percent of the 323 deaths recorded by the board in 1983 were attributed to heart related illnesses and cancer. Death caused by heart disease and malfunctions increased to 181 over 155 in 1982. Heart attacks attributed to 147 of these deaths. Deaths related to cancer increased by 12 over the previous year to 56.

Respiratory failure claimed 20 lives, 14 deaths were attributed to accidents, and 13 deaths were caused by strokes.

The remaining causes of death totals include leukemia, 8; pneumonia, suicide, blood clots, and natural causes, 5 each; tumors, 4; hemorrhaging and hepatitis, 2 each; and hypertension, diabetes and kidney failure each claimed one life.

The totals reflect death of ministers and denominational employees who participated in the board's retirement programs. One hundred fourteen died in active service while 209 died in retirement.

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Mountain Outreach Hammers  
Away At Housing Needs

By Sherri Anthony

Baptist Press  
3/13/84

CANADATOWN, Ky.(BP)--Because of the hard work, dedication and enormous commitment of a group of Kentucky college students, the Canada family is now settled in a brand new house.

The Canadas, along with their three children, live in the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky where unemployment is a fact of life. Boarded coal mines overlook their valley, serving as silent reminders of better days.

But in spite of the problems that mass unemployment brings, the people who live here are reluctant to leave. Jim Wilson, director of student ministries at nearby Cumberland College, explained why: "Their support system is Canadatown."

Residents of Canadatown have learned to cope with poverty and its attendant problems in creative ways. Gerald Canada built his family's first home. Linda Canada recalled his work with pride. "Gerald built that house himself. He hauled wood from trash piles and homes that weren't used anymore. We didn't spend a dime building it 'cause we didn't have a dime to spend."

Responding to this kind of dogged determination and the crushing needs of the area, students from nearby Cumberland College formed Mountain Outreach. With help from mission teams assigned by the Home Mission board, Mountain Outreach built five houses for needy families during the summer of 1983.

For homes built at an average cost of \$2,500-\$3,500, recipients of homes must pay the cost of materials with a 20-year, interest-free loan from Mountain Outreach.

Groups that work with Mountain Outreach are required to bring \$2,000 for materials and supply their own room and board. Teenagers from First Baptist Church, Ellisville, Mo., helped Mountain Outreach volunteers build the last two homes, including the Canadas.'

"Our kids were used to 'glamour' tours," said Skip Lloyd, youth director at the church. "They'd go on a choir tour, sing a concert in the evening and spend their days in Silver Dollar City. This year I wanted them to see and experience missions."

Lloyd contacted Esther Burroughs in the HMB's special mission ministries department and she suggested they work with Mountain Outreach. Said Burroughs, "I encourage youth leaders to balance their programs between activities that give something to kids and activities that require something of kids."

She continued, "When we require something of people, they grow. Some day these kids will be adults in our churches. I want them to have a vision for missions."

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In Canadatown, the Ellisville group quickly learned to pound nails, mix concrete and saw wood. For six days, they ate bologna sandwiches and drank Kool-Aid, often sharing with community children who came to watch the construction.

Team member Barb Olano, with one dust-covered child in her arms and two others hanging to her blue jeans, confided, "When I first got here, I was real worried about my fingernails." She glanced at her chipped, broken nails; the raspberry polish was almost gone. "You know what? They don't matter."

On the last day in Canadatown, the Ellisville youth turned down the chaperone's suggestion of quitting early for a swim party. They wanted to work as long as they could.

But their new-found commitment didn't end there. At Christmas, a group returned to Canadatown bringing clothes and toys for the friends they had made during the summer.

Lloyd observed, "As trite as it sounds, today these kids have a different view of life than when they arrived at Canadatown."

For Robert Day, a Cumberland College student who helped begin Mountain Outreach, that different view of life raises a big question. "How much do I sacrifice for those less fortunate than I?" he asked thoughtfully. "I don't know the answer, but I do know that I could sell everything I have, move out here, live as they do, but it wouldn't be the same: because I could leave."

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(Anthony is editorial assistant in the HMB's evangelism section.)

Baptist Professor  
Learns To 'Think' Jewish

By Norman Jameson

Baptist Press  
3/13/84

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Charles Ashby finds new comfort in the Old Testament prophets since his sabbatic education with Ahavath Sholom Synagogue last fall.

Ashby, assistant professor of foundations of education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, researched the educational process of the Jewish home and synagogue, an important system, "because everything they do is education."

In the process, he was voted admission into a "women only" class, attended bar mitzvahs, basic Judaism classes for potential converts, and meetings of staff, faculty, boards and educational committees.

He was hugged until he hurt, kissed to embarrassment and fed like a feedlot steer. He gained 10 pounds, a hundred friends and insight into the Jewish mind that turned illuminating beams into the pages of the Old Testament.

"The prophets were not so much foretellers as they were 'fourth' tellers," Ashby said. "I've heard that all my life but never realized until now what all my teachers were trying to tell me. It's forcing me to keep them (prophets) within the context of their times, instead of reading things back into the Old Testament from the perspective of the New Testament."

The experience has not changed Ashby's concept of the New Testament "and it won't," he said. But neither has his presence and influence changed his Jewish friends' minds about the New Testament.

"They believe the righteous of all nations will have part in the world to come," Ashby explained. "They have no problem with us believing in Jesus as long as we don't try to force our beliefs on them, and they won't try to force Judaism on us."

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Ashby admitted some early tensions at the synagogue, "going around with one eyebrow raised on the part of a lot of them. They just did not trust Christians, for a lot of historical reasons," he said. "Their idea of a Christian was ranting and raving and buttonholing. We've gotten around that now."

Rabbi Izakson, Ashby's project mentor, has spoken several semesters in Ashby's classes at Southwestern. He is "open and honest and the students love him. He wants me to understand more about Judaism and he wants to understand more about Christianity," Ashby says.

One understanding Ashby gained is what it is like to be in the minority. He says he is trying his best to think as a Jew. "Even now I catch myself, with things I see in the newspaper or read elsewhere or hear, thinking what my attitude would be if I were a Jew, even at the point of reading Scripture."

Ashby said since the Jews incorporated Sunday school into their educational system two decades ago, they have been doing what Southern Baptists have done since the beginning of Sunday school; they have relegated the religious upbringing of their children to the synagogue school and said 'Here, you teach them,' regardless of what they see, hear and observe at home.

"In so much as I can tell, God has given the responsibility to religious upbringing to the parents. I don't know of any point where that responsibility was taken back by God and given to the church or anybody else," Ashby said.

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Photo available upon request from Southwestern Seminary

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