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March 23, 1984

84-47

Senate Committee Approves
Clergy Housing Extension

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Senate Finance Committee voted to extend for an additional year a double housing tax break for clergy who owned or occupied their current houses before Jan. 3, 1983.

Tucked in a \$49.3 billion tax bill approved by the committee, the change puts on further hold for some ministers an early 1983 Internal Revenue Service ruling which disallowed mortgage interest and property tax deductions to the extent they were attributable to a tax exempt housing allowance.

A subsequent IRS ruling delayed the effective date of Rev. Rul. 83-3 until Jan. 1, 1985, for ministers who occupied their residence or had a contract to purchase one by Jan. 3, 1983. The Senate committee action would further delay the effective date until Jan. 1, 1986.

Rev. Rul. 83-3 reversed a 20-year-old policy of permitting clergy mortgage interest and real estate tax deductions as well as tax exempt housing allowances. An agency spokesman said th reversal was part of an IRS effort to apply consistently Section 265 of the Internal R venue Code which specifically prohibits double tax breaks.

Some opponents of 83-3 have charged the ruling is not consistent because IRS failed to make the same application to military housing despite recommendation in a general counsel memorandum that it do so.

Other legislation dealing with clergy housing is pending on both sides of Capitol Hill. H.R. 4548 sponsored by Rep. Stan Parris, R-Va., and S. 2017 sponsored by Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., would exempt both clergy and military housing from Section 265 application.

In other changes affecting churches, the Finance Committee bill would permit certain churches and church-related organizations to treat employees as self-employed for Social Security purposes and would tighten conditions under which IRS may audit churches.

Under the committee bill, churches and church-related organizations who "for religious reasons" opposed payment of employer portion and collection of the employee portion of Social Security taxes would be permitted a one-time, irrevocable decision to treat non-ministerial employees as self-employed for Social Security purposes. This option would be available only to churches not already participating in Social Security prior to Jan. 1, 1981.

The change would mean higher Social Security payments for employees of churches and church-related organizations making this election. Current Social Security rates for self-employed participants is 11.3 percent. For employed participants, the rate is 6.7 percent paid by the employee and 7 percent paid by the employer. Existing law treats ministers as self-employed for Social Security purposes.

This Finance Committee action came in response to complaints from some church groups that the 1983 Social Security reform package passed by Congress violated their religious freedom by making Social Security participation mandatory for all non-profit groups, including churches.

In a third area, the committee bill would place new restrictions on IRS procedures for investigating and auditing churches.

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Existing law permits IRS to examine church financial records only to the extent necessary to determine qualification for tax exempt status and the amount of unrelated business income.

Under the committee bill, IRS could begin an investigation of tax liability only if it had evidence which "led it to reasonably believe that the organization was engaged in taxable activities or did not qualify for tax exemption."

In addition, IRS would be required to provide expanded notice before examining church records and investigations would be required to be completed within two years.

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Baptist Youth Cite
Influence Of Religion

By Gail Rothwell

Baptist Press
3/23/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist youth place more importance on the influence of religion in their lives than other youth, according to a recent national survey conducted among 13 denominations and youth-serving agencies, including the Southern Baptist Convention.

Reports from the survey, prepared by the staff of Search Institute, Minneapolis, with funding from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., were presented during a recent national meeting of youth leaders. A total of 8,165 adolescents (5th through 9th grades) and 10,467 of their parents were studied. A composite report and separate comparison reports for each denomination and group were prepared.

Among Southern Baptist youth surveyed, 72 percent indicated religion was either the most important or one of the most important influences in their lives. This compared to 53 percent of other youth.

The survey also showed the belief system of Southern Baptist youth indicates a stronger emphasis on religion as a system of rules, and less emphasis on religion as encouraging concern for others.

Southern Baptist youth reported a higher frequency of prayer at all grade levels and strong reliance on their faith in the living of daily life. Southern Baptist youth are more likely to hold strong beliefs about the wrongness of drinking and lying and are slightly more supportive of spending for nuclear weapons than other youth.

The study also revealed families where parents and children attend church together have fewer domestic problems than families who do not attend church.

Merton P. Strommen, a clergyman and educational psychologist who conducted the overall study, noted in general, American families are stronger and healthier than commonly depicted.

One of the major findings from the Southern Baptist comparison survey is families reported a strong "bond of affection and influence with their children." The report indicated Southern Baptist parents and youth who were active churchgoers maintained a higher degree of communication, affection and concern for each other.

Among Southern Baptists, 71.3 percent of the mothers and 59 percent of the fathers gave their children some type of physical affection every day. From the national composite sample only 66.8 percent of the mothers and 49 percent of the fathers expressed some type of physical affection toward their children.

Conclusions drawn from the report show a stronger parent-child bond led to a lower usage report of drugs and alcohol by adolescents.

The Search Institute report said, "Southern Baptist parents and youth leaders should be aware of this powerful influence for the good that is theirs and reflect on how this influence might best be employed in the carrying out of God's will for themselves and their children."

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Other findings show a high degree of trust regarding the church and its teachings. The summary stated, "They (Southern Baptist parents and children) tend to center much of their social activity around the church, and to shape their beliefs and behavior, at least in part, according to the messages they believe it delivers.

"With this evidence of the power of programs and guidance offered by the church, leadership could be doubly concerned that they show appreciation of, respect for and responsible stewardship of the trust placed in them."

These conclusions were based on statistics which show 95 percent of Southern Baptist parents indicated the church has exerted a positive influence on their child, as compared to only 89 percent of the parents in the composite sample.

Representatives from the Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday school, church training, church music and church administration departments attended the national meeting.

Ray Evette, church administration department, said denominational leaders responded to the report with "cautious optimism." He explained the report was very positive at the point of showing families who do attend church have fewer domestic problems than non-church-goers, but noted program plans and resources need to be constantly evaluated to make sure they are meeting the needs of Southern Baptists.

Myrt Veach, Sunday school department, said, "Although we are doing a good job with families who come to church, we need to get more parents and children involved."

She noted youth expressed concern about ethical and moral matters and they are being faced with significant issues at a younger age. "We need to pay serious attention to what they are concerned about," said Veach. "We need to pat ourselves on the back where we did well, then explore ways to strengthen our weaknesses."

Clyde Hall, supervisor of the church training department's youth section, noted denominational leaders agree the survey affirms that overall, Southern Baptists are doing a good job of speaking to the needs of youth. "Our task now is to get the resources we have available in the hands of Southern Baptists," concluded Hall.

The report revealed seven trouble spots among youth deserving serious thought and reflection." They are:

--the nearly 20 percent of the 7th, 8th and 9th graders who reported they experimented with sexual intercourse;

--the worry expressed by young adolescents about sexual and physical abuse;

--the involvement some young adolescents have with alcohol and marijuana;

--the tension experienced by some families, including family violence and marital conflict;

--the relatively commonplace occurrence of some forms of aggression among youth adolescents, and

--the social alienation experienced by some youth, particularly boys.

In addition to the SBC, the following denominations and youth-serving agencies sponsored the study: African Methodist Episcopal Church; American Lutheran Church; Baptist General Conference; Churches of God, General Conference; Evangelical Covenant Church; 4-H Extension; Lutheran-Missouri Synod; National Association of Homes for Children; National Catholic Education Association; Presbyterian Church of the United States; United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church.

Roy W. Owen Resigns
Northern Plains Post

RAPID CITY, S.D. (BP)--Roy W. Owen, 61, has resigned as executive director of the Northern Plains Baptist Convention, a post he has held Jan. 1, 1977.

Owen and his wife, Maxine, will move to Denver, where he will become a regional consultant for the new church growth department of the church extension division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

In his new responsibility. Owen said he will work "to help develop a new department of work. We will try to discover and/or devise ways to more adequately help new churches grow to self support. I will work personally with pastors and new churches in states west of the Mississippi River...."

When Owen became executive director of the NPBC, there were 106 churches, with 17,913 members. By the end of 1983, there were 180 churches with 26,395 members. On Jan. 1, 1984, the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention began operating. Wyoming was one of the four states comprising the NPBC.

As he leaves, the NPBC has some 120 churches with about 15,000 members.

In his final column in the Northern Plains Baptist, Owen noted "phenominal growth" of the convention, and said: "As the NPBC moves toward the formation of a Montana Convention and a Dakota Convention, even greater challenges and opportunities will unfold." As executive of the NPBC, Owen also has been editor of the monthly newspaper.

Owen, a native of Merkel, Texas, is a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and attended Georgia State University in Atlanta. He has been pastor of churches in Texas, Arizona and California, and a staff member of the Home Mission Board and the Baptist General Convention of Colorado.

Prior to assuming his post in the NPBC, he was associate executive director and director of missions for the Colorado Convention.

The Owens have two children, both of whom are home missionaries. Daughter Cheryl (Mrs. Veryl) Henderson serves with her husband in Hawaii, and son Pete Owen, is a pastor in Idaho.

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Involve Singles In Ministry,
Seven Professionals Urge

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
3/23/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A church ministry with single adults should not include just meeting the needs of the members, but also should focus on involving them in ministering to others, according to seven ministers to single adults.

They shared recent experiences during a seminar attended by approximately 70 professional ministers to single adults sponsored by the family ministry department of the Baptist Sunday School Board at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Nashville, Tenn.

Ken Brumley, minister to single adults at The Village Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, said the development of a support group system for singles and a community ministry to disabled single adults illustrate the inward and outward dimensions of the ministry in his church.

The support group system is organized through the Sunday school, he said, and leaders are trained in a seminary on the art of caring. Disabled Friends in Action is the name of the church's ministry with disabled persons.

"Approximately 79 to 90 percent of disabled persons are single," said Brumley. "Nobody is ministering to them. These people aren't in our churches, and we don't know what to do with them when they come. This kind of ministry will turn your singles into a really caring group."

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The March 1983 suicide of a key leader in the singles ministry at Richardson Heights Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas, caused the leaders there to take a hard look at themselves and the needs of their community.

"Our Single Adult Council got real serious about not just talking about caring but really getting down to it," said Sherry Fairchild, minister to single adults at the church in the north Dallas suburb, an area recently plagued by suicides of youth as well as adults.

The council decided to plan a living memorial to their former member, a community-wide seminar, "What To Do When Your World Falls Apart: Dealing With Depression." After a massive publicity effort, 700 people came to the Saturday seminar which, Fairchild said, "really ministered to the needs of the people."

Two criteria determine the potential worth of an activity with singles, according to Mike Clayton, minister to singles at First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla. They are: will it minister to the needs of people and does it have the potential for reaching singles for Christ and church membership.

A Singles Job Fair which the church co-sponsored in the summer of 1983 with a local bank met the two criteria. It was planned to meet the needs of unemployed singles and others who were unhappy with their jobs.

An exhibit area was set up with representatives from potential employers and those involved in job placement, job service organizations and trade schools. Seminars included on goal-setting, preparing resumes, women returning to the workplace and job interviews.

Clayton said 400 attended the seminar and only 35 were members of the church. Several seminar participants have since attended the church and 11 have become church members. "It was a ministry to help people and to reach people," he said.

The single adults at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, have adopted a poverty-stricken area of South Dallas to target their ministry efforts. They provide Friendship Committees to support key leaders in the community such as principals and teachers. Ministry teams meet needs of families and institutions such as the public schools and a massive amount of material resources has been poured into the area.

Paul Royal, minister to singles, said a rundown school with the highest truancy rate in the city has been literally rebirthed through their efforts. "You wouldn't recognize the school, the attitudes of the people there or our singles who have been involved," said Royal. "We're seeing lives changed and people come to know Christ. This is the first time the single adults have brought in a project that has become a churchwide effort."

As part of her effort to establish a single adult ministry at West Main Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, Miss., Diane Warren, minister to singles, said she determined to emphasize building fellowship before starting a lot of activities.

Warren, who became part-time minister to singles in July 1983 and moved to full-time status in December, said Sunday night after-church fellowships have been a key factor in enabling singles to get to know one another.

A churchwide blood drive and a babysitting service for a parents night out for the married adults were two activities planned by the singles because, "we want to be known as a group who ministers to the church," said Warren.

Discipleship training which has involved 150 single adults has "altered the mentality of our singles," according to Dwight Kidd, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala. Instead of emphasizing just social activities and dating, the singles are now giving priority to ministry and Christian growth, Kidd said.

Bill Meyers, minister to singles at Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas, said the establishment of weekly Friday night activities, Fabulous Fridays, has enlarged outreach and given singles leaders a close-up look at the inner workings of the church and the proper way to go about implementing an idea.

David Anguiano Spans Gap Between
San Diego's Anglos And Hispanics

By David Wilkinson

SAN DIEGO (BP)--In 1972, when home missionary David Anguiano began his work here, there were two small Hispanic Southern Baptist churches and one struggling mission in the midst of a mushrooming Hispanic population. Relationships between Hispanic and Anglo leaders in the San Diego Baptist Association were not healthy.

Today the association includes 14 Hispanic churches or missions; seven of these are self-supporting. While problems still occur, attitudes and working relationships between Anglo and Hispanic Baptists are upbeat.

Anguiano is "a catalyst in the true sense of the word," said Wayne Eurich, director of missions for San Diego association and one of Anguiano's biggest fans. "David usually stays in the background, but he's the power, the moving force, behind our Hispanic work."

Indeed, Anguiano operates without fanfare. But a look at any one of the association's Hispanic congregations shows evidence of his influence. Several churches began as neighborhood Bible studies which Anguiano initiated, then patiently nursed into mission status.

Every Hispanic mission has an Anglo church as sponsor, a match which Anguiano usually arranges. When the mission becomes strong enough to be self-supporting, Anguiano often assists in the transition to church status.

When a church or mission becomes pastorless, the congregation quickly turns to Anguiano for guidance in securing a new leader. He draws on decades of experience and a wide-spread network of relationships on both sides of the Mexican-American border.

Anguiano, who's appointed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, also functions as a broker of denominational programs and concepts to the Spanish-speaking churches. Even in sermons, he manages to plug the denomination's challenge of Bold Mission Thrust.

Despite his enthusiasm, Anguiano never tries to force denominational programs on churches. "My role is to help the churches and their needs in any way I can, not to tell them what I think their needs are," he explained.

He also relates concerns of Spanish-speaking churches to leaders at associational, state and SBC levels. He refuses to be a simple "yes man." If he believes a program will work, he says so. If it won't, he says so, too.

Anguiano's role can be hazardous. He perpetually runs the risk of being misunderstood by both sides. Some Hispanic pastors have accused him of being a "coco"--a "coconut," brown on the outside and white on the inside, while Anglo pastors have sometimes seen his efforts as obtrusive.

Yet negative attitudes seldom endure. "He chips away at it and wins them over sooner or later," said Eurich with admiration. "When David senses opposition, he never bristles or retaliates. His philosophy has been, 'It's their problem unless I respond in a way that makes it my problem.'"

But Anguiano's influence extends beyond the churches. Eurich declared him "the real catalyst" behind the establishment of the Spanish Institute of Theology. Opening in 1983, with the cooperation of the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., the institute provides the first opportunity many area Spanish-speaking pastors have to study theology in their own language.

Anguiano also helped start the "Spanish Rally," providing interchurch fellowship, inspiration and worship; he helped organize a special Spanish-speaking evangelistic team to lead revivals and conduct workshops for evangelism training; he has led in the new Ethnic Leadership Development program for the association, an effort to train leaders in ethnic congregations; and he edits a monthly newsletter, "Proyeccion," giving information about ministries and church events to Hispanic churches.

Yet it is Anguiano's unselfish ministry to individuals, as well as to the churches, that is remembered by the Hispanic community of San Diego. People in need--often undocumented aliens--have flocked for years to the Anguianos' front door.

"We had people staying with us all the time I was growing up," said eldest daughter Ruth. "We just got used to it. You never knew who might be joining us for dinner."

Anguiano reasoned, "As long as they're here, the illegals need love just like anybody else. I don't ask, 'Are you documented?' before I share the gospel with them or minister to them."

Anguiano also befriends Hispanic pastors, an informal role he has acquired through the years. "When I have a problem in my ministry, I call him," said Jose Duarte of El Camino church in Los Angeles. Duarte spoke with deep emotion about his friendship with Anguiano. "Like I tell my people, everyone needs a spiritual guide--and Brother Anguiano is mine."

Santiago Morales, energetic pastor of a growing congregation in El Cajon, is also grateful for Anguiano's support. "He's my friend and counselor, as well as a fellow worker," he said. "He knows me and understands me. He believes in me. We need more David Anguianos if we're to reach the Spanish community for Christ."

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(Adapted from the January-February issue of MissionsUSA, the Home Mission Board's magazine)
(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press

Baptists Endure Setbacks,
Isolation In Nebraska Town

By Phyllis Thompson

Baptist Press
3/23/84

SCOTTSBLUFF, Neb. (BP)--In 1969, Bill Tritten was earning a comfortable income as a life insurance salesman. A recent graduate of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Kansas City, Mo., he also was pastor of a small congregation near Kansas City.

"We had a good life," said Tritten. "Nothing was wrong; we were at ease."

His wife, Rose Ann, enjoyed her job as an administrative assistant. Their four children were doing well in school. They owned a nice home in the suburbs. But the Trittens needed a challenge. In December, Tritten wrote the Home Mission Board: "I would like to pastor a church in California, Oregon or Washington--anywhere but Iowa, Nebraska, Montana or Wyoming."

Within a few weeks, Tritten received the HMB's reply: "Thank you for your willingness to pastor in Iowa, Nebraska, Montana or Wyoming...." After that, he said, "It was impossible to straighten out the mistake. It was like a written notice from the Lord. When I heard from Bethel Baptist Church (in Scottsbluff), I knew I had to come."

The Trittens arrived in March 1970. "I had never seen so much snow," said Rose Ann, "until April, when several more inches fell. I started to wonder, 'What are we doing here?'" When Tritten offered counseling services to businessmen, they responded coldly, "How long will you stay--six months? The longest anybody's lasted is nine."

The newspaper ran a notice of Tritten's arrival. Almost immediately he received threatening phone calls with claims that the church was in debt and demanding immediate payment. A lawyer phoned at 6 a.m. making numerous threats should Tritten fail to pay his client within a week.

"That settled it with me," said Tritten. He arranged to refinance the church's \$45,000 debt through an HMB 15-year loan. "That restored our credibility," he said. "Then I could begin to do what I came here for."

In November 1972, Tritten fell victim to a tubercular infection, causing numbness in his right side and blindness in his left eye. Nevertheless, he spent at least one day a week driving 150 miles "in some direction" to start new work. Three missions were begun: at Sydney, Chaddron and Alliance.

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It was a slow, tedious process. "We feel so alone in our efforts," he explained. "The nearest Southern Baptist church is 55 miles away. Our association--Western Nebraska--is 320 miles long. We have 10 churches and one chapel. We're the furthest west. Most Baptists just don't make it out here."

But for the Trittens, Scottsbluff has become home. A decade ago, it was different. "Every weekend, I made Bill drive to Denver," said Rose Ann, "just so I could get back in touch with civilization." Today, Scottsbluff has 18,000 residents and "civilization" has come to them. The town now boasts a K-Mart, a J.C. Penny catalog store, a McDonalds and a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise.

Despite setbacks and feelings of isolation the Trittens are determined to make Southern Baptist work strong in Scottsbluff.

But occasionally, it seem they're backpedaling. At one time membership at Bethel was 140. Today, after a local factory's closing caused many to move, it has dipped below 100.

"I guess I've been through four or five congregations," Tritten said. "But I've seen changes and I'll see more." He became quiet, thoughtful. "When you come to a place like this," he said, "you have to determine that you're going to plant your life and stay awhile. If you don't, the work won't be worth anything."

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(Adapted from the January-February issue of MissionsUSA, the Home Mission Board's magazine.)

State-Country Links Help
Both Baptist Partners Grow

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press
3/23/84

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The 76-year-old Buddhist woman came to the Christian service to hear the "big American preacher" who had come to Taiwan. But before she left, she made a decision that changed her life--she became a Christian.

The woman's daughter, a Christian, had never urged her to attend a church service until the Americans came during a partnership between Missouri and Taiwanese Baptists. While they were there, this woman was one of more than 2,200 who professed belief in Christ.

Those professions are one reason partnership missions, linking a Baptist state convention from the United States with an overseas convention, have become so popular.

In 1978 Texas linked with Brazil in the first partnership to help double that country's Baptist churches and membership. Since then, 16 other partnerships have joined state and overseas conventions as both groups have discovered the advantages of such a relationship.

With the Brazil partnership complete, Texas Baptists have formed new links with Mexico for an evangelistic partnership and with Senegal and Gambia in West Africa for a developmental partnership.

Partnerships are yielding new Christians and churches, but they don't stop there. Overseas churches get a shot of encouragement and enthusiasm from their American visitors. Church members learn how to teach Sunday school and lead church training, how to practice stewardship and personal witnessing.

In Upper Volta, gardens flourish on the shore of a lake that didn't exist before Tennessee Baptists arrived. People are learning to read, some to become leaders of those new churches.

In Zimbabwe, Louisiana Baptists are drilling wells, rebuilding houses and doing other projects in the drought-stricken Gokwe area through the "People Who Care" project. In Spain, Oklahoma Baptist college students joined students from Spain and six other nations in witnessing during the World Cup Soccer finals. Spanish Baptist pastors have traveled to Oklahoma to share the gospel.

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The partnership formula promises an infinite variety of ministries as more states team up with overseas conventions.

Kansas-Nebraska has a partnership with the African nations of Zambia and Malawi, and New Mexico is linked with Panama. Arkansas teams up with four Brazilian states along the Amazon and Louisiana's French-speaking Baptists team up with the French West Indies.

Mississippi is matched with Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay while neighboring Alabama is paired with Nigeria. Four other states adopted partnerships last fall: Kentucky with Kenya, Georgia with Liberia, North Carolina with Togo and Maryland with Burundi.

"I think the concept of partnership is exactly on target," says Kenneth R. Lyle, executive director of Maryland Baptists. He dreams as many Southern Baptists as possible will become involved in partnerships and broaden their understanding of missions.

The Foreign Mission Board embraced the partnership missions program for several reasons, says Lewis Myers, who oversees the program for the board. Partnership missions allow the board to use a network of state and local leaders already in place to recruit the increasing number of volunteers requested by overseas missions and conventions.

And partnership missions respond to the interest in direct, hands-on missions that has surfaced in the convention. Many of the more than 14.1 million Southern Baptists in 36,000 churches want to do more than just give to missions through the Cooperative Program. Partnership missions offered to put a large number of Southern Baptists in direct touch with the needs they were giving for.

Myers stresses the emphasis, however, will always be on meeting needs overseas, not on providing volunteers a place to go. In fact, the shape of a particular partnership isn't defined until the overseas convention or mission makes an assessment of its needs.

John Mills, the Foreign Mission Board's director for West Africa, which has five partnerships, believes the variety inherent in the partnership approach has forced missionaries to a creativity they wouldn't have exercised otherwise. Missionaries who seemed bound to one or two types of evangelism are trying new approaches.

In Togo, for example, the partnership with North Carolina will move missionaries into an area where there has been no Christian witness. Volunteers will live in an African-style village while working on projects such as a bridge to link that part of the country to the rest during rainy season. In their first evangelistic crusade there, missionaries and Togolese Baptists saw 446 people become Christians during a single week last fall.

Volunteers benefit from partnerships, too. One of the most important benefits is new relationships, says Myers. "When they have long since forgotten how uncomfortable the bed was, how unappetizing the food looked at a particular little spot way out in the country or all the smells, the thing they're going to remember is that person they talked to at that place--that old woman who had a toothless grin who smiled at them."

The volunteers also change. "People who go on one of these things will never come back the same," believes Lyle. "They'll be so much more committed, so much more risk-oriented, so much more open to launching out in things in our own country, and giving more money and really beginning to think about some things like what does it mean to live sacrificially, what does it mean to really be a servant of the Lord."

Ed Schmeltkopf, who has been involved with partnership missions in Texas since its beginning, also believes Texas Baptists who have participated in partnerships have developed witnessing skills which lay dormant at home. "They learn how to share their faith and come back and are better equipped to do the same thing in the local communities where they live and serve," he says.

With these and other benefits come cautions, especially about diverting resources from the Foreign Mission Board's basic career missionary program. But even those most aware of drawbacks seem to feel the future of partnership missions is bright if managed properly.

Donald McGuire, pastor of First Baptist Church, Kennett, Mo., would agree. On a flight from Penghu to Taipei, Taiwan, he and his interpreter sat by a 23-year-old engineering student who had been reared in the Buddhist faith.

As McGuire told him about Christ, the young man listened and then prayed confessing his sins and asking Jesus into his life. Before they parted, he asked McGuire, "Will you ask God to save my parents, too?"

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Baptist Offering Helps
Rio Grande Farm Workers

By Larry Brumley

Baptist Press
3/23/84

DALLAS (BP)--Texas Baptists have contributed more than half of a "second offering" collected by various Texas religious organizations for 15,000 Rio Grande Valley farm workers left unemployed after December's devastating freeze.

The uncharacteristic south Texas freeze virtually shut down the area's agricultural and citrus industries.

Of the first \$400,000 released by the Texans' Valley Disaster Relief Fund, more than \$250,000 came from Baptist churches which have collected special offerings since Feb. 19.

Even as money continues to come in, the special offering already has doubled the largest previous disaster offering collected by Texas Baptist churches, said Eugene Greer, program planner for the Texas Baptist State Missions Commission.

Greer said money coming from the churches is being sent to the relief fund as it comes into the state convention's treasurer's office.

Gov. Mark White called together religious leaders from all faiths on Jan. 30 and appealed to them to collect a special offering to help the unemployed workers pay utility bills and buy food, clothing and other necessities. Government assistance was exhausted, he said.

A six-member executive committee was formed in February to develop guidelines for distributing the money collected in the special offering and to administer the fund.

The committee includes Phil Strickland, director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, an Austin banker, and representatives from four other religious organizations. "About eight or ten" religious organizations have participated in the special offering.

The fund's executive board has traveled to the Valley to confer with local church officials on how the funds will be distributed, Strickland said. "I am confident that our communication with Valley church leaders has given us a good perspective on how the funds can best be put to use by families affected by the freeze."

An existing social service agency in each of the six counties affected by the freeze will distribute the funds, Strickland said. Local church leaders will work closely with the agencies in a supportive role, supply volunteers and oversee the distribution process.

The funds are being allocated to each county on the basis of "the best information we can acquire about population, unemployment and impact of the freeze," Strickland said. Funds are being distributed which can be used to obtain food, shelter, fuel and other critical needs.

"This money does not solve the long-term needs," Strickland said. "It provides emergency relief, which is a significant act of compassion by the churches. We quickly acknowledge that it does not remove the long-term problem created by the economic conditions in the Valley.

"We hope that all denominations continue to look for every means possible to address the long-term needs in the Valley."

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Robert Smith, director of missions for Rio Grande Association, said a "trickle of churches" have been coming to the Valley to help and "three or four" upstate churches so far have made a commitment to a one- to two-year partnership.

Partnership between upstate churches and churches in the Valley was recommended by a Texas Baptist missions division task force to help the churches affected by the freeze "get back on their feet" by providing salary supplements for pastors and other financial assistance.

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Georgia Church Donates
Art, Antiques To HMB

By Patti Stephenson

Baptist Press
3/23/84

ATLANTA (BP)--Members of First Baptist Church of Sandersville, Ga., recently donated art and antiques with an appraised value of more than \$16,000 to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to help start new churches.

The collection included a Picasso lithograph valued at \$2,000, silver flatware, English porcelain and other collectibles.

Pastor William Warnock explained church members voted to donate the items to support home missions "instead of selling them and putting the money back into the church." The items had belonged to the late Newson Summerlin, a life-long member of the Sandersville congregation, who left his estate to the church.

The 900-member church also divides approximately \$32,000 in interest earned annually from an endowment fund left by Summerlin between the Home and Foreign Mission Boards, Warnock said.

Jack Redford, director of HMB church extension, said proceeds from the sale of the items will be funneled directly into support of church planters involved in starting SBC churches in pioneer areas of the nation. A number of the items were recently purchased by HMB staff and board members; those remaining will be sold on consignment, Redford said.

Warnock, a former home missionary to Hawaii, said the donation has spurred his congregation to increased missions giving. Members are also involved in prison ministry and feeding and clothing programs for the needy in the 12,000-member community, he added.

Redford observed, "This kind of creative giving in support of Bold Mission Thrust is what we need if we're to reach our goal of 50,000 SBC churches in our land by A.D. 2000."

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Wingate College
Gets \$1.3 Million

Baptist Press
3/23/84

WINGATE, N.C. (BP)--Wingate College, a four-year school affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, has been awarded two grants worth \$1,370,000 by Charles A. Cannon Charitable Trusts.

The grants, coupled with a \$400,000 challenge grant awarded by the trust in September, 1983, bring to nearly \$1.8 million funds granted the 2,000-student school near Charlotte.

Wingate President Paul R. Corts said the grants will finance a new facility which will incorporate remodeled portions of the existing physical education building. Other plans include a 2,500 seat two-tiered arena, a 25-meter Olympic pool, handball and racquetball courts, a recreation arena with space for indoor tennis, track and other sports, aerobics fitness and weight lifting, a human performance laboratory and classrooms and offices.

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