



## BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

### NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
(615) 244-2355  
Wilmer C. Fields, Director  
Dan Martin, News Editor  
Craig Bird, Feature Editor

### BUREAUS

**ATLANTA** Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W. Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
**DALLAS** Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201-3355, Telephone (214) 720-0550  
**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300  
**RICHMOND** (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
**WASHINGTON** Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

May 28, 1985

85-68

New Wave Of Lebanese Refugees  
Includes Baptist Congregation

By Art Toalston

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--Members of a small Baptist congregation are among as many as 100,000 Christians driven from their homes in south Lebanon by Islamic militiamen.

As many as 60,000 refugees are jammed into Jezzine, an inland town in southeastern Lebanon. Others are farther to the south, along Lebanon's border with Israel. About 30,000 are in a Christian-controlled region north of Beirut, many having escaped south Lebanon by boat via the Mediterranean Sea.

"They've lost everything," said Ed Nicholas, chairman of the Southern Baptist missionaries in Lebanon, in a telephone interview. "They lost their homes and their businesses, if they had businesses. Everything they had has been looted or burned."

In mid-1983 Southern Baptist missionary Jim Bethea and a Lebanese pastor in his late 20s, Waleed Harmouche, began working with a small congregation near Sidon, a port city in south Lebanon, and with other small groups and individuals in the area. The church had been attracting 30 to 40 worshippers each Sunday.

However, Bethea, his wife, Stephanie, and their three children left Sidon in mid-January and are now in the United States. As fighting intensified, Harmouche, his wife and young child left the area by boat. Both families left most of their possessions behind.

"All the homes in the area where Jim and the pastor lived have been looted and burned," Nicholas said. And, according to one news report, the church neighborhood had been "picked clean" by Palestinians who also are refugees.

"The members of the congregation are scattered. Some are in Jezzine, some are along the border with Israel. I don't think any of them (except Harmouche) have come up to Beirut yet."

The new crisis began to develop in February when Israel announced its troops would end their 32-month occupation of south Lebanon. Since March, Christian militia have been unable to stop the advance by Islamic and Palestinian Liberation Organization forces, which have overrun numerous villages of Maronite Catholics, Greek Orthodox and a small minority of evangelicals.

An April 30 editorial in the Jerusalem Post said, "The Christian community in southern Lebanon is facing the threat of extinction, without any real hope of succor from any quarter, including Israel."

Nicholas said Baptists in the Beirut area are unable to help the refugees in south Lebanon. "We cannot get to them. We have no contact with them. The area between here and there is in the hands of hostile forces." But the refugees are being aided by such groups as the Red Cross. The dozen remaining Baptist congregations in the Beirut area, encompassing about 800 believers, are helping refugees brought to their attention by church members and friends, Nicholas said.

The current refugee crisis, however, isn't the first for Lebanon. Druze-Christian warfare in the Shouf Mountains southeast of Beirut in 1983 left 1,500 Christians dead and 150,000 homeless.

Many of the new refugees are said to be middle class and well-educated.

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One told a news reporter, "I have property worth two million Lebanese pounds (\$100,000) and look what I have now." He rubbed two coins together as he spoke. The greatest problem among refugees north of Beirut, one relief worker said, involves trying to "absorb their wrath. They curse to God...accuse everyone of being responsible and believe they are innocent."

"Imagine," Nicholas said, "what it is like to have a house and be rather settled and, all of a sudden, you're displaced and don't have anything but the clothes on your back. This is the situation so many of these people are in."

Still, not all are hardened. The Beirut-based evangelism and media ministries already have recorded 50 converts this year—"people writing in confessing their faith"—equal to what had been the entire 1985 goal, Nicholas said.

Previously, Middle East evangelism had been "sort of like breaking rocks," he said. "But people are a lot more open than they were." Continued prayer is needed that Lebanese churches will be able to effectively reach "people who are hungry for the gospel of Christ and hungry for some comfort, something to hold on to."

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New Sunday School Goal  
Focuses On Unsaved Person

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press  
5/28/85

ATLANTA (BP)—A new five-year Sunday school enrollment goal is being planned for Southern Baptists even as a final push for the current goal is under way.

Challenge 10/90, with a goal of reaching a Sunday school enrollment of 10 million by 1990, was a major topic for state Sunday school directors and personnel from the Sunday school department of the Baptist Sunday School Board meeting for strategy planning in Atlanta.

Before Challenge 10/90 begins Oct. 1, "From Here to Victory," a three-month emphasis for July, August and September, will focus on completing the goal of reaching a Sunday school enrollment of 8.5 million by Sept. 29, 1985.

Goals are important in helping Southern Baptists work to reach people, David Laird, director of Sunday school work for the Illinois Baptist State Association, said during a discussion of the new goal.

"Our challenge is the Great Commission. We come closer to fulfilling that commission when we set goals that help us stay with a concern for the lost," Laird said.

Although the goal of Challenge 10/90 was set two years before the end of 8.5 by '85, the "direction rather than the specifics" of the goal is the most important aspect, said Bernard Spooner, Sunday school director for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

"We are not going to sit back and relax at the end of 8.5. We can't afford the time to see the end of that goal before we plan for the next one," said Harry Piland, director of the BSSB Sunday school department.

The work of the 8.5 by '85 emphasis has laid a foundation for the next five-year plan. "We are going to keep moving in the same direction," Piland said. Because of the training and momentum developed with 8.5 by '85 the rate of growth for Southern Baptist Sunday schools should increase, he predicted.

One of the five focal points of the Challenge 10/90 plan is a goal of training one million Sunday school workers in evangelism. That goal represents a new spirit of cooperation between the evangelism section of the Home Mission Board and the church training and Sunday school departments of the Sunday School Board, Piland said.

Other focal points of Challenge 10/90 involve training workers and reaching out to unchurched individuals.

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A goal of conducting 10,000 outreach Bible studies is designed to locate and enlist persons in Bible study who are not involved in any church activities.

The eight-session outreach Bible study program developed by the Sunday school department can be conducted in homes, businesses, parks or other locations, Piland said. The eight sessions encourage a personal decision for Christ and involvement in a local church.

A goal of starting 8,000 Sunday schools also supports the Bold Mission Thrust goal of having 50,000 Southern Baptist churches by A.D. 2000, Piland said. Southern Baptists have started more than 5,000 new Sunday schools in the last five years.

An objective is to have 2,000 ethnic Sunday schools as part of the 8,000 goal, he said.

Training workers on an ongoing basis is the concern with a goal of having 10,000 churches with weekly workers meetings by 1990. "We must be prepared to teach and lead Sunday school members. When we let down on training, evangelism declines," Piland said.

He said approximately 7,000 churches now report weekly workers meetings.

Additional training will be involved in the goal of 30,000 leadership diplomas earned in the next five years. "The number of diplomas earned represent people trained and prepared to participate in evangelism," Piland said.

"The numbers of lost people require that we be evangelistic in our work," Piland said citing a 1984 Gallup poll survey indicating that 77 million adults were not members of any church or had not attended a church in the last six months.

Piland estimates there are more than 150 million unchurched people in the nation. "Those are the people we need to reach," he said.

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Baptists Aim 7,000 Tons of Grain  
To Save Lives in Burkina Faso

Baptist Press  
5/28/85

BOBO-DIOULASSO, Burkina Faso (BP)—Bill Dean gazed at the old woman's emaciated frame and knew the letter she had written her son was true. She was starving to death.

Four days later she died. Dean and the woman's son, Marcel Sama, who works in Dean's home, had come too late for her, but they had brought enough food to last her family until the next harvest.

Dean and other Southern Baptist missionaries hope to use \$360,000 of Southern Baptist hunger relief funds to prevent many similar deaths in Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) in coming months. Beginning in early June, they plan to distribute 7,000 tons of grain to famine areas in this drought-stricken west African nation.

Dean asks Southern Baptists to pray they will get grain to the more remote villages before heavy rains hoped for in July make roads impassable. Already the severity of the situation has prompted the mission to request additional money to distribute 6,000 tons instead of 4,000 tons. By working with Christian and Missionary Alliance churches in famine areas, Dean thinks he can stretch funds even further to distribute 7,000 tons.

Dean, a former Texas dentist, was tapped by fellow missionaries to head up grain distribution because he has not yet been able to set up his dental practice. His experience with Sama's mother brought home to him the urgency of his task.

Sama had received a letter from his mother in Bibiou telling him all their food was gone. She wanted to come to Bobo-Dioulasso to be with him, but was too weak to travel. She pleaded with Sama to come help before his family was left to die.

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Dean left with Sama on a Monday morning to take the family food and supplies. As they approached the family's huts, 30 or more children with spindly arms and legs and swollen bellies ran out to greet them.

Sama disappeared into a small hut for a few minutes, then stepped out to tell Dean his mother would like to meet him. As he stepped through the low door into the windowless mud hut, Dean's eyes made out the shape of an old woman who could not have weighed more than 50 pounds, propped against the wall. She was too weak to hold her head up.

Sama said to Dean, "Momma would like to thank you for coming."

Dean knelt and reached to take her hand, but she couldn't lift it. "Another woman placed her hand into mine, and this dear lady tried to speak with me," said Dean. "Although she could barely breathe and I could not have understood had she spoken, I understood her emotions."

"As I knelt there with her hand in mine, Marcel said, 'Momma wanted to say thank you for bringing me to see her and for bringing food. She said that we can go now,'" Dean related.

After they stepped out, Sama's brother said, "Momma is at peace now. She has gotten to see her son who had been gone for so long. He has brought food so that the family will be able to eat. He brought soap for her. She wants Marcel to go back with you to his family now."

When Dean later asked the significance of the soap, Sama explained his mother wanted to be cleaned properly before she was buried. Four days later she died.

But before she died she told her family to send word to the one who had brought her son to her and food to her family. She wanted him to know she had asked God to bless him.

"In that I am only the messenger and my efforts would not be possible without your concern and support, I am relaying this blessing on to you (Southern Baptists)," said Dean.

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Blacks, Whites  
Discuss Differences

By Leisa A. Hammett

Baptist Press  
5/28/85

CLEVELAND (BP)—Southern Baptists must recognize the cultural diversity within the black community in order to effectively reach black people for Jesus Christ, Southern Baptist leaders were told during a regional conference.

Willie McPherson, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board national consultant for new church starts, told black and white Southern Baptists representing 10 northern states that their denomination was setting a convention precedent by purposely starting black Southern Baptist churches within black communities.

"Brothering My Brother," a three-day conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board black church relations department, drew leaders from New England, New York, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan conventions.

Since most new black Southern Baptist churches will, for a while, be started by 99 percent white leadership, McPherson urged caution in those church starting efforts.

McPherson, HMB's first black national church extension consultant, said the two groups could relate more harmoniously if they took time to understand their cultural differences.

Emmanuel McCall, HMB black church relations department director, added white Southern Baptists can reach the black community more effectively by also realizing there are only two factors which unite black Americans.

Those two unifying bonds within the black community were their experiences as "a people of color and the historical lack of respect of that color," said McCall, the first black to head the HMB's department.

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"I may sound blatant," McCall added, "but there is no monolithic tie among blacks—not economics, education or religion. We are a multi-cultured, multi-faceted conglomerate of experiences and the same would be true of any other group of people."

Although only two factors unite black Americans, many divide them, McCall said.

It is a common misconception that all blacks come from the South and are, therefore, the same. Although there are similarities among blacks whose families came from the South, there are differences—in worship styles, experiences, etc., he said.

A third difference Baptists should take into consideration, he continued, is the circumstances which drove black families north.

McCall said when his own father was 15, someone prevented him from hitting a white lumberyard superintendent who had called his father "a choice name." Rumor spread there would be a lynching that night, but a visiting evangelist cut his revival short in order to take McCall's father and return north.

McCall said because of those memories, it was difficult for his father to visit him when he was a pastor in Kentucky and even more difficult when McCall moved to Georgia.

Diversity, he said, is also prevalent in black worship, varying from high church styles, categorized by islanders off the coasts of North and South Carolina, and the rural styles most commonly associated with black churches.

Chan Garrett, associate director of HMB black church relations department, said there is legitimacy and value in black church tradition. "We can't throw that out and say we are just going to talk about churches," said Garrett.

Southern Baptists need to understand black history in order to understand black churches, Garrett said. Racial criticism stems from the lack of understanding of those historical differences, he added.

Garrett noted black churches rose out of the slave era, during which blacks were scrutinized by white task-masters. Blacks took refuge in the church, which served as a vehicle of survival and self-improvement. More recently the black church has been the supporter of black education and community needs, he explained.

"To be authentic, a church will be involved in those needs," he noted.

Garrett also pointed out white ministers are encouraged to be active in civic affairs—chamber of commerce, city council, for example—but black ministers are criticized for their involvement. The black church is going to be more involved in politics than whites, he added. "It is impossible to separate the black church and the black community."

McPherson declared if Christians allowed the Bible rather than society to influence their thinking, there would be no need for such conferences between blacks and whites. He compared the human brain to a programmed computer and said Christians had let society and not God program racial prejudice.

McPherson said he grew up with the wrong program of hate for and inferiority to whites. Following Martin Luther King's assassination, his hatred for whites was so intense that only his wife prevented him from joining the Black Panthers, a militant American black liberation group.

McPherson said when he let God deal with his racial "tension," he was eventually able to change his attitudes.

McPherson added black church starting will not be accomplished until Christians rid themselves of their prejudices. He urged Southern Baptists to purge their churches of "junk attitudes" and their refusal to relate to others as persons.

"We need to burn off the facade and deal with the real issues," he said.

Secular Society Said  
Alternative To Revival

By Orville Scott

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)—Baptists either will join in fervent prayer for spiritual awakening or sentence their children and grandchildren to an unchurched secular society, authorities on revival warned in San Antonio.

Pastors and lay persons attending the Southwest Regional Conference on Prayer for Spiritual Awakening at Castle Hills Baptist Church were admonished to lead their churches and denomination to prepare for a spiritual awakening. The meeting was sponsored by the evangelism section of the Home Mission Board and the Texas Baptist evangelism division.

J. Edwin Orr of Los Angeles, author and president of the Oxford Association for Research in Revival, said the greatest hindrances to revival are misuse and misunderstanding of the words revival and repent.

He said revival happens when people truly repent and noted revival will not come with the usual way of doing things. "If revival comes, it'll break the pattern of our expectations."

Repentance, said Orr, is "the first word of the gospel" and was constantly emphasized by Jesus, but seems to be missing from the Christian vocabulary today. "The difference between true faith and make believe is repentance. Whoever told Larry Flint (publisher of Hustler magazine) that he was born again? He never changed."

Glenn Sheppard preached from II Chronicles 7:14 on the "Gate Posts to Revival."

"The first gate post which is the one most overlooked is humility. Humility is not a trait caught but a broken, crushed soul," said Sheppard, HMB consultant for Prayer for Spiritual Awakening.

"Where does humility fit in with this current Christian view of how to be healthy, wealthy and wise. How does it 'jibe' with the name it, claim it game?"

"We must bend ourselves before almighty God and admit our best is never to be compared with his life-changing power. We must, with brokenness over the sins of our lives, and our people say, 'Lord, we have failed. Help us. We can't...you can,'" Sheppard said.

Texas Baptist Executive Director William M. Pinson Jr. said, "A few months ago, a group of Texas Baptists gathered to study and pray and came to the realization that instead of establishing a Baptist Zion, we are losing Texas.

"Out of this meeting, we made our number one priority prayer for spiritual awakening."

Pinson said the history of spiritual awakening reveals, "We cannot flip a lever to make God act. He may withhold, knowing we are not ready. Yet there is a vital link between prayer and awakening."

He noted God many times uses awakening to bring his people to one accord, but historically more often they must be in one accord first.

With spiritual awakening, churches must grow in number, said Pinson. Along with prayer for spiritual awakening, Texas Baptists have set a goal to strengthen churches and to begin 2,000 new churches and missions by 1990.

Former missionary to China, C.L. Culpepper Sr. of San Antonio, described the Shantung Revival, 1931 to 1945. The Culpeppers had been on the mission field in China for eight years when the revival started.

"Though I had been called by God to China," he said, "the time came when God got hold of me and I realized all I had done in my own strength had been worthless." He said people poured out their hearts, weeping as they confessed their sins. "Chinese preachers who had been good preachers before turned into balls of fire. We learned to let God be God."

Orr said the greatest revival in America, the Great Awakening of 1858, began with a lay-led prayer meeting.

Revival swept across the nation like a tidal wave, said Orr, resulting in so many people coming to Christ it was impossible to baptize them all in the churches. Holes were cut in the ice along the Hudson River so new converts could be baptized in the river.

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Missionary Trades Medicine  
For More Direct Witness

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press  
5/28/85

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Carolyn Roberson is trading her stethoscope for Bible study materials.

The medical missionary to Bophuthatswana temporarily resigned her post in 1984 to attend Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, so she can go back to the Morokwena village as a discipleship trainer.

Roberson attended Southwestern 13 years ago to receive the required 20 hours of education for appointment as a medical missionary. She now plans to complete the master of divinity program by the summer of 1986 and be reappointed by the Foreign Mission Board.

"I'm definitely going back to the same area doing a different kind of work," she said.

In Bophuthatswana, she was the only missionary serving the 6,000 people in Morokwena and those in the 38 surrounding villages. The nearest hospital is 150 miles away. While she is at seminary, the people have no witness.

Roberson went to the South African village in 1978 after Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was closed to missionaries. She had been there since her appointment in 1973. The people of Morokwena are hungry for the gospel, she said. "I've never seen a more neglected area."

For several years, the Bophuthatswana mission's request for a general evangelist appeared on the FMB's list of needed personnel. But no one responded.

Although she'll be able to minister more directly than before, she's still praying for a preacher to go, since, "Even working full time there, I still can't touch all the areas."

Roberson will have an advantage when she returns to Morokwena. She knows most of the village leaders and anticipates an "easy time getting into the places to set up Bible studies." Through her work as a midwife, she endeared herself to the villagers. "Once you deliver their child, you're the granny." This "automatically opened the village," she said.

At Southwestern, Roberson is gladly taking in all the materials she can. She translates her MasterLife lessons into Setswana every night.

In addition to nighttime nursing jobs, she works as a seminary custodian.

Like most missionaries, she is anxious to tell about her work. She has been especially anxious to share with seminary students the need for more missionaries in Bophuthatswana.

"Missions, to many churches, is still rather foreign and impersonal," she said. Her home church, Bluegrove Baptist Church, a small Texas congregation, discovered "missions really came alive" when they got involved with Roberson's ministry.

Each week, a member of the congregation—child, teen-ager or adult—would write Roberson. In return, she corresponded with the church about the needs and victories she experienced.

One correspondence she was especially proud of was a cassette recording of a baby's cry. The Texas congregation had prayed for a village woman who had previously lost four children. When the fifth was born, Roberson captured the moment for her prayer partners.

"People need that kind of encouragement to make missions really real to them," she said.

Honeycutt Proposes  
'Commandments' For Unity

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Any resolution of the conflict within the Southern Baptist Convention must come from the messengers meeting in annual session, rather than from a small group of individuals meeting prior to the convention, says Roy L. Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

A "committee of reconciliation" adopted by convention action would be an example of a helpful step leading to resolution, Honeycutt says.

Writing in *The Tie*, Southern seminary's official publication, Honeycutt suggests "ten commandments of cooperation" which can form "a basis of cooperation" on which to establish reconciliation within the denomination.

"If we can agree on these ten fundamental principles--and I think we already do--why can't we use them as a common ground for restoring our unity?" asks the seminary president.

The principles Honeycutt suggest include: The centrality of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; the absolute authority and unquestioned trustworthiness of the Bible; the priesthood of every believer; the universal need for salvation by grace through personal faith in Jesus Christ; the autonomy of the local congregation;

Church membership limited to baptized believers; the Lord's Supper and baptism by immersion understood as ordinances of the church and not sacraments; religious liberty, freedom of conscience and the separation of church and state; the priority of the Great Commission and its mandate of missions, evangelism and education and the necessity for cooperation among the churches in carrying out the three priorities of the Great Commission.

"What more must we believe before we can break bread and bear witness together?" he asks.

Any resolution of the denominational controversy will have to recognize the historic diversity of Southern Baptists, according to Honeycutt.

"We are not a church, as in The Methodist Church or The Episcopal Church. Instead, we are a family of churches, with differing styles, personalities, practices, emphases. We have never been bound together by an ecclesiastical hierarchy or a formal creed," Honeycutt says.

"Instead, throughout 140 years of God-honored history, we have voluntarily chosen to join together for missions, evangelism and education. We have done this in spite of incredible variety in our local congregations and different perspectives of doctrine and practice because we knew that cooperation was essential to fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord."

The key to restoring peace in the convention is a recognition that diversity and cooperation are both possible, the seminary president said. He believes convention leadership with a commitment to those principles will be needed to bring reconciliation.

"Now is the time for leadership which has lived our Southern Baptist heritage, supports our cooperative mission, and is committed to healing the wound that is hemorrhaging the life from our convention," Honeycutt says.

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Marriage Enrichment Skills  
Help Family Relationships

Baptist Pr ss  
5/28/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Otis and Deigie Andrews describe themselves as "a couple in ministry together, reaching and teaching others about God's intended purpose for marriage."

Otis, a clinical chaplain at a youth center in Macon, Ga., and Deigie, a homemaker, are among more than 500 certified co-leaders in the Baptist Marriage Enrichment System, a leadership certification program of the Sunday School Board's family ministry department.

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The Andrews are committed to the program not only because they can help other couples strengthen their marriages, but the skills they learned strengthen their own relationship.

The Andrews believe marriage enrichment skills also have taught them to be better parents "because we have learned how to resolve our problems and not take our frustrations out on the children. The kids know we have a commitment to each other and to them, so things aren't going to fall apart just because Mom and Dad have a disagreement."

Strengthening the marriage has direct benefits to the church, according to Andrews, because they have learned to relate to others using the same skills. "I am a better leader in my church because I am a better person at home," said Deigie Andrews.

Another benefit of being co-leaders is that their church is beginning to realize they are a couple in ministry together. "Occasionally we serve on the same committees because we work more effectively together, which the church is beginning to acknowledge," Otis said.

Providing marriage enrichment opportunities to couples not only benefits the church but is an excellent outreach tool. "Providing training sessions says to the community we care about you, your family, your relationship with each other and your relationship with God," he said.

The Andrews believe the need for marriage and parent enrichment will continue to increase in the future. "The more complicated our society gets the more important it will be to have good relationship skills. Through marriage enrichment we try to provide couples with communication, listening, conflict resolution and affirmation skills. We help spouses look for the positive aspects in their marriage and to build from there," Andrews said.

He encourages couples to set one long-range goal at a time. For example, "Deigie and I knew we needed some time alone, so we agreed to have lunch together once a week for four months. That was over a year ago, but our Wednesday luncheons have become very meaningful to us and are a good witness of our commitment to friends and co-workers."

The Andrews say they will continue to be involved in marriage enrichment because they believe it is a preventive ministry instead of treatment of a problem.

"If we can help couples develop skills that will prevent future problems, then that is our reward," he said. "I believe as couples learn to enjoy their marriage they will find God's intended purpose for the marriage relationship and discover what true joy is."

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

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CORRECTION---In (BP) story, "Huge Attendance Creates Problems," mailed 5/24/85, in 15th paragraph please change the opening time for Sunday registration from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

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East Texas Churches  
Leveling Race Barriers

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
5/28/85

DALLAS (BP)—In a region generally characterized by strict segregation just one generation before, two East Texas Baptist churches are crossing barriers of color and culture to minister to blacks in their communities.

First Baptist Church, Pittsburg, and Trinity Baptist Church, Mt. Pleasant, have entered into a cooperative agreement with Harmony-Pittsburg Baptist Association and the Baptist General Convention of Texas to sponsor new black congregations. Both churches will receive \$500 start-up gifts from the missions funding committee of the BGCT state missions commission.

In Pittsburg, the desire to reach the local black community grew out of a youth revival three years ago in which more than 20 black teenagers made professions of faith.

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"We tried follow-up and discipleship with them, but we couldn't get them involved in the youth group here except for special youth activities," said Sam Jones, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pittsburg. When 30 more blacks were saved at a Paul Jackson Crusade last November, First Baptist Church decided to conduct a feasibility study with the cooperation of the BGCT church extension section to determine the need for a black Baptist congregation.

The study revealed Pittsburg had a black population 2,480, about 36 percent of the total community, and no black Southern Baptist church.

In nearby Mt. Pleasant, Trinity Baptist Church's plan to begin a black work grew out of the church's long-range plan for missions action. Since its inception, the two-year-old congregation has been committed to sponsoring multiple congregations.

"Our church was born with a real mission goal," said Reggie McNeal, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church. "We want to show that a church our size can do missions in a big way." The congregation, which averages just over 100 in Sunday school attendance, began a mission in a blue collar area in south Mt. Pleasant on the church's first anniversary, and coincidentally approved the proposal to begin a black work on its second anniversary.

Trinity Baptist Church also began its mission preparation with a feasibility study. The study revealed several pockets of unchurched people in Mt. Pleasant, including a major portion of the black community.

Trinity Baptist Church then ordered a specific study for the black community, conducted by a couple from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. The study revealed a black population of 2,345, approximately 16 percent of the total population. There was no black Baptist work in the immediate community.

The church unanimously approved a proposal to begin a black congregation and began putting together a budget for the work. McNeal is now working with the placement office at Southwestern seminary to locate a pastor for the congregation.

Both First Baptist Church and Trinity Church stress beginning black missions is not a substitute for welcoming blacks to the sponsoring church. It is simply an alternative. "We have an open door policy here (at First Baptist Church)," said Jones, who came to Pittsburg from the Fort Worth area. "We had that understanding when I came here.

"Of course, it's a different culture here. It's more like the old deep South," he said, noting black slaves had at one time been members of the 127-year-old congregation. But the Lord has touched the hearts of both the leadership and the rank and file of this church," he said. Today, blacks make up a large segment of the viewing audience of the church's televised worship services, and blacks are welcomed into the membership of the church.

Likewise, Trinity Baptist Church maintains an open door membership policy. "Our mission strategy is not an attempt to insure a homogenous community here at this church," said McNeal, pointing out Trinity Baptist Church is not strictly Anglo.

The rapidly growing non-Anglo population in Texas is one of the targeted areas of Mission Texas, the five-year plan to reach people, develop believers and strengthen missions. Texas' black population of more than 1.7 million is projected to increase by 15.9 percent by 1990, according to Roy DeSilvey, BGCT church extension for black work.

McNeal hopes Trinity will serve as an example to other Texas Baptist churches. "Frankly, we need models," he said. "We need to do black work to see how it's done. Our people are willing to take the lead." As Trinity Baptist Church continues its plans to start five or six congregations within the next 10 years, McNeal expressed hope other Texas Baptist congregations would look for places of ministry in non-traditional areas.

"We've had one bullet we've shot at everybody," McNeal said. "We've so socially entrapped the gospel we think it only works one way--the way we know. "We've wanted to start churches and have them grow up to be just like us," he said. "We must realize flexibility is the key to mission work."