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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, 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, 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. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

July 17, 1987

87-108

Eloise Cauthen Finds
A Different China

By Erich Bridges

YANTAI, China (BP)--Some "old China hands" yearn for the China that once was. Not Eloise Cauthen.

The 77-year-old former China missionary, widow of longtime Southern Baptist mission leader Baker James Cauthen, was born and reared in China's Shandong Province as the daughter of missionaries. Last fall she returned to Shandong, for the first time in a generation, to teach English for a year at the invitation of Yantai University.

She expected changes. She found a different world.

"I'm glad the past is past," Cauthen reflected, sitting in her tiny apartment on the new university campus. During her childhood, poverty and a constant struggle for survival were the lot of almost all the Chinese she knew.

"When I was growing up out here, education was just for the privileged few," she said. "One boy out of 10 had a chance to get an education at all, and the girls, except when they were in mission schools, had none. And now every boy and girl can have six years of education at least. In fact, that much is compulsory."

New universities and technical schools, like the one where she has been teaching, are "just bursting" with ideas, she said. Industries are growing. Agriculture is far more productive. Health care is widely available. "Their living has just improved so much. You see it in their clothing and in their health."

Yantai, formerly called Chefoo, is the northeastern coastal city where legendary Southern Baptist missionary Lottie Moon and other pioneer missionaries arrived by ship to begin work in northern China more than a century ago. Cauthen attended boarding school there as a young girl and came to love Yantai's tranquil beaches and hills. Today Yantai is one of the fastest-growing cities of the densely populated province.

Cauthen has enjoyed teaching English and brushing up on her own admittedly "rusty" Chinese. She has encountered two kinds of students in her classes in Yantai: young first-year university students from Shandong eager for future jobs as translators and interpreters; and older workers from all over China, sent back to school by their work units to learn English in order to catch up on international developments in their fields.

Members of the older group have lived most of their lives in the Chinese Communist era. The younger students have known nothing else. Now both groups are experiencing new opportunities for education and material advancement offered by China's recent modernization.

Cauthen sees in most of the students a sincerely patriotic desire to help China attain its goals, as well as a personal drive to find good jobs and prosper. But in some, she sees another kind of yearning.

One day as she walked from the university post office, one of her female students suddenly appeared at her side. "You're kind and loving," the student said softly. "I want to be like that, too."

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"She was one who has come to my apartment and visited and who has been eager to know something of the gospel," Cauthen explained. While concentrating on her professional commitment as a teacher, she has not tried to hide her Christianity from university officials or students who inquire about her beliefs.

Early on Easter morning, she joined two other Southern Baptist teachers in Yantai on the beach to watch the sun rise. They read the Easter story from the Bible, sang hymns and prayed together. Later, she explained the little worship service to three curious students who asked her how she had celebrated the holiday.

"I told what we had read. I told the resurrection story, and they looked with keen interest but absolute amazement at the story," Cauthen related. "I recognized perhaps more than ever before how utterly out of line it was with the thinking they have been trained and brought up in, how utterly impossible this all seemed to them, that we believe such a story.

"It must be a work of the Holy Spirit that can reveal the truth of the resurrection to students who have been told all their lives, 'We are in the 20th century now and we are scientific, we are modern, we don't need religion any more and there is no God and we don't need fairy tales like that.'"

Much of Shandong Province was closed to most foreigners from the time Japanese forces controlled the region during World War II until just four years ago. It remains less open to change than some other parts of China.

Most students know that Confucius was born in Shandong around 551 B.C. but have no idea that the legendary Shandong Revival swept the region with a wave of Christian conversions in the early 1930s. Nor do they know that missionaries like Lottie Moon and Cauthen's parents spent a lifetime preaching Christ in the province. But Shandong's illustrious Christian heritage still exerts influence across the years.

Rural people still call Sunday "worship day," whether or not they attend a church. Christians are respected. Chinese Christian leaders estimate that by 1985, some 250,000 believers worshiped in more than 60 churches and 2,000 home meeting points in the province. This despite a generation of isolation, as well as the widespread persecution of religion during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76.

In the Yantai church Cauthen has attended regularly, 300 to 400 people gather for worship, bringing their own Bibles and hymnals. During celebration of Communion, different lay believers lead in prayer, give testimonies and quote Scripture before sharing the elements. "It's like a Quaker meeting," she said. "They participate as the Spirit moves them."

In other parts of Shandong, fascinating traces of Southern Baptist mission history remain. One is a church in the town of Penglai (formerly Tengchow), where Lottie Moon worked for much of her missionary career. Beneath a centuries-old Ming Dynasty arch, the cobblestones leading up to the church are worn smooth with age. They are the same stones the pioneer missionary and her contemporaries walked upon.

The church sags in a sad state of disrepair. Windows are boarded, floors collapsed. Behind a locked gate, a small monument to Lottie Moon's work stands in the debris-strewn courtyard.

But just down a side lane from the church, an elderly Christian couple lives in a humble, one-room dwelling. Zhang Baosan, 78, and his wife, Wang Hongmei, worship here with their five grown children, since there is not yet an open church in town. Zhang was baptized in 1925 by Cauthen's father, Wiley Glass, and studied under him at the Baptist seminary in nearby Huangxian.

Despite the long years, Zhang recognized Cauthen when she visited Penglai. "At first glance I knew her!" he exclaimed with glee. Later he took out an old, much-underlined Bible and began to read from Psalms 37 and 39. Soon he looked toward heaven and recited verses from memory, with tears and choking voice. His wife joined him, and they recited Scripture in unison. The verses meant much to the couple during the Cultural Revolution, when they had to hide their Bible.

In Huangxian, Cauthen's actual hometown, the old Baptist seminary campus is now used for a middle school. She received permission to examine the house on campus where her father and other missionaries were held under house arrest by Japanese forces during the war. Her father left 40 years' worth of daily diaries in the attic, hoping they would someday be recovered. Cauthen was disappointed to find none.

She also had hoped to visit the Yantai cemetery where her mother and two infant brothers were buried. She found it had been turned into a park.

But to her amazement, she discovered her old piano at the recently reopened church in Huangxian, in quite good condition. It was left behind when she departed the area decades ago. "I have no idea where it was kept all these years," she said.

Cauthen was invited to teach a second year in Yantai, but she plans to return home to Richmond, Va., this summer. Her advice to other visitors to China: "Try to learn from the people. ... Try to understand where they live and what their needs are, and learn from the Christians there who have paid such a price to be Christians. And pray."

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

WMU Tour Group Discovers
Untouched Land Of Lottie Moon

Baptist Press
7/17/87

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--A group of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union leaders traveled to China in late June and early July to lay plans for upcoming tours.

It turned out to be a trip back in time to the days of Lottie Moon.

The group was able to trace Christianity from the famed Southern Baptist missionary's era to today's open churches and to lay the groundwork for visits between Southern Baptists and Chinese Christians.

They found the villages and buildings where Moon lived and worked in the Shandong Province. They walked the same land she once walked and met descendents of her converts and friends. They discovered her home in Penglai and visited with the current residents.

They found the still-standing hospital compound where Moon was taken when the other missionaries discovered she was starving to death out of empathy for the hungry Chinese. Like a West Texas ghost town, the hospital stood silent, surgical masks and beds as they were left nearly 40 years ago.

They stood inside the church she attended and saw the ruins of the first church she had founded.

The group of 12 Baptists became the first foreigners in many decades to enter some of those villages, located in a part of the world that has been closed for more than a generation to most foreigners.

WMU is coordinating its tour plans with Cooperative Services International, an office of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board created by Southern Baptists to assist Christians or relate to Christians in countries where missionaries do not work.

The work of Lottie Moon and other missionaries lives on in today's China, said Catherine Allen, national WMU associate executive director, author of "The New Lottie Moon Story," and tour leader. "Some villages seemed exactly as Miss Moon left them."

The efforts to locate Moon's territory of ministry led Allen back into six file drawers of research for the Moon book. When she wrote the book in 1980, travel in Shandong Province was not permitted.

The efforts also led her to the archives of the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va. There, she uncovered maps of mission work -- including one sent back to the United States by Moon in the 1880s. Using those maps, the group was able to locate rural villages and city buildings.

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It is to those same cities and villages that WMU officials plan to take hundreds of Southern Baptists in 1988 and 1989 to commemorate the centennial of WMU and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

The tours could include stops at Jinan, Weifang, Tinan, Pingdu, Shaling, Li Tze Yuen, Huangxian, Penglai, Yantai (formerly Chefoo), Ye Xian (formerly Laichow) and Qingdao (formerly Tsingdao), as well as the more commonly known cities of Shanghai, Beijing, Guilin (formerly Kwelin) and Guangzhou (formerly Canton).

"A high point was visiting Penglai, which was known as Tengchow when Lottie Moon had her headquarters and home there from 1873 to 1912," Allen said. "The church where she was a member during most of her years still stands. Because of our visit, the authorities had the building reopened. We stood in it and prayed and recalled the history of the church."

A monument inside the church that was erected by Chinese Christians in 1915 in honor of Moon has been "miraculously preserved," Allen said. "Only the word 'American' was defaced during the Cultural Revolution."

Otherwise, the monument to Moon and a marker honoring Martha Foster Crawford, a missionary who preceded Moon, remain "unscathed by time," Allen said.

But even more exciting, she said, was that "authorities assured us that when the local Christians wish to use the building for worship, they may."

Another high point for the group, Allen said, was visiting Shaling, the village near Pingdu where Moon was "the first woman of any mission ever to open a mission station in the interior."

"The first of four churches begun in Pingdu under her ministry was located there. We saw the site of that church building, built by the local Christians following Lottie Moon's philosophy of church development. Although the building fell down in the 1950s, Christians remain in the village, and they still meet together and worship."

The group also found and talked with the grand-nephew of Moon's first convert in Pingdu -- a man by the name of Dan. "We were thrilled to learn that the Dan family has continued to be Christians," Allen said.

Nearby, they saw the threshing floor where Moon first taught the Shaling people. "The wheat harvest was in progress while we were there," Allen said. "It was so very reminiscent of her writings. In fact, to me, the wheat became the symbol of the whole trip. All around us, we saw golden fields, white unto harvest."

From their experiences in "Lottie Moon's China," the group learned several things, Allen said:

- The gospel has survived and grown in China.
- The efforts of Moon and other missionaries live on. "Truly, we see that God's work does last forever. We found in every city people who fondly remembered our missionaries."
- Chinese Christian churches continuously are being opened. "These are 'post-denominational' Three-Self churches (self-propagating, self-controlling, self-funding)."
- Most buildings built by Baptists in China still remain. Some have been restored for use by Christian churches. "In Yantai, we attended the Catholic services now being held in the former Baptist church. Most of the hospital and school buildings continue to be used for hospitals and schools run by the government. Some properties are now used to house many families. Some buildings, such as the hospital and residence compound in Pingdu, are standing unoccupied, as if waiting for Christians to claim them for use."
- Many Christians, especially in the small towns, meet privately in homes, either by preference or because there is not yet an open church.

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-- The standard of living for the typical Chinese person has been improved greatly. "We saw that people have better diets and shelter and medical care than in old China. The people seemed happy and hard-working. Construction work is in progress everywhere. Still, the needs for more housing space, improved sanitation and consumer goods are great."

-- The people are warm, friendly and curious about Westerners. "Everywhere we found people with books studying English. Many are openly interested in Christianity."

Perhaps the most significant of all things they learned, Allen said, was that "the time is ripe for Baptists to visit China, to learn what is happening among Christians there and to let the Chinese know that we are their friends."

Even though the Three-Self Church movement is strong and Christians are independent, "they are very willing to have outside communication and to share with us," she said. "We have much -- very much -- to learn from them. Christianity is growing, and the people are exhibiting amazing faith and ingenuity."

The upcoming tours of "Lottie Moon's China" have now become more than a "tourist proposition or a missions education tour, although missions education is very important," Allen said. "Now, it's grown to be an opening for friendship with the Chinese."

Now that the doors of friendship are open, she said, "We should be going through them with all our might."

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(BP) photos and a China map graphic will be mailed to state Baptist newspapers by WMU, SBC

FMB, Mozambique Baptists
Team Up To Fight Famine

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press
7/17/87

MAPUTO, Mozambique (BP)--Jim Brock began his first term as a Southern Baptist missionary just in time to watch one of the world's most dramatic modern-day famines played out in front of him.

Until now Brock has been powerless to help. But as a result of meetings in early July between officials of the Mozambique Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and about a dozen government offices, Brock will begin to coordinate a major relief program for the country.

Demanding at least \$1 million in Southern Baptist hunger relief money, the proposed plan is part of a bigger project in and around Mozambique.

Southern Baptist relief funds also will be used in bordering countries to help starving Mozambicans spilling out of their homeland. Southern Baptists are looking for a two-year coordinator to be stationed in Harare, Zimbabwe, to plan overall hunger relief, said John Faulkner, Foreign Mission Board director for eastern and southern Africa.

Official statistics compiled by the Mozambique government show 2.2 million people either have been uprooted from their homes or are severely undernourished because of the famine and fighting, said to John Cheyne, the board's hunger relief planner. However, the United Nations has estimated 4.5 million people face starvation. Solid figures are difficult to secure, because at least 1 million people are said to be inaccessible, surrounded by internal strife.

The first six months on the field as a missionary have not been easy for Brock, a former pastor from Alabama. He has been deeply grieved by what he has seen since he arrived in Mozambique early this year with his wife, Brenda, and their 5-year-old daughter, Paige.

The Brocks are the only Southern Baptist missionaries living in Mozambique. People are starving all around them. Food in the marketplace is scarce and expensive. Some of the nation's most fertile land and valuable enterprises have been destroyed, and families have been uprooted in fighting between rebel Mozambicans and the government. The rebels have blocked attempts to distribute food to rural areas.

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Through the Mozambique Baptist Convention, Brock will develop cooking and serving methods to feed homeless children uprooted in famine and civil strife. By organizing a model feeding station at First Baptist Church of Maputo, he will train Mozambican Baptists to run about a dozen feeding programs in five cities.

He also will begin planning a \$350,000 program through which an armed convoy accompanied by a national Baptist monitor will distribute seed and hand-held farming tools to 5,000 families in the Chibuto region north of Maputo. Southern Baptists are choosing to distribute seed instead of food because civil disruption makes it unsafe to transport or store large quantities of food outside urban areas. In fact, convoys run by the government into rural areas frequently are attacked by hit-and-run bands of rebels.

If the Chibuto seed program proves successful, Baptists will duplicate it in other areas with groups of 5,000 families each, Cheyne said. Under the program, the government will give each family three acres of land to cultivate.

Cheyne accompanied Brock and Bento Bartolomeu Matusse, president of the Mozambique Baptist Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church of Maputo, to meet with government officials in early July. They visited government offices, including the Department for Prevention of Calamities, the Agriculture Ministry and the Gaza Province governor's office.

They also flew to Xai Xai, capital of the province where seed distribution is proposed, and drove to a government orphanage called the Center for Education in Chihango, where several hundred children ages 8 to 18 were being housed, fed and educated.

As the men arrived at the center, a Swedish humanitarian worker was on her way into Maputo to plead with Mozambique officials for food. "They virtually had no food left," said Cheyne. "They showed us the empty bins where they had had some flour. The rice was gone, and the beans were gone. I shared our testimony that we were sent by our Lord and were there in the name of Jesus, because we care." The center will be one of seven feeding stations for children around Maputo.

Besides providing for hungry people in Mozambique, Southern Baptists are planning how to help displaced Mozambicans in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland. To gauge the severity of the problem, Cheyne met in late June in Harare, Zimbabwe, with Brock and missionary representatives from those nations.

About 220,000 Mozambicans have surged across the border into Malawi, and relief officials expect that number might total 400,000 by year's end, missionary Ed Barnes told the group. Barnes, director of Southern Baptist relief efforts in Malawi, will explore a self-help program through which Baptists could provide for Mozambican families working to redevelop fields and settle in the southern part of Malawi.

In Zambia, missionary relief director Delos Brown said he would study how to provide food and seed assistance to two refugee camps near the border. Most of the 120,000 refugees estimated to be in the country fled from neighboring Angola, so it is difficult to determine how many are actually Mozambicans, Cheyne said.

About 50,000 other Mozambicans have sought refuge in South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. They are pouring into Swaziland, a tiny nation at the southern tip of Mozambique, at a rate of about 1,000 a month. Zimbabwe has kept its border tight and allowed in only about 5,000 Mozambicans.

Mozambicans in South Africa, officially called "crossovers," are filtering into local villages and being absorbed by tribes. Missionary Terry Blakley, relief coordinator for Southern Baptist work in the country, said Southern Baptists could team up with a council including the International and South African Red Cross organizations, Salvation Army, a group of French doctors and others. The council was formed just to help "crossovers."

Summer Youth Decisions
Top Last Year's Totals

NASHVILLE (BP)--More than 4,000 young people attended "Summer Youth Celebrations" in June at Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Centers, where 1,165 public decisions for Christ were made.

About one-fourth, or 496, of the 1,940 youth attending Glorieta June 6-12, made professions of faith in Christ, rededications, vocational or other decisions, said Clyde Hall, manager of the youth section in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department, which sponsors the events.

A week later, nearly one-third, or 669, of the 2,199 young people attending a similar conference at Ridgecrest made decisions, he said.

At Glorieta, 318 youth made rededications; 93, professions of faith; 44, church-related vocations; and 41, other types of decisions.

At Ridgecrest, 87 made professions of faith; 487, rededications; 34, church-related vocations; and 61, other decisions.

The 1987 figures represent increases in attendance and the number of decisions.

The church training department youth section follows up on all decisions made at the celebrations by writing a letter to each of the youth recognizing and encouraging the decision, Hall said.

The young people are encouraged to make their decisions public at church after they get home so the pastor can follow up appropriately, he added.

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

'God's Little Acre' Times 6
Yields Children's Home Harvest

By Bill Bangham

Baptist Press
7/17/87

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--When the men of Ararat Baptist Church set aside six acres of land for a potato patch, someone commented, "It's just like 'God's Little Acre' times six."

But unlike the characters of the Erskine Caldwell story, moving God's little acre with each whiff at economic gain, the men of Ararat stood pat.

And God blessed.

Estimated yield for the field was 60,000 pounds. But when they harvested this summer, about 100,000 pounds of Irish potatoes were gathered and given to the four Baptist children's homes of Tennessee.

"I don't know what these potatoes are worth," said Gene Gafford, director of the Memphis home. "But what we're able to save (in food costs) we can use in other areas."

Residents of today's Baptist children's homes are seldom orphans. Most are from broken homes. Many have been abused and often require skilled professional help. Any money saved for those "other areas" is money well spent.

Gary Burhop of Malone and Hyde, a wholesale grocer in Memphis, currently quotes Irish potatoes for institutions like a children's home at 20 cents a pound. Later in the year they will cost more. So the gift of the small, rural church on the edge of town is significant.

"We don't feel like it's such a big deal," said Jim Clement, a church member who owns the automotive transmission shop just down the road from the field. "It's pulled our church together and given us the opportunity to help someone else."

The opportunity to help is a phrase heard often from members of the church.

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This particular opportunity began with a revival lead by Gerald Stowe, overall director of the four children's homes supported by Tennessee Baptists.

"Dr. Stowe was here and got everyone charged up," said Clement. "We wanted to do something to help the kids out."

At a Baptist Men's meeting, Ararat Pastor George Hill mentioned planting a small potato patch 20 years ago at another church where he served and giving the yield to one of the homes. The men liked the idea.

Billy Haynes, a farmer in the church who donated the land, remembers saying, "'Well I've got six acres of land next to my house,' and it went from there."

Where it went was to fire the imagination of the entire community.

Seed potatoes, pesticide, burlap sacks, fertilizer, tractors, a mechanical harvester and the trucks to transport the potatoes all were donated by local companies, farmers and the farmers cooperative.

More than 100 people worked a day to prepare the seed potatoes for planting. And 100 worked another day to plant them.

During the Saturday harvest, 40 men and women, and 30 children from two of the Tennessee homes, stumbled across the stubble of the potato field following the mechanical harvester as it churned dust, dislodging potatoes from sod.

They bagged, hoisted and lifted potatoes into waiting trucks under a sun that more struck than burned.

Women from the church hauled heavy water coolers across the field to thirsty workers and fed lunch to everyone who worked.

Farmers in the church paid some of their hands to work the harvest. Others volunteered their time.

A repairman from across the state working on a nearby cotton gin heard about the project, came by and rode several rounds on the harvester.

"We've always had a good relationship in our church," said Clement. "But this is pulling people together ... people who don't come often, neighbors. It's become a joint church-community effort."

By Saturday evening, the harvest still was not complete. Church members, a mix of farmers, factory workers, businessmen, accountants and real estate agents, worked Sunday afternoon, canceled evening services and worked into the night.

"I guess you could say the ox was in the ditch," said Clement, "if it ever was."

By Monday evening, there were still 20 rows of potatoes in the ground. The men of Ararat were exhausted. Many needed to get back to their jobs and their own fields.

The trucks were gone. And they still had not decided what to do with the remainder of the crop; perhaps lay it on the field for the community to glean.

Rain ended their speculations and settled the dust of their labors.

Clement looked over the field. The rain had revealed potatoes lost to the machine and the human army trudging behind it. They stood out, washed, red spots against the darkening soil.

"It seems a shame to leave them," he said. "If we could just get those to some people who are hungry, even if it was just enough for one meal."

Shreveport Church 'Strikes
Gold' With Outreach Ad

By Gary W. Griffith

SHREVEPORT, La. (BP)--Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., struck gold recently with an outreach tool that continues to win national, regional and local recognition.

Broadmoor's outreach tool -- an advertising billboard adjacent to one of Shreveport's busiest intersections -- recently earned a Gold Medal Award during the Shreveport Advertising Federation's 1987 ADDY Awards ceremony, reported Tom Pennell, Broadmoor's minister of media and counseling.

The winning advertisement was part of Broadmoor's 1986 outreach effort in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention's simultaneous revival campaign, "Good News America: God Loves You." The board displayed a rolled-up newspaper with the headline "Good News Shreveport: God Loves You."

The award is one of 43 advertising recognitions -- including an American Advertising Federation 10th District first-place ADDY award and a regional ADDY award -- Broadmoor has received in the past 12 years, said Pennell.

"Broadmoor's ads are judged along with all advertising -- secular and religious alike," he noted. "We are not judged in a limited, special category that favors our winning special awards. Our work is critiqued together with the very best that the advertising industry has to offer."

The billboard advertisements are part of Pennell's "multi media outreach" program he developed as the volunteer media director at Broadmoor in 1972.

The program focuses on total media saturation of the Shreveport area, involving television, radio and outdoor or billboard advertisements, and is based on a theory Pennell learned in college.

"The learning theory says if you use a simple message repetitively and can involve several of the senses -- sensory modalities -- you get better behavior modification than from one alone," he explained. "If a person sees the billboard, hears the radio message and sees and hears on television, the cumulative effect causes learning to take place better than one medium alone."

Broadmoor's messages and designs are brainstormed by Pennell and advertising agents from two Shreveport companies, although the minister produces most of the ideas. But for the past 15 years, the church has sought to communicate "one simple message" to drivers passing the King's Highway and Youree Drive intersection, Pennell said.

"The boards have always been designed to carry only one simple message: 'Christ is the answer, no matter what your question.' Our intent is to take a message to our community to let people know Broadmoor Baptist Church cares enough to want them to know Christ cares for them. And with the billboard, we can word that a million different ways."

Official state estimates indicate more than 43,800 cars with 2.8 occupants pass by the church's billboard sign in a 24-hour period. Many people cross the intersection 100 times a year, but Pennell considers each contact important.

He also asserted the quality of the advertisement is important.

"There is nothing worse than homemade-looking advertising because people are sophisticated," he explained. "They see television spots that cost \$200,000 to make and all the digital effects. They see slick art in magazines, so they expect that."

Driving speeds mean the billboard must preach a 12-second sermon -- of seven words or less -- that is recognizable but not "too churchy or esoteric" or drivers won't read it, Pennell noted.

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"You have to know who your target audience is," he stressed. "My target audience is someone staggering out of a bar, getting in his car and driving by; or a long-haul truck driver; someone who is on their way to work; or someone who just got in a fight at home. I want to say something to that audience, and I'm not looking for the Sunday morning audience."

Pennell attempts to "couch everything I want to say in creative, contemporary vernacular of the street."

He compared billboard advertising to witnessing for Christ. "In the few seconds I have available, all I can do is pique interest. It is almost like witnessing in that our responsibility is to make ourselves available and let the Holy Spirit take care of the harvest gathering."

Broadmoor seeks to produce effective, high-quality advertisements because "God deserves our best, and we are in the people business," Pennell emphasized. "Our advertising tells people that we love them and that God loves them.

"The awards don't mean anything unless they translate into what we're all about here. Our bottom line is how many people walk that aisle and accept Christ."

About 47 percent of people who become members at Broadmoor indicate their first contact with the church was through media, Pennell noted: "So we're reaching people with a multimedia outreach, and it's not just trying to win advertising awards. It is evangelistic outreach."

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(Gary W. Griffith is a staff newswriter for the Baptist Message, newsjournal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.)