



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 5, 1990

90-49

FMB trustees elect Hancock,
experience foreign missions

By Robert O'Brien

N-FMB

SAN DIEGO (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees elected new officers and appointed 30 missionaries in San Diego after traveling to nearby Tijuana, Mexico, for a firsthand mission experience.

During the April 2-4 meeting, trustees also voted to open mission work in two African countries and approved a report calling for Southern Baptists to help European Baptists strengthen their seminaries, training programs and evangelistic outreach.

William Hancock, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., was elected trustee chairman, defeating John Simms, an attorney and member of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., 51 to 22. Hancock succeeds Mark Corts, a pastor from Winston-Salem, N.C., who rotates off the trustee board in June after 10 years of service. Corts has been chairman since 1988.

Morris Mills, a semi-retired building contractor and member of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., defeated Dale Cain, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas, 46 to 27, for first vice chairman. John Jackson, pastor of Crescent Avenue Baptist Church in Anaheim, Calif., and Betty Swadley of Springfield, Mo., were elected unopposed as second vice chairman and recording secretary, respectively.

More than 3,000 people gathered April 3 at the San Diego Convention and Performing Arts Center for the appointment of 29 new missionaries from 15 states for service in 13 countries. California Southern Baptists played host to the event.

At the close of the service, 75 people responded to an invitation from board President R. Keith Parks to consider mission service.

The next day trustees reappointed a former missionary and voted for the Foreign Mission Board to seek personnel to begin work in the African nations of Chad and Guinea Bissau.

Twenty-two of the 90 trustees, accompanied by 14 family members and 14 missionaries and Foreign Mission Board staff members, split into small groups April 1 to preach and give personal testimonies in nine Tijuana Baptist churches. They also shared their faith in several neighborhoods.

The evangelistic effort resulted in more than 30 public professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

The report from the trustee committee responsible for work in Europe concluded that "the time is not right" for the board to establish "another central theological seminary in Europe."

Instead, it said, the board should concentrate on strengthening existing work and further equipping missionaries and European Baptists for evangelism, church development and theological education.

The committee's conclusions grew out of a study outgoing trustee Chairman Corts asked for last year after Ron Wilson, a trustee from California, urged the board to consider purchasing the property of an evangelical seminary in Brussels, Belgium.

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Trustees accepted the committee's findings after defeating, by a vote of 23 to 18, a proposed amendment by trustee Paige Patterson of Dallas that the report be delayed for further consideration at the trustees' July meeting.

The eight-page report, drawn from input from a range of sources in Europe and the United States, cited several reasons for not establishing an additional central seminary.

The reasons included: no request for another seminary has come from mission planners in Europe or on the board's Global Strategy Group; an increasing emphasis on practical evangelism by the Baptist seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland; the need for development of more localized training in European countries; and the high cost of purchasing and maintaining the Belgian property. The report also noted that the value of the Belgian property "was greatly affected when its doctoral program could not be procured."

The report applauded efforts by the Ruschlikon seminary trustees to cooperate with recommendations the board made when it voted in 1988 to transfer the seminary property to European Baptists.

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BP map mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

FMB trustees work for
day as volunteers

By Donald D. Martin

N-FMB

Baptist Press
4/5/90

TIJUANA, Mexico (BP)--More than 30 people accepted Jesus Christ as their savior April 1, as 22 trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board spent the day preaching in Baptist churches and sharing the message of Christ in several neighborhoods in Tijuana, Mexico.

The trustees, who had gathered in nearby San Diego, for their April meeting, signed up for the firsthand mission experience through the board's volunteer enlistment process. Each trustee filled out forms, wrote his or her Christian testimony, purchased insurance, attended an orientation and paid personal expenses.

The group also included 14 spouses and children of trustees, seven Southern Baptist missionaries who work in Spanish-speaking countries and seven Foreign Mission Board staff members.

Although some of trustees and spouses never had been on a foreign mission trip, the group saw evangelistic success even before the day's scheduled activities began. Shirley Corts, wife of outgoing trustee Chairman Mark Corts of Winston-Salem, N.C., and Southern Baptist representative Rebecca Alexander talked to two Mexican women waiting at a trolley station on the U.S. side of the border. Both Mexican women accepted Christ.

The two women had waited for relatives at the trolley station for two days with almost no sleep or food. Mrs. Corts and Alexander offered them money for food and asked how they could help find the relatives.

Alexander suggested they pray that God would help the women find their relatives. As they began to pray, two of the relatives arrived. Even before the women collected their bundles to go, they were telling their family members about their spiritual decisions.

Trustees, missionaries and board staff members split into small groups to preach in nine Baptist churches in Tijuana. The churches ranged in size from 20 to several hundred members.

Trustees said the experience impressed on them the difficulties of ministering in developing nations.

For example, trustees Bob Claytor of Rome, Ga., and Morris Mills of Memphis, Tenn., and their wives spoke at Monte Sinai Baptist Church. The congregation is in the Falipa Velasquez district, one of the poorest sections of Tijuana. Most of the district's 40,000 residents earn from \$5 to \$9 a day.

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Hundreds of two-room shacks line steep dirt streets that would test any four-wheel-drive vehicle. Most are without water, sewer or electricity. Drinking water costs \$1 for five gallons.

The district's ragged hills are rutted with signs of erosion. Residents have woven old tires together to form retaining walls along their property. In some places the black braid of tires works to prevent more erosion, but in others the desert soil washes out with each rain.

The pastor of Monte Sinai Church, Wilfredo Torres, said the community has responded well to the year-old congregation. The area is open to the gospel because so many people are starting new lives, and old habits and traditions -- dominated by the Roman Catholic Church -- are less of a barrier, he said.

Torres, 29, said the church had a regular attendance of about 60 people several months ago. But about half of the members joined a new church in another area when the congregation decided it could minister better to the community if it divided and met in two locations, he said.

Like many buildings in the area, the church is in danger of sinking as the soil erodes. Mills, a building contractor, suggested ways to improve the church's retaining wall.

At the end of the evangelistic service at the church, three young people accepted Christ. One was the pastor's brother. Torres said his brother often had spoken about Christ but never had made a public profession of faith.

Many of the trustees, speaking that evening at a dinner sponsored by First Baptist Church of Tijuana, said they were challenged by the overwhelming needs they found.

Bavdelio Reyes, pastor of First Baptist Church, said a "new nation" has emerged along the U.S.-Mexican border. The border area's population draws from both nations, and the blend has produced new customs and a vibrant economy. Last year 52 million people crossed between Tijuana and San Diego -- the largest number recorded at any border crossing in the world, said Reyes.

"People from around the world are coming here," he said. "They're seeking some kind of blessing. They don't know what that blessing is, but we do. Some stay here, some move to the United States and others return to their homes. This is a ready-made place to distribute the gospel."

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BP photo and list of participating trustees mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Israeli worker killed
at Baptist Village

By David Smith

N-FMB

Baptist Press
4/5/90

PETAH TIQVA, Israel (BP)--Ashi Eshel, a 33-year-old employee of Baptist Village in Israel and a Jewish believer in Jesus, was killed April 2 in an accident at the camp and conference center.

Eshel, the conference center director, was using a power tool to cut the bottom off a metal barrel that had contained paint thinner when a spark ignited the fumes. The bottom blew off the barrel, hitting Eshel and flying another 40 yards.

A volunteer who witnessed the incident sent someone for an ambulance and unsuccessfully attempted to administer first aid to Eshel, whose heart had stopped.

About 300 Jews, Arabs and expatriates attended Eshel's funeral April 3. He is survived by his wife, Helen, and three young children.

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Eshel first heard the gospel when he and his wife, a gentile, or non-Jewish, believer, were traveling around Europe in the early 1980s. He was given a Bible in Hebrew by some German Christians and read it.

He eventually became convinced of the gospel's truth but refused to commit himself to Jesus because of the trouble he feared from his Orthodox Jewish family. However, his wife explained, when Eshel was called by the military to serve in the Lebanon war, he considered the possibility of his death in the conflict and asked himself, "What am I going to say to God?" Through that experience he became a believer in Christ.

"He had love for all people," said Southern Baptist representative Norman Lytle, director of the Baptist Village. "Here in this country where passions are high, that's not simple."

During any conflict, Eshel sought to resolve it according to the "spirit of Christ," Lytle added.

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David Smith is press representative for Southern Baptists in Israel.

Baptists offer relief
to Mexico tornado victims

By Ken Camp

N-Texas

Baptist Press
4/5/90

DALLAS (BP)--Within 24 hours after a tornado ripped through Candido Aguilar, Mexico, leaving 800 people homeless, Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers were on the scene.

The tornado hit the village, about 50 miles south of Brownsville, Texas, during the early evening hours April 2, destroying 160 homes and damaging another 142.

The next day, a Texas Baptist Rio Grande River Ministry medical team under the direction of Delores York, a volunteer nurse from La Feria, Texas, mobilized at nearby Cone Oasis Encampment. Making trips to Candido Aguilar two consecutive days, the team treated 93 tornado victims. No casualties were reported.

In addition to providing emergency medical care, the team also delivered blankets, diapers and other supplies.

Volunteers accompanying the health-care professionals read Bible stories to children and conducted preaching services for adults. Thirty decisions for Christ were recorded among the adults April 4, said Jerry Johnson, director of missions for Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association.

David Romero, a member of the governor's staff in Victoria, Mexico, was in contact with local officials to help facilitate the coordination of relief efforts. Romero became a Christian as a result of Southern Baptist disaster relief ministries in northeastern Mexico following Hurricane Gilbert in September 1988.

Mexican military personnel initially manned feeding operations in Candido Aguilar and supervised distribution of building materials supplied by the Mexican government.

The regional disaster relief unit built by First Baptist Church of Beaumont, Texas, that had been used in spring break beach ministries on South Padre Island was placed on standby status in Harlingen, pending a request from Mexican officials.

An evangelism tent that had been used by Isaac Torres, consultant with River Ministry, for simultaneous revivals along the border was on standby for use in Candido Aguilar as home base for counseling ministries by Baptist volunteers.

During the recovery and reconstruction phases of the disaster response, Southern Baptist volunteer roofers will replace tin roofs and repair other damages caused by the tornado, said Bob Dixon, executive director of the Texas Baptist Men organization.

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Baptist hymnody forum
set for New Orleans

N- (CO
(NOBTS))

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A hymnody forum focusing on congregational singing will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 9, at First Baptist Church of New Orleans.

Organized by the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference meeting at First Baptist Church June 10-11, the forum is for people interested in hymnology. Both meetings will be held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans June 12-14.

The hymnody program will include presentations on "Baptist Hymnody in America before 1800," by Paul Richardson, associate professor of church music, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; "Welsh Hymnody," by Alan Luff, precenter of Westminster Abbey, London, England; "Indigenous versus Western Church Music in Nigeria: Looking at the Future," by Michael Hawn, professor of church music at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.; and "The 'Broadman Hymnal': A 50th Anniversary Hymn Sing," by William J. Reynolds, professor of church music, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

The forum program is coordinated by Harry Eskew, professor of music history and hymnology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

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Southwestern Seminary students
help bring hope to America

By Chip Alford

F- (CO
(SWBTS))

Baptist Press
4/5/90

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Students from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary participating in spring revivals helped bring a message of hope to 175 Southern Baptist churches in 32 states and two foreign countries during the school's spring break.

More than 500 professions of faith in Christ have been recorded, with more than 20 participating churches still not reporting, said to Dan Crawford, associate professor of evangelism/missions and director of the seminary's Spring Evangelism Practicum.

Most of the student-led revivals were held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist "Here's Hope" simultaneous revival campaign sponsored by the convention's Home Mission Board.

The practicum, held each year during the seminary's spring break, is designed to give practical experience to students who lead revivals at smaller churches in new-work areas of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In addition to the students, Crawford, two other Southwestern faculty members and one staff member also led revivals as part of this year's program. "We wanted the students to have a sense of faculty support not only in word, but also in participation," he said.

Students who participated in the practicum described their involvement as learning experiences in preaching and faith.

While preaching a revival at Fellowship Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland native Phil Taylor said he learned that "God is still in the miracle-working business."

Fellowship church is involved in feeding the homeless, Taylor noted, adding he witnessed a special miracle during his stay. "Normally they are accustomed to feeding between 250 and 300 people, but because of this particular weekend, we were blessed with snow, and almost 700 people came," Taylor recalled. "It doesn't take a math major to figure out that when you are expecting 300 and 700 show up, more than likely someone won't be fed."

Church workers were forced to shut the doors at one point, fearing they would have to turn away the hungry.

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"But God knows how to multiply," Taylor said. "The food just kept on coming. When we had enough left for seven plates, we walked outside and there were seven people standing there. Everyone got fed, and there was no food left.

"I think it is appropriate to say that on this particular Saturday they were serving fish," Taylor said, alluding to Jesus' miracle of feeding 5,000 people from a boy's basket of fish.

Danny Forshee, a theology student from Alabama, said 16 people accepted Christ during a revival he led at Carrollton Baptist Church in Carrollton, Va.

"I'm no Billy Graham," Forshee said. "God just used me as a vessel. Prayer and preparation were the keys to our success. I just praise God I had the opportunity to be in an atmosphere and setting where the Holy Spirit of God came down and met these people."

In addition to the student-led revivals, a basketball team made up of Southwestern students also participated in the practicum by sharing the gospel through the athletic arena. The eight-member team traveled to the Big Bend area of south Texas to play against college and non-professional teams from Mexico. During their stay they played against Mexico's No. 1 amateur team, which included players from the Mexican Olympic team.

"It was really a unique opportunity because these (players) are high impact people in the country of Mexico," said Southwestern team member David Landrith. "We got to share our testimonies with them through an interpreter, and we presented each of them with a New Testament."

Another highlight of this year's practicum was a trip made by eight students to Vieux Carre Baptist Church in New Orleans -- the only non-Catholic church in the city's famed French Quarter. In a street ministry project there, the students witnessed to 170 people and distributed more than 4,000 evangelistic tracts and portions of Scripture.

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BP photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary

Louisiana 'hallelujah'
reflects mission success

By C. Lacy Thompson

F-00
(L.A.)

Baptist Press
4/5/90

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--Louisiana Baptists enjoyed a little "hallelujah time" before they left South Korea at the completion of their recent church-starting effort.

The effort ended a three-year missions partnership that leaders praised as a success and a key to developing a strong, cooperative Korean Baptist Convention.

"It was sort of a hallelujah time when we (met for evaluation and) looked at the amount of progress that has been made in this partnership," said Charles Lowry, Louisiana Baptist director of church programs and partnership coordinator. Review indicated 95 percent of the partnership goals had been completed, he said.

The three-year effort touched every aspect of Korean Baptist Convention life. The hope was to help Korean Baptists develop a strong convention so they could become a world missions force, Lowry explained. Throughout the partnership, he has contended Korea may be the key force in reaching the Orient for Christ.

Billy Peacock, a staff member with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board agreed. "I don't think there's any question but that Korea sees itself as a key nation in Asia for sending missionaries to other parts of the world," he said.

After three years of consultations, crusades and training, they are poised and beginning to do just that, observers reported. The convention now has home and foreign mission boards and a cooperative funding program. It has missionaries on foreign fields. And it has an enduring appreciation for what Louisiana Baptists have done in the nation during the last 20 years.

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The relationship between Louisiana and Korea began with crusades in 1969. Since then, the state and nation has been involved in a series of partnerships.

The latest may prove to have the most impact. Lowry cites several highlights:

-- Development of a full age-graded Sunday school program and curriculum. Peacock praised this aspect of the partnership. "Korea Baptists now have the finest Sunday school literature in the world outside of the United States," Lowry said.

-- Development of evangelism materials and Lay Evangelism School training. During the partnership, evangelistic manuals and tracts were translated into Korean and about 700 pastors and 8,500 laypeople received evangelism training.

-- Evangelism crusades. About 12,000 people made professions of faith in Christ during partnership crusades, Lowry said. In addition, more than 150,000 New Testaments were distributed during the efforts.

-- Development of the Korean Baptist Foreign Mission Board. The new board combined scattered efforts into a conventionwide program of appointing missionaries. With the structure in place, Korea looks to become a "leading nation for spreading the gospel to other countries," Peacock said.

-- Development of a stewardship and unified budget emphasis among churches. This may be the "most long-range benefit of all," Lowry said. "This will make possible a strengthening of the convention and all its work."

The partnership also made an impact on Louisiana Baptists, participants said.

"Every team member has come back saying, 'I have a completely new picture of what foreign missions is all about,'" Lowry said. One team member even said every Southern Baptist should serve on a mission team at some time. Many members have come home committed to increasing the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget support of missions and to witnessing in their own community, Lowry added.

Lance Cunningham and Walter and Nell Mangham participated in the recent church-planting effort. Cunningham is pastor of New Chapel Hill Baptist Church in Monroe, La. Mangham is associate pastor and minister of music at First Baptist Church of Monroe, La.

"It was for us the most unforgettable experience we'll have in all of our ministry," Mangham said. "And it reminds us that if the Lord is all-powerful to win people using an interpreter, then how much more would he be able to use us to win souls here where there is no language barrier. We're just amazed at the power of God."

Cunningham described the recent effort as a "tremendous experience" that planted gospel seeds for future harvest. "And it was not just us," he said. "It was the work of the Holy Spirit. A lot of times, the interpreters couldn't quite put what we were saying into words. But God was at work. And we attribute it all to the working of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of people back home."

Cunningham said he hopes the state begins another partnership soon because "this is a great way to reach the world."

The way Louisiana Baptists started churches figures to prove significant. Previously, churches were started as young Koreans pastors struck out on their own to "scratch out" a new work, Lowry said. However, the recent effort was a model of cooperation, involving funds from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and support from sponsoring Korean churches and the Korean Baptist Home Mission Board.

In addition, Lowry is looking for Louisiana Baptist churches to team up with the 20 new congregations in Korea and provide additional financial support for at least one year.

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The recent effort may have provided a model for launching new churches in Korea, Lowry said. Twenty teams led in locating prospects and holding services in communities with no existing Baptist church. By the end of the effort, 19 churches had been started -- and the 20th will conduct services soon.

But the number of decisions was less than in earlier efforts, primarily because teams were in areas with no cultivated prospects. But volunteers still saw "miraculous response," Lowry said.

For instance, one team recorded 40 professions of faith in Christ during its work. Another saw only five decisions, but they came at a church begun with just three members. Another team kept a low profile because of Buddhist influence in their community. Nevertheless, they visited 184 homes and reported seven professions of faith.

The experience demonstrated the importance of relationships in reaching people, Lowry said. In his location, professions of faith came as Christians brought friends to services.

The experience also indicated Koreans must now bear the weight of outreach efforts in their country. "The day when the Anglo face would open the door for you and get you a say is gone," noted Don Mabry, Louisiana Missions director.

But Korean Baptists have the commitment, he adds. And thanks in part to Louisiana Baptists, they now appear more than ready to take on not only their nation, but the world.

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Former children's home
leader Wade East dies

N- (CO)
(LA.)

Baptist Press
4/5/90

MONROE, La. (BP)--Longtime Louisiana Baptist Children's Home leader Wade Butler East died March 26 at age 73.

East died in a Sevierville, Tenn., hospital following a heart attack. He was buried March 30 in Monroe.

The Everman, Texas, native came to the Louisiana facility in 1962 with experience at three children's homes. He was a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

East retired in 1987, ending the longest tenure of any Louisiana Baptist Children's Home superintendent. Upon his retirement, he was named superintendent-treasurer emeritus.

East is survived by his wife of 51 years, Lora Lucile Cochran East; one son, Wade David East, of Woodlands, Texas; one daughter, Janette Lucile East Arterburn, of Gatlinburg, Tenn.; and eight grandchildren.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the first of a three-part series on adult Sunday school

Fellowship provides basis
for Bible study, ministry

By Frank Wm. White

F-SSB

Baptist Press
4/5/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--An organization that allows people to stand around a coffeepot and talk about anything and everything before moving to the main topic may not seem very effective.

That's what often happens in adult Sunday school classes throughout the Southern Baptist Convention each week.

And adult Sunday school likely is the best way to involve adults in Bible study that is directed toward application and meeting needs, said Mike Harton, associate professor of adult education and the J.M. Frost Sunday School Board professor of Christian education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

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Larry Shotwell, manager of the adult Sunday school program section at the SBC Sunday School Board, said: "When we come together and share our experiences and how God has helped us, we help each other.

"Adults have needs that God's Word can address." Bible study through Sunday school provides a directed way to relate the Bible to individual needs, he added.

Sunday school is different from other Bible study experiences because of the fellowship. The small-group interaction helps identify specific needs that can be addressed in Bible study, he pointed out.

Shotwell acknowledged that Bible study could be more efficient in a more academic setting, but the opportunity to apply the Bible to daily situations and share life experiences can best be done in the fellowship setting of Sunday school.

"Jesus taught through relationships. In the fellowship we can seek the meaning of life as we understand who we are and God's plan for us as individuals," Harton said.

The fellowship may be as important in Sunday school as the Bible study because the relationships are essential, he noted, adding, "In the fellowship, we develop an understanding about who we are and how God's plan for individual lives is being carried out."

As a minister of education, Dennis Parrott sees the basis for adult Sunday school in the Great Commission, where Jesus directs his disciples to be involved in reaching others and teaching them his commandments.

"No other approach accepts the total responsibility of the Great Commission as does adult Sunday school," said Parrott, minister of administration and education at Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas, and former president of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association.

The early Christian church was organized on the basis of fellowship, Parrott said. He pointed to the details of the early church in the second chapter of the Bible's book of Acts, where people of different backgrounds were involved in fellowship and were going house to house telling others about Jesus.

Fellowship can be enhanced when adults are grouped by age. But that's not the only way to create homogeneous groups, he said.

With an average attendance of 2,400, Green Acres Church has classes for doctors, newlyweds, engaged couples, singles and other interest groups, Parrott said.

When those groups become large enough, age grading within the group becomes necessary. "We often start with a need and get back to the point of age grading," he said.

Shotwell noted that such specific groupings are possible only in a large church such as Green Acres. Even medium-sized churches would not have sufficient numbers for such groupings, he said.

The Sunday School Board's Sunday school division advocates age grading as generally the most logical method for creating small groups.

"Age grading is the tried-and-true method. We are there because it is the most simple way. It doesn't take subjectivity to decide where prospects go," Shotwell said.

No matter how people are grouped, Shotwell said, the important point is homogeneous groups so that needs are met.