



- - BAPTIST PRESS

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May 2, 1990

90-61

Brotherhood extends
St. Croix project

By Jim Burton

N-(O
(B'hood)

FREDERIKSTED, St. Croix (BP)--The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission will extend its commitment to reroof homes destroyed by Hurricane Hugo through July 31, said James H. Smith, Brotherhood Commission president.

After a recent visit to the U.S. Virgin Islands, Smith determined the task of reroofing 100 homes in six weeks is too great because of the extensive damage and the type of construction required to rehabilitate the homes.

"There is a romance about a project like this," said Smith. "The enthusiasm and excitement we've experienced this week down here gives justification for saying we should extend it."

The extra time will help Southern Baptists reach their goal of 100 homes.

"It is not a thing of just going and putting lath on rafters," said M.B. Howard, on-site coordinator. "If that were it, our men could put the lath and tin on in one day. But we are having to put ceilings in the houses."

The Southern Baptists are working with a number of other denominations to restore homes on St. Croix. Mennonites took the lead last October in volunteer construction and asked for the assistance of Southern Baptists. As of late April, the Mennonites had reroofed 105 homes.

The Mennonites anticipate pulling out of St. Croix by May 30, said Harold Martin, St. Croix project leader for Mennonite Disaster Services. This would make Southern Baptists the largest volunteer group on the island.

The Interfaith Coalition of St. Croix was formed shortly after Hugo hit the islands in mid-September. Headed by Sylvia Ross Talbot, the coalition evaluates projects before assigning them to various faith groups.

"I'm positive the interfaith group would more than welcome us staying and take us into their arms," said Howard, of Covington, Tenn. "Of the roofs left to be put on, it looks like the church will have to do it."

Most victims receiving help from volunteers are home owners who didn't have insurance or whose insurance company folded after the hurricane, said Talbot.

"It is in the hands of the church for the poor people," she continued. "The government is taking care of tenants, people who are renting. The people falling between the cracks are people who own their own homes but cannot work."

Volunteers were originally scheduled to work in St. Croix from April 16 to May 28. Those interested in working after May 28 will pay \$75 to the Brotherhood Commission to cover food, lodging, insurance and island transportation, said Jim Furgerson, Brotherhood Commission national disaster relief director.

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The Brotherhood Commission will direct volunteers to travel agents who can get the best air fares to St. Croix. The average air line ticket for disaster relief volunteers costs about \$435, said Furgerson.

Volunteers interested in the St. Croix project should contact their state Brotherhood director.

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BP photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Brotherhood Commission

Volunteer commitment to
missions grows in St. Croix

By Jim Burton

F - CO
(B'hood)

Baptist Press
5/2/90

FREDERIKSTED, St. Croix (BP)--Brotherhood Commission-recruited missions volunteers are learning that a commitment to missions is not necessarily in the comfort zone.

With all the luxuries that mosquito nets, cots and cold morning showers have to offer, up to 44 volunteers a week are calling Grace Central Baptist Church in Frederiksted home.

Grace Central is one of two Southern Baptist churches on St. Croix, located about 95 miles east of Puerto Rico in the Caribbean. Most of two side walls of the sanctuary were blown out by Hurricane Hugo. When not being used for worship, folding chairs are replaced by cots and air mattresses.

Forsaking the conveniences of home has not been the only cost to volunteers. A thief in the night stole an estimated \$4,000 of money and personal items. But the culprit didn't rob the spirit of the volunteers.

Gleaton Rickenbaker, pastor of First Baptist Church of St. Charles in Waldorf, Md., led the volunteers in a devotion the next morning, encouraging their understanding and forgiveness.

"We had prayer together and sang "Amazing Grace," said M.B. Howard of Covington, Tenn., the on-site coordinator. "There were tears in people's eyes, hurting for those who lost possessions. We had prayer for the people who stole from us."

"When you travel in countries like this you figure it is going to happen some time," said Cal Jones, Louisiana Brotherhood associate. "You just never expect it is going to happen to you. I lost a lot of stuff but I am sure the Lord will work it out."

Still, St. Croix has been the missions experience of a lifetime for most of the volunteers.

Howard's wife, Cathryne, led a kitchen crew of five women. A veteran of numerous volunteer missions trips, Mrs. Howard said St. Croix has been the most challenging situation she has been in, trying to feed home-cooked meals to 44 people from a small kitchen. But she and her staff of volunteers met the challenge and experienced a blessing in the process as she witnessed servanthood.

The most humbling experience of the week was when Ruth Spigle of First Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., washed the feet of another volunteer, said Mrs. Howard.

"You talk about humility," she continued, "that was true humility."

For churches that send crews, the project is building unity among members that is sure to impact their church back home.

"Involvement in missions matures men as Christians and it creates a desire to get into the word," said Ermel Mooney, Baptist Men's president at Blackshear Place Baptist Church in Gainesville, Ga. "It draws you closer together and creates a bond between each man that will last for years."

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"I watched those boys from Georgia bawl in church services this morning," said Howard. "This has been a very, very emotional week."

For Mike and Nancy Conley of First Baptist Church in Maryville, Ill., St. Croix has been the opportunity to experience missions first hand with an eye toward a career commitment.

"There is a lot of work to be done here," said Conley, an Army major.

Conley was assigned to a crew reroofing the home of a Spanish-speaking disabled welfare recipient.

"I felt so sorry for him," said Conley. "His house is so open that he is living in one corner of it. The rest of his house is in such poor shape that people in our home area wouldn't even live in it."

For many volunteers, St. Croix is the first taste of missions.

"It is a totally new experience for me," said James Hilke, 59, of Central Baptist Church in Paris, Ky. "I've learned there is an awful lot of good will among Baptist Men who apparently are willing to devote their time and energy and financial resources to doing this sort of thing."

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BP photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Brotherhood Commission

Women in Ministry to focus
on 'Welcoming the Stranger'

N-(O)

Baptist Press
5/2/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"Welcoming the Stranger ... Sojourners in the Fellowship of God" will be the theme for the eighth annual meeting of Southern Baptist Women in Ministry June 9-10 at the Intercontinental Hotel in New Orleans.

The theme expresses the concept of hospitality, noted Betty Winstead McGary, president of the organization and minister to adults at South Main Baptist Church in Houston.

"We have been strangers in a familiar land, and now we want to offer welcome to other weary sojourners, as welcome has been offered to us," McGary explained.

The conference will be held on a Saturday and Sunday prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans June 12-14.

The SBWIM meeting will feature worship, workshops, seminars, a riverboat dinner and general business sessions.

Program personalities will include Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler of Cincinnati, retired executive director of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, and Katrina and Greg Pennington, ministers at Northwest Baptist Church in Ardmore, Okla. Music will be provided by Agape, the women's ensemble of South Main Church in Houston, and the chancel choir from Northminster Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss.

A Sunday morning worship service, titled "An Invitation to the Table," will be a communion service celebrating the inclusiveness of the Christian gospel. As a symbol of inclusiveness, the service will feature breads from around the world.

Workshop topics will be "Basic Opportunities for Ministry," "Coping with Your Anger," "Keepers of the Fire," "Conflict Management and Resolution," "Creative Worship Planning," "Women in the 1990s," "Joining the Kingdom: Journeys in the Spiritual Life"; and "Personality Types and Leadership Styles."

Registration for the meeting costs \$25. The riverboat dinner party costs \$15 with registration and \$25 without registration.

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For registration information, call McGary at (713) 529-4167, Pam Tanner at (713) 980-4431 or Nancy Campbell at (713) 526-1675.

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Southern Baptist Women in Ministry

June 9-10, 1990

Hotel Intercontinental, New Orleans

Theme: "Welcoming the Stranger ... Sojourners in the Fellowship of God"

Scripture: "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God ..." (Ephesians 2:19)

Saturday, June 9

- 9:30 Instrumental Music -- Joy Steincross, professional musician, church musician, Second Baptist Church, Liberty, Mo.
 Greetings -- Betty McGary, minister to adults, South Main Baptist Church, Houston
 Prelude -- Joy Steincross
 Meditation for Worship
 Call to Worship -- Ruth Fowler, pastor, Richboro Baptist Church, Staten Island, N.Y.
 Invocation -- Christine Rowland, chaplain, Lew Sterrett Justice Center, Dallas
 Hymn of Praise -- "Stand Up and Bless the Lord"
 Theme Interpretation -- Phyllis Pleasants, doctoral student, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.
 Hymn of Confession -- "We Are a New Creation"
 Discipline of Silence -- Nancy Cole Ferguson, minister of music, Hanly Road Baptist Church, St. Louis
 Proclamation in Song -- Agape Women's Ensemble, South Main Baptist Church, Houston
 Sermon -- Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, retired executive director, Woman's Missionary Union, Cincinnati
 Hymn of Response -- "God of Justice, God of Mercy"
 Announcements -- Betty McGary
 Benediction -- Cindy Johnson, minister at large, First Baptist Church, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Md.
- 10:30 Break
 10:45 Business Session # 1
 11:30 Lunch
 12:45 Business Session # 2
 1:30 Break
 1:45 Seminar/Workshop Session # 1
 3:15 Seminar/Workshop Session # 2
 1-Hour Workshops -- Choose 2
 Basic Opportunities for Ministry
 Coping with Your Anger
 Keepers of the Fire
 Conflict Management and Resolution
 Creative Worship Planning
 Women in the 1990s
 2-Hour Workshops -- Choose 1
 Chasing the Kingdom: Journeys in the Spiritual Life
 Personality Types and Leadership Styles
- 4:15 Break
 4:30 General Session
 7:00 Riverboat Dinner Party

Sunday, June 10, 1990

- 9:30 Prelude -- Joy Steincross
 Processional Hymn of Praise -- "Sing to Our God a Song of Cheer"
 Words of Welcome -- Betty McGary

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Call to Worship -- Betty McGary and Edgar Tanner, director of ministry center, Houston Baptist University, Sugarland, Texas
 Hymn of Community -- Agape Women's Ensemble
 Meditation on Forgiveness -- Greg and Katrina Pennington, staff ministers, Northwest Baptist Church, Ardmore, Okla.
 Time of Silence
 Meditations -- Bread of Hope, Sarah Frances Anders, sociology professor, Louisiana College, Pineville; -- Cup of Joy, Donna Starkes, associate pastor, Tropicana Christian Fellowship, Las Vegas, Nev.
 Litany of Confession -- Andee Reed, kindergarten teacher, actress/singer, New Orleans
 Assurance of Pardon -- Agape Women's Ensemble
 Meditations -- Table of God, Roger Paynter, senior pastor, Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss.; -- Peace of the World, Fran Porter, director of Sanctuary Home, shelter for abused women and children, Waco, Texas
 Passing the Peace
 Choral Worship -- Northminster Church Chancel Choir, Jackson, Miss.
 Invitation to the Table -- Betty McGary and Edgar Tanner
 Serving the Elements
 Hymn of Response -- "Welcome the Stranger"
 Prayers of the People -- Nikki Hooser Hall, laywoman, Wagon Mound, N.M.
 Offering -- Joy Steincross
 Recessional Hymn of Commitment -- "We, O God, Unite Our Voices"
 Benediction -- Betty McGary

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'God is with you,' pastor tells
 chaplains at commissioning

N- HMB
 By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
 5/2/90

DOUGLASVILLE, Ga. (BP)--No matter how difficult the ministry, "God is with you," a pastor told 24 chaplains commissioned by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board April 29.

The commissioning service was held at Central Baptist Church in Douglasville, Ga., where Paul Mason is pastor. Mason is a chaplain in the Army Reserves and formerly was an active-duty Army chaplain.

Chaplains are not appointed and paid in the same way as home missionaries, but they are endorsed for service by the denomination's Chaplains Commission, which is housed at the Home Mission Board.

"The Bible tells us to go into all the world and preach the gospel," Mason told his congregation in introducing the chaplains. "These folks go into places we cannot normally go."

Speaking from Psalm 42, the pastor admonished the chaplains: "All of us at one time or another find ourselves in the hard places. We know there are some thorns along the way. It's not tiptoeing through the tulips all the time.

"Regardless how deep the valley or dark the night, the Lord is there with you and knows you're there."

Based upon his own experience as a chaplain, Mason said: "The hardest places we have been in have turned out to be the greatest times of growth. Perhaps we couldn't see the hand of God then, but in retrospect, he was there."

Two of the chaplains gave testimonies about their salvation and calls to ministry.

Karen Long, chaplain with the Bradford Group, a drug and alcohol recovery center in Birmingham, Ala., said she wants to help people find the hope she had longed for as a child and discovered in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

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Raised in what she described as a "dysfunctional family," Long said she saw hope in the character of Opie Taylor on "The Andy Griffith Show," which she watched on television as a child. "I always believed it could be different, that fathers could love their children, that life could be better," she said.

Long found her calling while a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary doing hospital ministry, she said. "I discovered here God is in the real world of pain and suffering -- in relationships between persons."

Faced with babies dying of AIDS, 6-year-olds run over by trucks and other atrocities of life, Long said, "I do the work of God when I say to someone, 'I will be with you whether you are soaring with the eagles or walking in the valley.'"

Nathanial Milton, a Navy chaplain, related how God had dealt with him from the time of his childhood in Mississippi through experiences as a summer missionary and pastor. Milton served three terms as a student summer missionary and one term as a two-year missionary with the Home Mission Board.

The influence of a Navy chaplain in the church where he was pastor caused him to consider chaplaincy as a ministry, he said.

In addition to Long and Milton, chaplains commissioned at the service were Dan Branscum, Jacksonville, Fla.; Kim Norwood, Fort Jackson, S.C.; Michael Robinson, Abilene, Texas; Rick Rogers, Fort Jackson, S.C.; Danny Riggs, Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas; Larry Sweat, Fort McClellan, Ala.; Hoyt Swann, Meridian, Miss.; Eddie Sumbler, Fort Campbell, Ky.; Brett Travis, Hunter Steward Air Field, Ga.; Charles Christopher, Crossville, Tenn.; William Hall, Morganton, N.C.; Mike Keown, Valdosta, Ga.; Nick Riggins, Hardwick, Ga.; Edgar Stephens, Boron, Calif.; Timothy Brown, Dublin, Ga.; Kenneth Cook, Chattanooga, Tenn.; James Huguley, Nashville, Tenn.; Wayne Sibley, Corbin, Ky.; Dallas Speight, Pace, Fla.; Steve Sweatt, Birmingham, Ala.; Alan Swindall, Birmingham; Skip Wisenbaker, Atlanta.

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Browders help deaf
Venezuelans 'hear' gospel

By Mary E. Speidel

F- FMB

Baptist Press
5/2/90

CARACAS, Venezuela (BP)--For 20 years, Jesus Bueno rarely missed a service at Central Baptist Church in Caracas, Venezuela.

But he never heard the sermon.

He sat alone reading the Bible while others worshiped. He couldn't talk with other Christians or join them in Bible study.

Bueno kept going to church anyway, and his persistence paid off.

Today Bueno is among some 75 deaf people who attend services at the church, where Southern Baptist missionaries Jerry and David Browder communicate the gospel across two cultures.

"We try to work with the deaf as we would any other language or ethnic group. We want to respect their culture, language and customs," said David Browder, who is from Fort Worth, Texas. Mrs. Browder, the former Jerry Burrell, is from San Angelo, Texas.

That commitment has meant learning two new languages and cultures almost simultaneously. When the Browders began working with deaf Venezuelans in 1986, they were just getting a handle on Spanish. They already knew American Sign Language, or ASL, from their deaf ministry at Trinity Baptist Church in Missoula, Mont. But to communicate with deaf Venezuelans, they had to know the sign language used in Venezuela.

Armando and Aymara Alvarez, a young couple attending services for the deaf at Central, became their tutors. They met with the Browders twice a week.

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Conversation was complicated. "We were doing everything we could -- writing, drawing pictures, reading lips and using American Sign Language and what little Venezuelan sign language we knew," Browder recalled.

After one lesson, the Browders were so drained they practically staggered out of the Alvarez home. "We thought, 'Lord, we were trying to do this in Montana. Why did you have to drag us all the way down here to do this in a language we don't know?'" Browder admitted.

As communication improved, the Alvarazes began asking about the Browders' faith. "I had so many questions about the Word of God," said Mrs. Alvarez. Soon she and her husband accepted Jesus Christ as Savior.

"They became like family, our new family in Christ," she said of the Browders.

The Alvarazes represent two sides of deaf culture in Venezuela. Alvarez, a draftsman, grew up signing. Because his parents were deaf, family members rarely used their voices. Mrs. Alvarez, a computer programmer, grew up speaking Spanish and reading lips. She comes from a hearing family.

Until a few years ago, deaf schools in Venezuela emphasized "oral education," or teaching the deaf to speak and read lips. But today schools are beginning to teach signing.

Caracas native Eduardo Perdomo remembers when his teachers slapped the hands of deaf students who tried to sign. Perdomo, who is deaf, learned ASL in California after his family moved there when he was 16. He became a Christian at a church for the deaf in Los Angeles.

After 27 years in California, he and his hearing-impaired wife, Gladys, sensed God's call to Venezuela to work with the deaf. They returned to Caracas as independent missionaries, and he became pastor to the deaf at Central.

Perdomo's ties in Caracas, Venezuela's capital city, have helped in establishing relationships with the deaf. But making one-on-one contacts can be challenging in a city of more than 3 million people.

Most deaf Venezuelans don't own TDDs -- telephone devices for the deaf -- so messages must be delivered in person. But the Perdomos and the Browders have found several ways to reach the deaf.

One way is to go where they gather. Groups of deaf meet on Friday nights at shopping areas such as Caracas' Plaza Chacaito. In some Venezuelan cities they meet in bowling alleys.

Evangelistic camps have been another outreach tool. Bob Bell, a Southern Baptist affiliated with the Voice for the Deaf ministry in Puerto Rico, has led several camps for the deaf in Venezuela. He also helped launch Baptist work with the deaf in Caracas in 1986.

Leaders also have made contacts through schools. Browder has met teachers and students at a deaf school in Barinas, about 260 miles from Caracas. In Barinas he led a deaf ministry seminar at a Baptist church and a Bible study for the deaf. He hopes to do the same thing in other cities.

The Browders have found fulfillment in their ministry to the deaf even though they weren't appointed originally for that purpose. A former cartographer and computer consultant, Browder was appointed as an administrator with the National Baptist Convention of Venezuela. A former nurse, Mrs. Browder was appointed a church and home worker.

When they arrived on the field in late 1984, they learned his job no longer existed because of some national leadership changes. "That's when our call was so important," said Mrs. Browder. "We had to re-examine that and say: 'What are we doing here? We're here, but we've already worked ourselves out of a job.'"

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For two years, the Browders plugged in where they were needed but had no firm job description. "We were busy, but we were in limbo," he said.

Meanwhile, they began noticing deaf people around Caracas. Because of their experience with the deaf, they began praying about working with deaf Venezuelans. In 1986, the Browders and Perdomos formed a deaf ministry team at Central Baptist Church, Venezuelan Baptists' largest church.

As they began work, they lacked suitable Bible teaching materials for the deaf. As a result, Browder has developed teaching materials with his personal computer. Using a scanner and a graphics program, he creates visuals that combine artwork, Venezuelan signs and Spanish.

Besides these materials, deaf ministry leader Daniel Urpin, 20, uses drama as a teaching tool. A hearing member of Central, he also leads a deaf choir.

Such learning opportunities are long overdue for Bueno, the first deaf member at Central. Now, for the first time, he can study and discuss the Scriptures with other Christians. And he can finally understand the sermon.

Although the deaf and hearing meet separately at Central, they are part of the same congregation. "Even though there are some problems in communication, there's a sense of family, of harmony," said Enrique Damaso, Central's hearing pastor. "We're one in the spirit."

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

Baptist chaplain ministers
in Panamanian invasion

By Bill Bangham

F - HMB

Baptist Press
5/2/90

ALBROOK AIR FORCE BASE, Panama (BP)--It was dark, early on the morning of Dec. 20, when Susie Hagler shook her husband, Donald, awake. He lay still for a moment, listening to the dull thud of distant explosions, the spit and crackle of small-arms fire, the sounds of aircraft overhead.

The clock read 12:37 a.m., and the U.S. invasion of Panama had begun.

It was the closing scene in a drama that had been thrashing toward finale during Hagler's 32 months of service as a Southern Baptist chaplain at Albrook Air Force Base outside Panama City.

A half mile from Hagler's house is the chapel where he preaches on Sundays. On weekdays it simply is government building 805. That night it was the site of an Army mortar platoon lobbing shells toward targets in the city.

Down a small hill lies the flightline. A chain-link fence divides American on one side, Panamanian on the other. Hagler found it awash in tracer bullets as Panamanian and American soldiers fired at each other.

A Panamanian squad fired three volleys toward the chapel, but they landed 300 yards short. American retaliation knocked out the Panamanian guns before they could fire again.

A slight adjustment on the gunsight, an officer told Hagler, "four millimeters up and five right, chaplain, and we'd have lost the chapel."

Hagler's midnight awakening began four weeks of 17-hour days for him and the other chaplains assigned to Albrook. On one front, he took the night shift; Chaplain Richardo Hernandez, his commanding officer, the day. Most of the time they overlapped in a blur as they moved among the troops -- encouraging, counseling, sharing a cookie or a Christmas card; being the presence of God in a godless time.

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Within 48 hours after the invasion, Hagler had contacted all the families in his chapel congregation.

Children in the congregation made Christmas cards. The women of the church made cookies. On Christmas Day, Hagler passed them out among the troops.

Some of the soldiers hadn't eaten anything but MREs, or meals ready to eat, in three or four days, so the cookies were welcome. Troops who received cards invariably asked of the children who made them.

"They would ask me about Jenny," said Hagler. "And I would describe her, tell them about her. And they would tell me to tell Jenny who they were and where they were from and how much that card meant to them.

"Here's a guy, loaded to the teeth, face painted -- a guy who could have killed God -- standing there weeping over a card from a child."

Ninety-three attended Christmas Day worship services. The day before, Sunday, services were not held due to fighting and live fire on Albrook.

On Christmas, worshippers closed the curtains, broke out the candles and held a candlelight service at 11:40 a.m.

"Most of the people who came on Christmas Day had not been out of the house since the 19th," Hagler said. "For some of the wives and children, this was the first day daddy could come home. There was a feeling of gratitude and appreciation you could hardly believe."

On Dec. 26, Hagler began a three-day-a-week Bible study, primarily to give people something to do. But it also brought together a community of people to talk about their experiences and maybe work through some frustration.

As U.S. troops began to go home, Hagler convened a small gathering of children in the basement of building 805. On the wall he placed a sign scrawled with the words "Invasion Kids II."

Asked to draw a picture of how they felt, the children busily scribbled out their messages in crayon on white paper. Brittany drew a big yellow sun because "there isn't much fighting going on today, and nobody's getting killed," she said.

Alicia drew trees because she went outside for the first time that day. Jessica drew a big smile because she took her dog for a walk.

They missed playing outside, their friends, their school. One saw a sniper killed; another saw one captured behind her house. One play-acted each time he heard gunfire, grabbing his chest and falling down. But mostly they were scared.

"It's all right to be scared," Hagler told them. "The feelings are not bad. We've felt that way before, and we'll feel that way again. It's smart to be scared when you're in a war."

Because Albrook is the only base where American dependents were under fire during the invasion, Hagler saw a need to work with several groups of children, divided by age. He fears long-term effects for some of the children. And they don't have time to process their experiences before they move on to other places and other things.

"Two of my families move to California next week," he explained. "Three are going to England, several to the Philippines, which is worse than it is here. How can I help them?"

"Those who will be here until summer ... maybe."

In summer, Hagler too will leave, his tour completed.

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The invasion has given him a sense of closure. He has been in Panama through demonstrations, random violence, arrests and beatings. And war.

Nowhere could he have made the contribution he has made in Panama, he said: "I've witnessed to more people in three years than I would in 50 years of a rural Alabama pastorate. People I preached to last year are now in Turkey, Japan and Nevada. What better way to influence the world?"

"I have 12 to 18 professions of faith a year, and baptize half of them. That's as many as I ever had back home."

The impact of this ministry was surprisingly illustrated after the invasion while the Haglers sat watching television with their children -- Peter, Paul and Philip. A game-show question asked, "What did your father do in the war?"

Peter turned and grinned at his dad. "He prayed."

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BP photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press

Missionary partners minister
'2 by 2' in Venezuela

By Mary E. Speidel

F-FMB

Baptist Press
5/2/90

PUERTO LA CRUZ, Venezuela (BP)--They formed two lines on the sizzling sand.

Two at a time, they waded into the Caribbean Sea. Sunbathers stared while musicians played guitars and tambourines. Others lined the shore clapping and singing.

Two by two, Southern Baptist missionary Mike Glenn and Brazilian Baptist missionary Calixto Patricio baptized 22 new Christians. The two work together at Jesus Is the Way Baptist Church in Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela. Glenn is co-pastor; Patricio is pastor.

Much of their ministry and lives come in twos.

"When we look at the Scriptures, we see the Holy Spirit sent the people out two by two," explained Patricio, pointing to accounts of the early church in the New Testament book of Acts.

The Brazilian and the American are both 39. Patricio is from Florianopolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil. Glenn is from Albuquerque, N.M., in the United States.

Their wives -- Becki Ratliff Glenn and Suely Sirazawa Patricio -- both grew up in mixed cultures. Although from Albuquerque, Mrs. Glenn has lived in Honduras and Peru. She is the daughter of former Southern Baptist missionaries John and Wynona Ratliff. Mrs. Patricio grew up in a Japanese community in Andradina, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The Patricios and the Glenns, who also have lived in Fort Worth, Texas, each have two children. The Glenn children -- Aaron, 16, and Cassidy, 11 -- attend boarding school in Rubio, Venezuela. When they're home, they and the Patricio children -- Danielle, 11, and Samuel, 8 -- are in and out of each other's homes several times a day. That's not surprising, since both families live in the same apartment building, two floors apart.

The partners even share a double vision for their ministry. Patricio compares their vision to a coin's two sides -- global missions on one side and a vision for discipleship on the other. "You've got to have both working if the total missionary work is going to function," Patricio said.

By 1995, the congregation hopes to have 40,000 members supporting 200 missionaries around the world. But as they move toward that goal, Glenn and Patricio have found something missing. "We came to realize that what we were doing in our church was trying to build a bridge of evangelism and missions without having the support of discipleship," said Patricio.

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The missions part of their vision began in 1984 when the Patricios asked the Glenns to join them in Puerto La Cruz. Appointed by the Brazilian Baptist Convention's World Mission Board, the Patricios went to Venezuela in 1977.

They helped start Memorial Baptist Church in Barcelona, which adjoins the cities of Puerto La Cruz and Guanta on Venezuela's eastern coast. The tri-city area has a population of about 500,000.

After Memorial called a pastor, the Patricios and 19 members started Jesus Is the Way in Puerto La Cruz on a member's patio. The 300-member church now meets in a warehouse another member provides rent free.

The Patricios planned to leave when the church called a Venezuelan pastor. But Patricio felt God directing him to stay put for a decade. His assignment was to build a mission-minded church -- a model for other Venezuelan churches. The task seemed too big for one couple, so the Brazilians sought the Americans' help.

The two couples had met in 1980 when the Glenns came to work in Puerto Ordaz, an eastern Venezuelan city south of Puerto La Cruz. "I liked Calixto instantly. He's a very enthusiastic missionary," Glenn said.

That enthusiasm blends well with what others call Glenn's more easygoing style. "Mike and Calixto are as different as night and day," noted Mrs. Glenn. "Suely and I are opposites, too. Our personalities complement each other. We can sort of pool it all."

In almost five years of pooling gifts, the couples haven't had any major disagreements. "There have been cultural differences we've had to overcome," said Patricio. But, his wife added, "There's a unity in our differences."

The rest of the church staff also is a cultural mix. Brazilian Baptist missionary Ana Maria Alcantara leads Woman's Missionary Union, youth and young married adults. Neisa Pamphile, from Maracaibo, Venezuela, is the church's director of missions. Venezuelan Margarita Tovar is minister of education.

They share a commitment to the dual vision of missions and discipleship. "What Jesus wants from his disciples is to have a global view of the work we need to do," said Pamphile. "Like the Bible says, the field is the world, but you cannot start planting just one little corner of your field and then forget the rest. You have to plant the whole thing."

The church plants seeds in a variety of ways -- locally, nationally and internationally.

In Puerto La Cruz, one way it does so is through monthly Sunday night church services on the beach. The outdoor worship attracts tourists and locals along the waterfront on Paseo Colon, one of the city's main streets.

Along that same boulevard, some of Venezuela's street children struggle to survive. One of those was 4-year-old Nadia Cucho. After authorities found and hospitalized her, doctors discovered flowers, seeds and dust in her stomach. She was suffering from malnutrition and had scabies. She later went to live at Good Samaritan Orphanage, begun last May through the efforts of Fernando Regnault, a member of Jesus Is the Way Church.

When Nadia arrived there, she refused to bathe because she didn't understand what a bath was. She would not sleep in a bed since she was so used to the floor. "Now, she's our model child," said Necglis Jueregua, a house parent at the orphanage, which now receives support from 11 other churches, 42 individuals and even the city of Puerto La Cruz.

Planting beyond the tri-cities, Jesus Is the Way Church has started seven missions throughout Venezuela and supports missionary work in Panama, Bolivia, Angola, India and Brazil. In India, it funds an Indian missionary couple in Bombay through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Jesus Is the Way collects most of this funding through its World Missionary Offering in July, but it also strongly supports the offerings and work of the National Baptist Convention of Venezuela. The church gives 15 percent of its income to the convention's Cooperative Program budget.

In fact, the church has the convention to thank for the second part of its dual vision -- discipleship. Glenn and Patricio discovered at a 1988 Venezuelan Baptist conference on discipleship that their missionary vision needed correction.

Before the conference, the church offered limited discipleship programs, but leaders were not as serious about discipleship as they were about missions. After the conference, the pastors led the congregation to adopt this slogan: "The responsibility of every church is to start missions, but the responsibility of every Christian is to make disciples."

Now, all new Christians have an opportunity to receive basic discipleship instruction. The co-pastors also are leading a core of church members through such Southern Baptist discipleship training as the Survival Kit for New Christians and MasterLife. Each will then select a group of new believers to disciple.

At Jesus Is the Way, discipleship and missions are grounded in prayer. "We have this great vision, but the secret to all this is prayer," said Glenn.

And, for the two-nation partners, prayer is the most important thing they do in twos. Six days a week from 5:30 to 7 a.m. Glenn and Patricio pray together in the church's prayer room.

Prayer helps them acknowledge that "all that is done is because God has opened up the doors," Patricio said.

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

CORRECTION: In the 5/1/90 BP story titled "Honeycutt reassures Southern students," please change the date in the second paragraph to April 26.

Thanks,
Baptist Press
