



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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92-35

Chicago church ministers
to homeless mentally ill

By Louis Moore

CHICAGO (BP)--The elderly woman spotted pastor Jim Queen as soon as he stepped out of Uptown Baptist Church's side door. Taking him by the arm and putting her deeply furrowed face in front of his, the woman began to tell Queen about the abuses she has suffered while living on Chicago's streets, including robberies and a rape.

After Queen listened patiently for a few minutes, he instructed the woman to go inside the church for food and other aid.

As he walked away, Queen told a visitor the rape the woman cited happened much earlier, even though the toothless woman talked as if it had just occurred. Inside the church a few minutes later, another woman was waiting to tell Queen about how someone was paying \$500,000 to \$1 million to force her to stay at a nearby halfway house.

As he patiently listened, his words, "I know. I know." signaled the dozens of times he already had heard the story from the woman.

Even though it can be found in all strata of society -- from the poor to the rich, from the ignorant to the best-educated -- studies indicate the problem of mental illness intermingles with homelessness, alcoholism and drug abuse.

Studies show as many as one in five of the homeless are people who 20 or so years ago would have been in state-run mental health facilities. The early discharge programs of the past two decades have emptied these institutions, often onto the streets. In theory the early release programs were supposed to equip the mentally ill with new medications to control their symptoms. But once released, many have refused to take their medications and have lacked family support to monitor and provide for their care.

Stresses of job loss and marital breakup that lead to homelessness also can spark mental difficulties once a person is adrift from his emotional support system. So can drug and alcohol abuse, which alter the ability to cope with reality. The New York Times has quoted Irving Shandler, a national expert on homelessness, as saying, "Substance abuse is one of the major issues causing people to be homeless and keeping them homeless."

Some regional organizations trying to help the homeless have reported as many as 90 percent of their clients are addicts of one kind or another.

Ministry experts say churches have enough difficulty knowing how to respond to mental illness when its unusual thought patterns and bizarre behavior patterns confront them in sanitized suburban churches, but the issue becomes an even bigger challenge for Christians working with the homeless mentally ill.

Jim Hightower, of the church administration department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, said churches tend to score low in responding to the needs of the mentally ill. Fear and lack of understanding of the mentally ill still pervade many churches, he noted.

"This is an area where we Christians need to expand our understanding and ministry," Hightower said. "In some ways, churches find ministering to the mentally ill at least as difficult as working with people with AIDS and their families.

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"We want to encourage churches to embrace persons with mental illness and their families so that churches become welcoming places for them," he said.

Uptown Baptist Church in Chicago is often cited as an example of how a church can minister effectively to the homeless mentally ill.

The church is situated in the heart of Chicago's highest concentration of homeless. Once a popular, affluent Chicago resort area, Uptown today is a racially mixed neighborhood of government-subsidized apartments, high unemployment and high crime rates. Uptown Baptist Church leaders estimate 100,000 people live in the high-rise apartments within a 10-square-block area around the church, a density rate among the highest in the country. There also are a number of halfway houses for people who were formerly institutionalized, many in mental hospitals and institutions for the retarded.

The 1980 census classified 10 percent of the Uptown population as mentally handicapped, meaning they have either a low IQ or are emotionally troubled. Uptown church leaders expect an analysis of the 1990 census to show an even higher percentage of mentally handicapped in their neighborhood.

Spearheading Uptown's ministry with the homeless mentally ill is Michael Dunton, a US2 Home Mission Board missionary from Michigan. He began working with the Uptown church in 1986 while a student missionary through the Baptist Student Union program at East Texas Baptist University. He moved to Chicago in 1989. Dunton was planning a career in accounting when he felt God's call to return to Chicago to work among the homeless.

"I was real nervous and felt real inadequate in the work when I first came here," he said, but: "I soon began to feel I was meant for this."

Though he is not trained in Christian social work, he says he can easily distinguish between the mentally retarded and emotionally troubled by the way they respond to change. "Change wreaks havoc on a retarded person's life but a mentally ill person is not as affected by it," he said.

The church's ministries to the homeless do not differentiate between the mentally retarded, the mentally ill, the addicted and those who are homeless because of other reasons such as job loss and family abuse.

One Bible class Dunton teaches on Tuesday mornings includes persons with low IQs and several persons in the throes of mental illness. He has become accustomed to unusual behavior in the class such as one member who repeats, like an echo, almost everything he or anybody else in class says.

All the church's programs and worship services are open to everyone including the homeless mentally ill, but the church provides a special worship service for all its neighbors, including the homeless, once a month on Saturday nights. Between 150 and 300 regularly attend the "Saturday Night Praise Service," where church staff offer to pray with those who come forward with whatever concerns they have. Many focus on life on the streets and the results of their mental handicaps or drug and alcohol abuse.

Seck Abykane, who came to this country from Kenya then later was institutionalized in Chicago, says, "This (Saturday night) service is very encouraging. It increases my faith and gives me encouragement to live for God.

"I feel welcome here," he said. "I feel accepted. They deal with the Word of God here."

Uptown Baptist Church was formed in the mid-1970s by Southern Baptists wanting to develop a ministry in Chicago's inner city, pastor Queen recounted. In 1981 the congregation purchased a building formerly occupied by a church that left the area.

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"We are in the forefront of this type of ministry because of our location," Dunton said. "Uptown is the place in Chicago where the unwanted people are put.

"We're a church, not a mission center," he said. "This is our community. We believe we must minister to the needs in our neighborhood. If all these people moved out and the area were gentrified with rich people, then our ministry would be to them.

"The heart of everything we do both inside and outside of this building is evangelism," Dunton said. "If we don't do evangelism, we don't do it at all."

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Christian Life Commission.

CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Southern Baptists start 1,027 missions in 1991" dated 2/24/92, the second paragraph needs to be changed to read:

The number of church-type missions started during 1991 was a decrease from the previous year when 1,206 church-type missions were begun. Both year's totals fell short of the HMB goal of 1,500 new missions per year.

Thanks,

Baptist Press

SBC must change to reach
ethnics, leaders declare

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
2/26/92

SAN ANTONIO, Texas, (BP)--Southern Baptists must update their denomination to include ethnic diversity in leadership roles, teaching materials and worship to reach Hispanic, black and Asian Americans, speakers said during a national leadership conference sponsored by the Home Mission Board.

"Baptists must visualize the nation not as an Anglo-Saxon Christian nation but as a mosaic of peoples," said Oscar Romo, HMB director of language church extension.

Non-Anglo Americans comprise nearly 20 percent of the United States, according to the 1990 census, and ethnic diversity is expected to grow, said Barbara Bryant, director of the U.S. Bureau of Census in Washington.

Between 1980 and 1990, the population of Anglo Americans grew 6 percent while the Hispanic population grew 53 percent and Asian population grew 108 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Charles Chaney, HMB vice president for extension, said Southern Baptists must be culturally inclusive in their denomination's leadership if they wish to be a convention for the entire nation.

He said Anglos in the Southern Baptist Convention should not think they are the only members of the SBC to the exclusion of other ethnic groups.

Romo added, "A challenging question is: Will Southern Baptists be willing to update their infrastructures to meet the needs of the American Hispanics as well as other ethnic groups?"

The Southern Baptist Convention has almost 3,800 ethnic congregations, 1,578 of which are Hispanic. The SBC also includes about 1,300 black congregations.

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But ethnic Southern Baptists have grown weary of waiting to be included in the leadership of associations and state conventions, said Jim Herrington, director of missions for Union Baptist Association in Houston.

"They've been paternalized about as long as they can stand," he said. "They're walking away with their hands thrown up but they're not giving up on a cooperative pool through which to do missions."

At least one group of ethnic Southern Baptist churches already has formed its own association to perform missions work, he said.

Meanwhile, Anglo Americans have largely ignored their relationships with other ethnic groups, said Paul Geisel, a sociology professor from the University of Texas at Arlington.

"I think we tend to see the white missionary in the Hispanic church but not the Hispanic missionary in the white church," Geisel said.

Romo said it is important that Southern Baptists market the gospel in the context of each ethnic group -- "not just the language, but the culture," he said.

"The early church made cultural accommodations to minister to the Grecian widows, to reach out to the Samaritans and to embrace the Gentiles without forcing them to become Jews culturally and ceremonially," said Daniel Sanchez, professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"It is not surprising that in Acts 6:7 the Word of God kept on spreading and the number of disciples increased," Sanchez added.

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis challenged conference participants to respond to God's call to be apostles who start new churches to reach all the ethnic groups of America.

The work of the apostle, said Lewis, is often forgotten and neglected but it is the greatest work in the world -- starting new congregations representing the body of Christ.

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Whites discuss other ethnics,
not themselves, professor says

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
2/26/92

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--While blacks, Hispanics and Asians are often analyzed as ethnic groups, white Americans are seldom under the microscope, a Texas sociology professor told Southern Baptist leaders.

"Black people, Hispanic people and Asian people talk daily about who they are, but we (white people) don't," said Paul Geisel, a professor at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Southern Baptists comprise the largest "ethnic group" in the South, yet most Southern Baptists do not see themselves as "ethnic," observed Geisel, a Mennonite.

All churches, he explained, are ethnic churches. "You need to accept that and beautify it. Don't be ashamed of who you are and don't be afraid to talk about it."

During a national leadership conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Geisel said whites refuse to discuss the most critical issues in their society as it relates to their ethnic group.

The consequence, he said, is that change in society occurs without direction and often with harmful impact.

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"We do not debate how to change, we simply acknowledge that somehow or another it is going to happen," he said.

For example, Geisel said not discussing such issues as sexism, racism and economic elitism has caused those attitudes to be prevalent in society's basic institutions.

Silence also has oriented white youth towards the marketplace as the only worthwhile pursuit, not social change or helping others, he said.

"Our brightest and best (youth) are disassociated," he said.

Most young adults are working in order "to live in the perfect home, drive the perfect car, work in the best job and belong to the best club."

"Yet they belong to nothing," he said. They are captives of a corporate mentality that defines happiness in materialistic terms of performing an occupational task successfully, he said. "That is not enough for a meaningful life.

"We have to begin to talk about the hard topics: Who are we? Talk about what we have to be.

"Understand who you are," he said. "Explore your roots and explore your future. Talk to your children, talk to your neighbor. Talk about everything."

Only when white Americans are willing to discuss openly and honestly who they are will they come to a clear identity and understanding of what gives meaning in life, he said.

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YouthLink 2000 planned
to ring in millennium

Baptist Press
2/26/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Elementary school children across the country may be one up on their older brothers and sisters.

Though they'll have to wait seven years to attend, they will be invited to the largest Southern Baptist youth celebration of the century.

The Southern Baptist Inter-Agency Council recently approved preliminary plans for YouthLink 2000 -- simultaneous youth celebrations at indoor stadiums and convention centers across the United States Dec. 29-31, 1999. Organizers hope to draw more than 120,000 young people to the three-day event.

"Only once since the birth of Christ have Christians welcomed in a new millennium," said Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and co-chairman of the YouthLink 2000 steering committee. "Today's children -- tomorrow's youth -- will have the chance to welcome it together in a series of celebrations that will likely be the launch for a new dream to follow Bold Mission Thrust."

Ross said several Southern Baptist agencies will be involved in planning YouthLink. Dean Finley, assistant director of evangelism church growth at the Home Mission Board, is serving as the other co-chair of the 23-member steering committee.

"One of the goals of YouthLink will be to challenge Southern Baptist youth to reach every one of their peers in the United States in the year 2000," Finley said. "I think that is a realistic goal since statistics have shown that one out of every 20 American youth is currently enrolled in a Southern Baptist Sunday school class."

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Describing the three-day event, Ross said YouthLink 2000 will offer a variety of activities at each location, including Bible studies, worship experiences, concerts, missions exhibits and a host of workshops and seminars. The event will climax with a celebration service New Year's Eve.

"There will be something for everybody," Ross added. "We really want this to be something all of the participants will remember for the rest of their lives. But while we want this to be a fun event for youth, we also want them to be challenged to mature in their faith and consider the possibility of committing themselves to some type of Christian service."

While specific plans for the event will be worked out over a period of several years, Ross said meeting space must be reserved this year.

"New Year's Eve 1999 is going to be one of if not the biggest nights of celebration this century," he explained. "All kinds of groups are going to be sponsoring parties and events. If we don't go ahead and reserve space this year, we won't have anywhere to go seven years from now."

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Death row experience keeps
Caudill active in prison ministry By Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist Press
2/26/92

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--It was an experience R. Paul Caudill will never forget.

The year was 1929. The now pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church in Memphis was a ministerial student at Wake Forest College (now University) in Wake Forest, N.C.

He recalls sitting at the breakfast table when news came over the radio about a man who was to be executed at the North Carolina State Prison that afternoon.

"I raced to the prison and they let me see the man," Caudill says.

Caudill witnessed to him for 30 minutes. "He made a confession of his sins and a plea for forgiveness, like the thief on the cross. And if the thief on the cross was forgiven, I think he was forgiven," Caudill says.

Caudill walked with the young man to the electric chair, at the prisoner's request, and standing beside him until the execution was over.

The North Carolina native says he asked the young man what message he would have for others. The prisoner replied, "Tell them not to follow my example."

"From that day on, I was plunged into prison ministry," Caudill says. He also cites Luke 4:18 as the biblical basis for his concern for prison inmates.

Caudill's interest in prison work followed him throughout his pastorates in North Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee.

When Caudill came to First Baptist Church, Memphis as pastor in 1944, he soon began making the first radio broadcasts to prisoners in Shelby County.

With his help and persistence, a chaplaincy program, staffed by members of the Memphis ministerial associational, began at the city jail. Those efforts eventually led to the employment of a full-time chaplain at the facility.

Caudill's concern about prisoners became common knowledge around Memphis. He was approached about helping build a chapel at the county's penal farm (now correction center). Caudill served as chairman of the committee and the effort to build a chapel succeeded. Recently the chapel was named the R. Paul Caudill Chapel in his honor.

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He points out his involvement in prison work was over and above his pastoral ministry and denominational activities. Caudill has served numerous Southern Baptist Convention and Tennessee Baptist Convention committees and was TBC president, 1957-58.

Though he retired from First Baptist in 1975 after 31 years as pastor, the 87-year-old Caudill does not like the word "retired." "I did not retire. I just went on to other things," he says.

At the center of those things has been continued prison ministry. Four years ago Caudill and his wife, Ethel, felt burdened every inmate in Shelby County should have a New Testament on Christmas Eve.

He called the American Bible Society four days before Christmas four years ago and placing an order for about 4,000 New Testaments. ABS leaders were aware of Caudill and his ministry and gave him a discount but told him it normally took about three weeks to fill such an order. Caudill persisted and four days later the Bibles arrived in boxes marked, "Rush, Rush, Rush."

Every Christmas Eve since, Caudill and his wife have distributed New Testaments to Shelby County inmates. This past Christmas, they gave away 5,500 copies of Holy Scripture.

When he presents the New Testaments he holds a brief service. The services usually result in a number of professions of faith, he says.

Caudill feels there is a need for intensified efforts to reach prison inmates. Where else can one go and find a ready willing audience who needs so much to hear about the gospel of Jesus Christ? he asks.

Caudill believes his experience in 1929 has given him credibility among prisoners. "I have walked where few men have walked. When I talk to these prisoners they know I'm someone who is interested in their problems," he says.

The Caudills have pledged to continue to provide New Testaments to Shelby County inmates every Christmas as long as they are alive.

His dream and prayer is that every inmate across the country willing to accept a Bible will receive a New Testament on Christmas Eve.

"The placing of even one portion of Scripture can lead to a conversion," he says.

People interested in learning more about how to supply New Testaments to prison inmates should contact Caudill at 2045 Thornhill Road, Memphis, Tenn., 38138 or call (901) 756-6200.

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Pastors can communicate
through hymns, prof says

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
2/26/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky.--Pastors can communicate the gospel effectively through the poetry of a hymn as well as the prose of a sermon, said a Southern Baptist hymnologist.

Hymn writing should be reclaimed by pastors as a method of expressing theological truths, said Paul Richardson, associate professor of church music at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. "People retain hymns better than sermons," he said. "Hymns have form, rhyme and memorable ideas. They are also undergirded by a tune."

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Most current Baptist hymn writers are either church musicians or lay people, Richardson said. This stands in contrast to previous generations when Baptist pastors such as Samuel Stennett ("On Jordan's Stormy Banks") and Robert Robinson ("Come Thou Font of Every Blessing") were also accomplished hymn writers. The theological reflections of thoughtful pastors could strengthen the theological underpinnings of modern hymnody, he said: "This is a way for pastors to help congregations remember the theological and biblical concepts they preach."

Hymns need not be published in order for them to be useful, Richardson said. "There is value in writing hymns and singing hymns that may never be sung outside a particular congregation," he explained. "Hymn writing is a way to connect people with a message."

Writing hymns can be a "good devotional exercise" for ministers, Richardson said, adding that an extensive musical background is not required. He suggested beginning hymn writers start by writing poems that can be sung to familiar tunes.

Baptists, Richardson said, introduced hymn singing into the regular worship services of English-speaking congregations. English Baptist pastor Benjamin Keach began writing hymns for use in the Lord's Supper and baptismal services in the late 16th century. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Baptist pastors commonly wrote "homiletical hymns" to summarize their sermons, Richardson said.

Among Southern Baptists, Basil Manly Jr., an original faculty member at Southern Seminary, helped pioneer the denomination's hymnic tradition. In a Founders' Day address in February, Richardson noted that the late Old Testament professor composed and collected hymns from the perspective of a "pastoral theologian."

Manly compiled or co-compiled three hymn books, wrote 12 published texts and composed 13 published tunes. Though he wrote in and used a variety of types of hymns and songs, he "did not want growing Christians to be deprived of the riches of classic hymnody," Richardson said.

The hymnic tradition of the church is always in need of new texts, Richardson said. "There are always new topics for the church to address and old topics to address in new ways."

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State newspaper editors
meet in Charleston

Baptist Press
2/26/92

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--Meeting in this historic South Carolina port city for their annual session, members of the Southern Baptist Press Association heard presentations on Southern Baptists and foreign missions, noteworthy moments in SBC history and religious liberty.

Editors of state Baptist papers met at the same time as state executive directors, Feb. 12-14. Elected president of the SBPA for the 1992-93 term was Jack Brymer, editor of the Florida Baptist Witness. He succeeded Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor of Tennessee's Baptist and Reflector. Quentin Lockwood Jr., New York Baptist editor, was re-elected secretary-treasurer of the body. Named as president-elect was John Hopkins, editor of the Kansas-Nebraska Baptist Digest.

Davis Saunders, retired Foreign Mission Board vice president for Africa, now living in nearby Walterboro, gave the editors an overview of the growth and changes in foreign missions during his 40-year career with the FMB. He discussed the need for state papers to accurately report needs of missionaries and to express ways for mission involvement.

Oliver S. Thomas, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, discussed current religious freedom and First Amendment rights matters now before the U.S. Congress, including the possibility of a second class postage hike.

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R.G. Puckett, editor of the North Carolina Biblical Recorder, dealt with Baptist issues such as missions and anti-missions movements, formation of the SBC, Campbellite and Landmark movements, the Whitsett controversy, fundamentalist versus modernist conflict of the 1920s, the Ralph Elliott controversy and recent events.

Three retiring editors were honored with plaques: Julian Pentecost, Religious Herald, Virginia; Louise Winningham, Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist; and J. Everett Sneed, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

The editors also honored John Roberts and Hudson Baggett for having served as editors for the South Carolina and Alabama papers, respectively, for 25 years and Polly McNabb for her 43 years as associate editor of the California Southern Baptist.

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EDITORS' NOTE: This story supplements a (BP) story on a Baptist World Alliance-sponsored communications conference in Papua New Guinea dated 2/21/92.

Sunday school curriculum training
provided for Papua New Guinea Baptists

Baptist Press
2/26/92

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE (BP)--Communications and curriculum training for Baptists in Papua New Guinea provided by representatives of the Baptist World Alliance and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board could pave the way for a news publication and curriculum materials for Baptists in the South Pacific nation.

Richard Barnes, youth curriculum editor from the Sunday School Board, and other Baptist World Alliance representatives provided curriculum development training for about 25 Baptists from throughout Papua New Guinea. Another 30 Baptists from the region participated in publication and photography training.

In curriculum development, participants followed a model established in 1989 when SSB representatives, at the request of the BWA, provided curriculum training in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, for Baptist leaders from 16 countries.

A notebook, "Ten Steps to Producing Bible Study Materials," which was produced by the SSB for the Ruschlikon conference, also was used for the training in Papua New Guinea Feb. 10-13. The notebook was used in a similar effort to train Evangelical Christians-Baptists from the former Soviet Union in July 1991.

"I don't know what will come from this. There is a high level of interest," Barnes said.

Unlike Baptists who have participated in previous curriculum training sessions, Papua New Guinea Baptists currently do not have curriculum materials. There are more than 700 languages throughout the nation.

While there are no Southern Baptist missionaries in the country, Australian Baptist missionaries serve in some areas, Barnes said.

"The Baptist World Alliance was the mutual link to tie this together because of their relationship to Australian Baptists, Baptists in Papua New Guinea and Southern Baptists," Barnes said.

Baptist leaders in Papua New Guinea cited a coordinated Bible study curriculum for Baptist young people as one of their most critical needs, Barnes said.

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About 100 villages throughout the country with more than 20,000 people have not yet heard the gospel, according to Martin Wayne, general superintendent of the Baptist Union of Papua New Guinea.

However, the number of Baptists in the country has more than doubled from 18,000 in 1980 to approximately 36,500 now, Barnes said.

"I was most impressed with the sincere desire of the people to want to learn to write Christian materials," Barnes said. "They seemed most interested in how to design curriculum plans and how to write a good Bible study.

"Many did not have access to Bible study helps, but all had a commitment to communicating the gospel," Barnes said.

Barnes said apparently the only Baptist curriculum being produced in the country was a Bible study booklet produced by Gary LeCras, an Australian Baptist missionary in Kompiam, in a remote mountainous area.

LeCras, who participated in the curriculum workshop, uses a computer, laser printer and photocopier powered by a generator missionaries have fashioned at a nearby stream.

In addition to the curriculum training, the BWA project in early February provided communications training to help Papua New Guinea Baptists produce a newspaper.

Although the intent was to provide training for two separate projects, Barnes said workshop leaders suggested that the two groups initially work together. "Maybe they can produce a newspaper with Bible study materials in it," Barnes said. "That will be a first step for both groups that are starting from nothing."

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

Also available upon request:

-- Feature by Glenn Brown about an Oklahoma church returning to its local Baptist association after being disfellowshipped in 1987.

-- Feature by Foster Ferrell about the Christian witness of Montreal Expos pitcher Bill Sampen and his wife, Amy.