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September 27, 1995

Baptist Press

TEXAS--Media helps alcohol remain nation's most-used drug.  
DALLAS--Baptist volunteers feed 100,000 in first week of Caribbean relief.  
WASHINGTON--Schaefer recounts encounter with China's oppression.  
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Media helps alcohol remain  
nation's most-used drug

By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press  
9/27/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--A conservative estimate is 13 million Americans, about one of 10 of legal drinking age, are alcoholics.

"Alcohol is the nation's No. 1 drug," said Jack Johnson, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

"A startling fact is that only 10 percent of the drinking-age population consumes more than half of all alcoholic beverages sold," he said. "If all of the more than 100 million drinkers of legal age consumed the official maximum 'moderate' amount of alcohol -- .99 ounces per day, the equivalent of about two drinks -- the industry would suffer a 40 percent decrease in the sale of beer, wine and distilled spirits."

These figures indicate if all alcoholics were to magically recover -- just stop drinking -- the alcohol industry's gross revenue would be cut in half, Johnson said.

"The alcohol industry, obviously, is going to do everything in its power to see that such magic does not happen," he said. "The industry will continue pushing to keep its well-oiled mythology intact through advertising and media support. That mythology portrays alcohol as a special magic that can make one successful, sophisticated and sexy. Without this magic potion, one's life is depicted as dull, mediocre and ordinary."

While Americans are daily overwhelmed by the pervasive message that alcohol is desirable and harmless, Johnson said many in society discover it to be more a horror story than a fairy tale.

"Alcohol advertising and alcohol glorification by media tunes out the fact that alcohol-related problems are responsible for more than 100,000 deaths each year," he said.

"Nearly half of all accidental deaths, suicides and homicides are alcohol-related. Drinking is involved in approximately one-third of drowning, boating and aviation deaths. And, dismissed with a shrug, is the carnage on America's highways caused by drunk drivers. Alcohol-related traffic accidents are the No. 1 killer of 16- to 24-year olds."

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The devastating effects of alcohol cost U.S. society more than \$135 billion in economic losses each year, while the personal cost to families is incalculable, the RTVC president said. While alcohol costs the federal government \$25 billion annually, the government collects only \$5 billion each year in alcohol excise tax revenues, he said.

"Because the media depend upon alcohol advertising for a large share of its profit," he said, "for the most part media relate alcohol to parties, good times, celebrations and fun. In truth, it can be related to murder, suicide, rape, divorce, unemployment, health problems, child abuse and numerous other negatives.

"There have always been more negatives than positives related to alcohol."

Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) and fetal alcohol effects (FAE) are the leading cause of preventable birth defects with accompanying mental retardation, Johnson said. More than 5,000 children are born each year with FAS and tens of thousands more with FAE, he said.

"Some people have been duped into believing that certain brewers encourage moderation in drinking," Johnson said. "Nothing could be further from the truth. Their slick commercials counseling moderation do nothing more than give consumers a warm fuzzy feeling about their product.

"The most basic analysis of alcohol advertising reveals a twofold strategy, with emphasis on recruiting new, young users and pushing heavy consumption of products. Advertising that encouraged only moderate drinking would be an economic failure. Advertisers, therefore, target heavy drinkers and design their advertising strategy accordingly. As with any product, the heavy user is the best customer. When the product is a drug, the heavy user is often an addict."

Young people also are a lucrative market for alcohol producers, Johnson said, because youthful drinking is frequently characterized by binges and episodes of drunkenness, and young people are particularly vulnerable to ad campaigns presenting heavy drinking as fun and normal.

"The myths perpetrated by alcohol advertising," Johnson said, "include the idea that drinking is a risk-free activity, that you cannot survive without drinking, that problem drinking behaviors are normal, that alcohol is a magic potion that can transform you, that sports and alcohol go together and that if these products were truly dangerous the media would tell us.

"Entertainment television perpetrates many of those same myths," Johnson said. "More often than not, prime-time programs glamorize the drinking or serving of alcohol as a sophisticated or adult pursuit; show the use of alcohol gratuitously where another beverage might easily and fittingly be substituted; omit the consequences of alcoholism and alcohol misuse; deny characters a chance to refuse an alcoholic drink; show drinking as an activity that is so normal everyone must indulge; show excessive drinking without consequences, or with only pleasant consequences; show easy recoveries from alcoholism, normally a difficult task; show children 'lusting after' alcohol and the time when they are adult enough to drink it; associate drinking alcohol with macho pursuits; and omit any criticism of alcoholic drinking."

Children often base their decision about whether and how to use alcoholic beverages on what they see and hear on television, Johnson said.

"Messages presented by television massage the mind-set of children, who on average watch the tube 22 hours a week," he said. "And children who pay the most attention to commercials are least likely to be skeptical about them. Research has also shown that the children who pay the most attention to beer commercials have the highest expectation that they will drink as adults."

Johnson said his concern is that parents, churches, schools and the government are placing all their focus on so-called "hard drugs" and ignoring a drug that opens the door to all sorts of substance abuse.

"Alcohol is a killer and destroyer of lives," he said, "but because alcoholic beverages are glamorized by media, they often are not viewed as such. This is just another reason we must educate our children and grandchildren to properly use and understand media."

**Baptist volunteers feed 100,000  
in first week of Caribbean relief    By Ken Camp**

DALLAS (BP)--Southern Baptist volunteers from Texas and Alabama prepared close to 100,000 meals in their first week of disaster relief on the Caribbean islands of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix following Hurricane Marilyn.

Texas Baptists restored electricity and replaced plumbing at the Blackbeard's Castle Hotel on St. Thomas and set up their headquarters there, preparing meals continuously each day from 7:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Using rationed bottled water, they cooked about 52,000 meals that were served by Red Cross personnel. On Sept. 26 alone, the Texans prepared 6,280 meals for St. Thomas and 2,000 more for delivery on St. John.

Alabama Baptists set up emergency food service at the airport in St. Croix, serving more than 46,000 meals in seven days.

"Team members are thankful for good health among their number and team spirit is good," said Kenny Rains of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, off-site coordinator for Caribbean Relief.

A 10-member replacement team is scheduled to arrive at St. Thomas on Oct. 1.

Two Texas Baptists left the United States Sept. 22 bound for St. Maarten and Antigua to teach local personnel how to operate water purifiers provided by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Two water purifiers, each capable of purifying 25,000 gallons of water daily, were sent to the islands about three weeks ago after they were hit by Hurricane Luis.

On Antigua, volunteer Gary Smith of Dallas and a Southern Baptist missionary have been taking the purification unit from village to village, distributing tracts and delivering water in plastic bladders.

"Gary says it is like a circus, with the people flocking around them. They're giving out two kinds of water at once -- the baby-safe kind and the eternal variety," said John LaNoue of Texas Baptist Men.

The first volunteer construction team enlisted by the Brotherhood Commission is expected to arrive on Antigua Sept. 30.

On St. Maarten, volunteer Dick Talley of Dallas said island residents are in need of a dependable water supply that could be purified. He reported trying several wells, but each ran dry after about 15 minutes. Construction supplies for rebuilding had not arrived as of Sept. 27, Talley said.

The need for volunteer builders on St. Maarten is "desperate," according to Mickey Caison, project manager for the Brotherhood Commission's Caribbean effort. Prospective volunteers can call Beth Huneycutt at 1-800-280-1891.

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**Schaefer recounts encounter  
with China's oppression**

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
9/27/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--It required less than a day for Nancy Schaefer to learn firsthand about the oppressiveness of China's totalitarian government.

Schaefer recently returned from Beijing after representing the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission during the United Nations World Conference on Women in China's capital.

The day after her arrival, Schaefer went to the Beijing International Convention Center for caucuses on the first day of the conference. Shortly after arriving at the convention center, however, she "felt a check in my spirit" and decided to return to her hotel, Schaefer said. She was accompanied by Wanda Miller, her assistant at Family Concerns, an Atlanta-based pro-family organization Schaefer founded.

As they approached the room, "we noticed two men standing at our door and one man inside our room with a screwdriver that he had used to bore a hole into the corner of my luggage and was attempting to break it open," said Schaefer, a CLC trustee.

"All three Chinese men were humiliated at being caught, and after pretending to be repairing the door hinge they left."

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Schaefer and Miller also left. They changed hotels the next day to one closer to the convention center. Representatives from several other pro-life/pro-family non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also were in their new hotel.

Schaefer, Miller and other NGO representatives sought to lobby official delegates.

In other news from the massive gathering in Beijing:

-- The conference itself was from Sept. 4-15. The NGO forum was held Aug. 30-Sept. 8 in Huairou, about 30 miles outside Beijing.

The NGO forum proved to be a nightmare at times for participants as well as the Chinese government. The Chinese moved the forum away from Beijing apparently to avoid having potentially thousands of women demonstrating in the capital city.

It still proved a public relations disaster for China's government. Chinese security harassed participants at the NGO forum, including members of the U.S. delegation. Some workshops were scheduled in tents, but rain turned some of the site into a quagmire.

About 40 percent of the workshops never took place, said Bob Ditmer, a reporter for Family News in Focus radio network. In some cases, tents which were to house workshops were not even set up when participants arrived, he reported.

In addition, representatives from NGOs which were to conduct workshops never appeared, Ditmer said. Family News in Focus reported the Planned Parenthood Federation did not show up to conduct a workshop, so a Kenyan delegation took it over.

The NGO forum was not as helpful to official delegates to the women's conference as it had been at the U.N. population conference last September in Cairo, Egypt.

"It's not like it was in Cairo," Ditmer said in a newscast during the NGO forum, "where (the forum) was just across the street and quite often you would see delegates at many of the forum meetings on different topics to learn more before they went in and negotiated what was going to be in the document. That's not happening here because it's so far to go."

-- Like much of the conference's official document, the NGO forum was not friendly to biblical faith, morality and concepts of the family.

"If you needed or wanted a new god or goddess, Huairou was the place to go," said Jane McDermott, an Episcopal priest and a representative of the Ecumenical Coalition on Women and Society.

"But if you wanted a forum where persons of differing opinions could gather to exchange views and listen thoughtfully to one another, this was not the place. If you were an ardent feminist, you would have been among the majority, but for someone who believes in traditional Christian values, especially the family, it was a place that did violence to one's soul.

"Huairou was physically and sensually overwhelming: Long travel times, high temperatures, rain, more rain, pungent odors, nowhere to sit, colorful posters and protests," McDermott wrote in a report from ECWS.

-- Religious freedom took hits before and during the U.N. forum and conference.

Chinese security officials cracked down on house churches prior to the meetings, according to a report by News Network International cited in an ECWS release. According to NNI, security officials visited Christian leaders in Beijing, questioned them about their congregations and warned them not to meet with conference delegates. In the province of Henan, two female house church leaders were sentenced in August to three years in a labor camp for membership in an outlawed religious sect and involvement in anti-government activities, NNI reported.

ECWS members received a list of 11 "points of attention," including a warning to "refrain from staging religious activities or distributing publicity materials" except in three designated areas. The list was a reminder religious expression is considered as offensive as other specifically mentioned crimes, such as drug trafficking and prostitution, ECWS reported.

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In a workshop sponsored by ECWS, a Chinese woman shouted, "Liar," and another grabbed a stack of documents, including petitions calling for religious liberty language in the conference's Platform for Action, and ran from the meeting tent. The women acted when Rep. Christopher Smith, R.-N.J., recounted the Chinese government's abuses of religious liberty and other human rights.

Diane Knippers, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, vainly chased the woman.

"There was no way I could have stopped her short of tackling her," Knippers said in an ECWS release. "She was so angry. Perhaps she had never heard the facts about her country before -- or perhaps she just couldn't tolerate hearing these abuses discussed openly."

Religious liberty gained a victory in the final conference document, the Platform for Action. It was one of the few bright spots for pro-family organizations in a document which espoused sexual and "reproductive" rights and did little to affirm marriage and the nuclear family.

In a paragraph on religious freedom, the document said, "The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is inalienable and must be universally enjoyed."

Knippers said in an ECWS release, "This was one of our major goals in coming to Beijing. However, we will not be satisfied until women in places like Sudan, China, Iran and Vietnam in fact enjoy their full religious liberty. We will especially not forget the dozens of Christian women in prison or under police surveillance here in China."

The document "remains fundamentally flawed in many other respects," Knippers said.

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David Dockery book aims  
at consensus building

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
9/27/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--New Testament theologian David S. Dockery believes it's time for conservative Christians to move toward consensus on the subject of biblical authority.

That was his purpose, Dockery said, for writing "Christian Scripture: An Evangelical Perspective on Inspiration, Authority and Interpretation," a book recently released by Broadman & Holman, publishing arm of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"It was written because Southern Baptists and the broader evangelical world need more than rhetoric (about the Bible)," said Dockery, a vice president and dean of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's school of theology, Louisville, Ky.

"We need a theology that articulates what we believe and we need to be able to understand the implications of our theology." He added the book defends "the inspiration and complete truthfulness of the Bible without in any way ignoring the historical particularities of Scripture."

Prominent evangelical scholars have indicated in their reviews of the book Dockery has met his aim of consensus building. Craig Blomberg, a New Testament professor at Denver Seminary, said Dockery's work "provides the 'Magna Carta' on which Baptists and other Christians can and should build a strong, healthy Bible-centered faith for years to come."

"Dockery's book is informative, up to date, clear, thoughtful and most importantly charitable," said Clark Pinnoch, a theology professor at McMaster Theological School in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. "It comes from a young member of the new Southern Baptist leadership team and is not divisive, but the kind of consensus statement that can restore unity and get us moving forward again."

Walter C. Kaiser, professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, South Hamilton, Mass., said the book "should stand as a landmark volume on evangelical consensus achieved at the end of the 20th century."

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Dockery began his teaching career in 1984 when the Southern Baptist Convention controversy over the Bible was at its height. As a young professor at Criswell College in Dallas, Dockery quickly became known as an irenic and scholarly proponent of biblical inerrancy, the position advocated by SBC conservatives.

Today Dockery is concerned that Southern Baptists augment their high view of the Bible with a comprehensive understanding of the place of Scripture in their lives.

"It seems quite clear to me that the SBC of the '90s has decided that biblical inerrancy is the focus of the new theological center," Dockery said. "What we now need is a fully orbed perspective on biblical inspiration, authority and interpretation that is consistent with the church's view of Scripture throughout church history."

While Dockery wrote the book for a broader audience than Southern Baptists, he included in the volume a 38-page appendix that summarizes the views of Scripture held by Southern Baptist theologians since the denomination's formation in 1845.

"The issue of the truthfulness of Scripture has been an intensely debated matter by Southern Baptists for 20 years," Dockery said. "It is important for us to get a longer perspective on ways Southern Baptists have viewed and used the Bible."

Contemporary Southern Baptist scholars representing various sectors of SBC life have offered flattering judgments of the book. Robert B. Sloan, president of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, called the book "a fair and balanced treatment of the doctrines of biblical inspiration and authority that should find a wide readership in American Christianity."

Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., said "as an introduction to where evangelicals now stand on the pivotal doctrine of Scripture, this book will prove invaluable, especially to theological students."

Carl F.H. Henry, a Southern Baptist who is often referred to as the "dean of evangelical theologians," described the book as "timely and well-documented. Every Southern Baptist pastor and seminarian ought to read it."

"Dockery has raised relevant contemporary questions about the meaning of inspiration, biblical authority and truthfulness," said Thomas D. Lea, dean of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's school of theology, Fort Worth, Texas. "He has solved these questions with balanced statements, scholarly insights and a commitment to relevance and reliability of Scripture."

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Seminary president says media  
critical in proclaiming gospel      By C.C. Risenhoover

Baptist Press  
9/27/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary wants to create an atmosphere in which students develop communications skills, not just preaching skills.

"The 21st century preacher must learn to use all facets of communications," said Ken Hemphill, president of the Southern Baptist seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "And the ability to use media effectively is a critical and legitimate part of what we must do to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Southwestern is the only Southern Baptist seminary offering a master of arts in communications, but Hemphill said his vision was not just for those majoring in the field.

"The effective use of media must be taught to everyone attending the seminary," he said in an interview to be published in the Radio and Television Commission's journal, Beam. "As ministers, we must expose everyone in the life of the local church to the need for and effective use of media in spreading the message of Christ."

A primary need in Southern Baptist seminaries is courses in creative writing, Hemphill said. Good writing, he said, is the foundation for good media -- print or electronic, oral or visual.

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"It all begins with writing," he said. "Media ministry opportunities abound for the pastor or layperson who has the ability to write. Practically any pastor can get an article in a local paper, especially if it deals with some current issue. And, if a pastor writes well, he could be invited to write regularly for the paper. That's just one way of spreading God's Word that doesn't cost anything but time and effort.

"But, no matter what the media or means of presentation, there is a need for well-written, well-thought-out messages that speak of God's grace and love through Jesus Christ."

Hemphill also noted every church must create a sense of visibility.

"Most churches already have reputations," he said. "And, if a church has a bad reputation, the perception won't die easily or quickly. A pastor and his people have to understand that the perception they have of their church may be altogether different than the community's perception. How people perceive you may be entirely different than how you perceive yourself. The solution to offsetting a bad community perception often is not a matter of creating a new image, but of recreating what you really are ... of reinforcing the truth. Regardless, media can be a tremendous asset, whether creating a new image or reinforcing the truth."

Hemphill spoofed the idea that only mega-churches can have effective television ministries.

"A television ministry can do a lot for a relatively small congregation," he said, "because it can give them visibility. People of all denominations watch and listen. Often people are referred to a church with a TV ministry by someone from another denomination who watches the program. And, when people watch a church's television program and then attend that church, they're often ready to join. They already feel as though they are a part of what is happening."

Hemphill, pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va., from 1981-1992, said his church used both radio and television to reach people.

"Radio can be an especially effective means of reaching people," he said. "You do have to understand that when a message is aired is important because it determines your audience. With radio you have different types of audience during different time periods. Many churches do well with one-minute spots directed to a specific audience.

"When Christian radio came to Norfolk, I listened for two or three weeks and there was a sameness to all the spots about churches. All the spots gave church addresses, time of services and so on. It was the sort of thing you expect to find in a telephone company's Yellow Pages."

Hemphill said First Baptist purchased a series of 30-second spots and he used young adults in the church to write vignettes for the time.

"In a sense, they wrote soap operas," he said. "Norfolk is a Navy town, so they wrote spots about a husband being away at sea, a wife being homesick and so on. The spots stressed 'First Family,' not First Baptist. And we didn't give the time of services or the address of the church. When the proper interest is created, people have the initiative to look up the address of a church and to find out the times of its services. And how many people can write down the address, times of services and phone number when they're driving?"

"Our purpose was to promote First Baptist as a caring community, so we intentionally utilized radio to create this sense of 'First Family.' We also used radio to develop the theme 'Singles Are Family.' I think many people perceived First Baptist as stiff, but with radio we were able to offset that image."

Hemphill said some pastors give up on use of media because its value is often hard to measure.

"When a media ministry is ineffective," he said, "it's usually because the pastor or church isn't committed to an imaginative approach, hasn't marketed it properly or hasn't targeted the right audience. That's why understanding media and how to use it is such an important area of teaching at the seminary."

Hemphill said with the communications industry exploding, there are questions and challenges as to how the seminary can respond to the media needs of its students.



"Obviously, we have to rely on donors to help us with equipment purchases and funding for teaching expertise," he said. "We have to specialize and expand. We've had an excellent relationship with the Radio and Television Commission, but we'll lose that source of support when the agency is moved to Atlanta. But, regardless of the difficulties, the seminary must be committed to an ongoing program of teaching our students to use every means of communication to proclaim the gospel."

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**Chinese Baptists join hands  
in outreach to Apache Indians**

By Jean Bihn

**Baptist Press  
9/27/95**

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--When pastor Simon Tsoi and his wife, Christina, took a trip to the White Mountains this summer, they took along more than 1,000 eggs, 200 pounds of chicken, 100 pounds of pork and 250 pounds of rice.

But don't look for a new Chinese restaurant opening in northern Arizona anytime soon. Rather, the Tsois joined other workers from eight churches, seven of them Chinese Southern Baptist, in a mission effort to the Apache Indians. Two of the churches involved are in Arizona -- First Chinese Baptist Church in Phoenix, where Tsoi is pastor, and Tucson Chinese Baptist Church. The other six are from California.

"This is long overdue. Christian missions, especially sharing Christ, is the privilege as well as responsibility of every Christian, regardless of their ethnic background," said Tsoi, a former first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The mission effort, now in its fourth year, began to take shape in 1979 as Tsoi prayed for a way to reach the Apache people. Three churches finally united to begin the annual trek to lead Vacation Bible School and revival meetings and provide services to the community. This year, 87 volunteers traveled from the California churches and 28 from Arizona.

Al Campsen, pastor at White Mountain Apache Baptist Church in Whiteriver, Ariz., said the Chinese volunteers related well to the Apaches. "It was real encouraging to see their enthusiasm," he said. "They did a tremendous work here. ... They were very well prepared for what they were doing."

The July 29-Aug. 4 endeavor was divided into four sites on the reservation: Cibecue, Cedar Creek, Canyon Day and Whiteriver, with the latter church as headquarters.

Vacation Bible Schools were held during the day, with revival services in the evenings. Twenty vans were used to go out into the area to pick up kids for VBS. After seeing the children home from VBS, the workers visited parents and neighbors, sharing Christ with them. In addition, many volunteers repaired and painted homes of the elderly, many of them widows.

Christina Tsoi coordinated the feeding of the nearly 120 volunteers three meals a day. She had shopped for bargains in Phoenix and prepared, then froze the food in the kitchen of the First Chinese Baptist Church there. She took pots, woks and rice cookers for cooking the huge amounts of food.

Alan Chan, pastor of Mandarin Chinese Baptist Church, Los Angeles, coordinator of the mission work, said, "We really sense a tremendous need among the Apache people and are received very, very well.

"We see this thing as an opportunity not only to give, but to receive," Chan said. Many parents from his California church insist their children go on this mission, he said, because they see the difference it makes in their lives.

This year's trip resulted in a total of 400 children in VBS in the four locations. In all, 200 decisions were made. "We're just being faithful in doing what the Lord guides us to do," Chan said. "He causes the seed to grow."

The week culminated in a "harvest celebration" with 400 present. The Chinese-Americans invited the Apache people to share an evening meal. The group feasted on fry bread and beans brought by the Apache people and Chinese food prepared by the visitors.

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In addition to the annual mission trip, three of the churches provide financial support to White Mountain Baptist Church and another church in Winslow.

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Bihn is a free-lance writer.

Orphanages key facet  
of Texas River Ministry

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
9/27/95

OJINAGA, Mexico (BP)--Olivia Medina wasn't even born when Texas Baptists launched their River Ministry nearly 28 years ago.

But thanks to the River Ministry's efforts along the Rio Grande, she became the first Christian in her family, leading the rest of her loved ones to faith in Jesus.

And now Olivia and her brother, Julian, are directors of a new orphanage in Ojinaga, sponsored by Iglesia Bautista Bethel in Presidio's sister city.

The orphanage is housed in the original building used by Bethel, built more than a decade earlier by River Ministry volunteers from Shiloh Terrace Baptist Church, Dallas.

Today, the River Ministry helps to support the Medinas as they provide Christian care and guidance for up to two dozen orphans.

"These children need the Lord greatly," Medina said. "That's what I live for."

River Ministry works with a half-dozen children's homes along the border, caring for youngsters who have been separated from their parents for various reasons.

"Some are the children of prostitutes. Some of their parents are drug addicts. Each has a different story," said Margarita Marquis.

She and her husband, Juventino, pastor of Christ the Only Hope Baptist Church in Piedras Negras, direct El Pesebre de Belen (The Manger of Bethlehem) orphanage.

Thirty children, from preschool to high school age, live in what had been an abandoned schoolhouse. After River Ministry helped to put a new roof on the building, the city government in Piedras Negras agreed to let the orphanage rent the facility for \$1 a year.

Elsewhere in the Piedras Negras area at several church-based sites, Ruben Juarez directs a nutrition program that provides daily meals for more than 400 children a week. Juarez is a pastor and physician who works as area health services coordinator for River Ministry.

And in nearby San Joaquin, Templo Bautista Divina Trinidad provides day care for children whose mothers work in the maquiladora factories, assembly plants that offer low-paying jobs to minimally skilled workers and cheap labor for U.S. manufacturers.

Earlier this year, the church enrolled 40 children of non-church members in its day-care ministry.

"Forty kids out of 28,000 isn't much," said Jack Calk, director of missions for Del Rio-Uvalde Baptist Association. "But I think it's where Jesus would start."

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EDITORS' NOTE: Sam Beene began striving toward racial reconciliation among Southern Baptists some 20 years before it became fashionable. His dedication to racial harmony as a Christian social ministry missionary in California and a black church development consultant at the Baptist Sunday School Board stands as a legacy everyone can learn from. In June, during the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, messengers voted to accept a Racial Reconciliation Resolution which, in part, apologizes to all African Americans for the denomination's role in perpetuating American slavery. Beene was unable to attend due to illness, but his son, Keith, had the opportunity to witness this historic meeting and later talk with his father about the future ramifications of the resolution.

## FIRST-PERSON

Father leaves son, others  
racial inclusiveness legacy

By Keith Beene

Baptist Press  
9/27/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A week after his cancerous right lung was removed, my father asked me over for an afternoon chat. That afternoon he told me his wishes regarding his funeral service. He never left anything to chance. Every action had a purpose and each sentence he spoke was planned to evoke a specific response.

He died two months later, after a four-year battle against colon cancer. His funeral wishes were simple. Someone of my mother's choice would do the eulogy. A person of color would sing the hymn, "God Is." Henry Webb, a co-worker at the Baptist Sunday School Board, would bring an evangelistic message and Olivia Cloud, a close friend and colleague, would end the service with prayer. His pallbearers must include three women and only two Anglos.

Dad's life, as with his funeral service, reflected an unrelenting focus on inclusiveness and racial harmony and the basic thought that God is the reason for everything and everyone.

For Dad, racial reconciliation was biblical and multiculturalism was not just a catchword -- it was who he was. He believed it was important to be multicultural simply because one could not successfully share the love of Christ with a person of another culture without first knowing a little about his/her history, customs, laws or language.

No matter a person's skin color, Dad simply treated others as he wanted to be treated. He always seemed to be watching out for the oppressed and enjoyed playing advocate for the downtrodden. His heroes had names like Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Caesar Chavez and Gandhi.

My sister and I became the direct beneficiaries of Dad's relentless pursuit of a healthy cultural sensitivity. Our parents continuously exposed us to other cultures and beliefs outside our Anglo-European heritage. At times, Dad's bent toward multiculturalism seemed almost obsessive, but he believed that if we learned a multicultural outlook as children, we would have no need for racial reconciliation later in our lives.

Whenever we were introduced to derogatory racial or gender-related stereotypes at school or in the media, our parents taught us the root of the stereotypes. Political and gender correctness were norms in our home for as long as I can remember. For instance, Pollock jokes and the use of racist words like blackmail, blacksheep, blackball or blacklist definitely were forbidden.

He had a knack for using everyday situations to teach us about racism and prejudice and the difference between the two. One such lesson came on a summer day, as I played baseball with other neighborhood children. We began choosing professional baseball players after whom we wanted to model our style of play. I chose my favorite, Willie McCovey, a strong, power-hitting, first baseman for my hometown San Francisco Giants. I was quickly told that Willie McCovey was black and I couldn't be him because I was white. I didn't care that he was black; he was my favorite ballplayer. An argument ensued. Finally, insults were thrown and I was branded a "nigger-lover" and forced to pick a white player or not play at all. I didn't exactly know what that meant, but I knew it wasn't nice. So I picked up my Reggie Jackson bat and Willie Mays outfielders glove and went home.

That evening, I asked my father about the word I had heard. He told me the word was used mostly by Anglos as a derogatory term for anyone of dark skin. He explained to me the African etymology of the word and how it had been purposely distorted over the years to become an ugly racial slur.

Racism, a form of prejudice, was what my friends had shown toward Willie McCovey because of his skin color. Prejudice, on the other hand, was how my friends had treated me for my beliefs. I'll always remember that talk because of what he told me at the end, "Son, it's OK to be a nigger-lover."

About the same time I was learning about prejudice on the baseball diamond, my family began visiting Emmanuel Baptist Church, a predominately black Southern Baptist church in San Jose, Calif. Visiting different churches each Sunday was not out of the ordinary for us since my father, as a home missionary, related to a large Southern Baptist constituency throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. On any given Sunday, Dad might be called upon to preach, share his testimony or conduct an evening Bible study.

However, Emmanuel was different. Soon our visits became regular and as a result of the friendliness and genuine Christian love we experienced, the church became our home.

For the next 11 years, Emmanuel played a vital role in my family. My father worked as a part-time minister of education and helped the church's Sunday school grow into one of the state leaders in attendance. My mother taught Sunday school and my sister sang in the children's choir. Church members also supported our family through prayer during my recovery from brain surgery in 1979. During our time at Emmanuel, we all developed strong friendships that last even today.

Because of the reputation he nurtured and earned while at Emmanuel, my father came to the Baptist Sunday School Board in 1987 to work in Black Church Development. At first Dad worked as a liaison between the section and Anglo leaders of state conventions. Soon he shifted his focus and began working directly with churches and pastors.

From the outset, many thought of Dad as the token white in a section dedicated solely to black church work. Some even questioned why he'd accept such a position. Wasn't this a demotion? What were his qualifications? Did he actually think he could successfully work among African Americans, whose church style, culture and language were so different from mainstream Southern Baptists?

Many assumed his "calling" in life was to work with African Americans, just as a foreign missionary is called to work among non-Christians in far-off places like Africa, China and India. Some thought his job was to show black Southern Baptists how to "do" church the Southern Baptist way.

But nothing could be further from the truth. Really, we never discussed why he worked where he did. It was simply his job and what he loved to do. I know he felt comfortable in the black community and never found his skin color to be an obstacle.

Throughout his career, Dad constantly worked to broaden the racial sensitivity of others. Even while working at the Sunday School Board, he routinely confronted co-workers about their views of race in the workplace and in the Christian community. Although his entire career in Christian ministry seems dedicated to racial reconciliation, he had a somewhat critical view of the Racial Reconciliation Resolution adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention last June.

He thought, as do many black Southern Baptists who attended the SBC, that the resolution by itself will not change anything in the relationship between blacks and whites in the Southern Baptist Convention. Openness and a willingness to learn and understand -- qualities my Dad's life exemplified -- will make a real difference.

He knew that racial reconciliation is more than just saying you're sorry. It will come only when actions begin to speak louder than words.

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