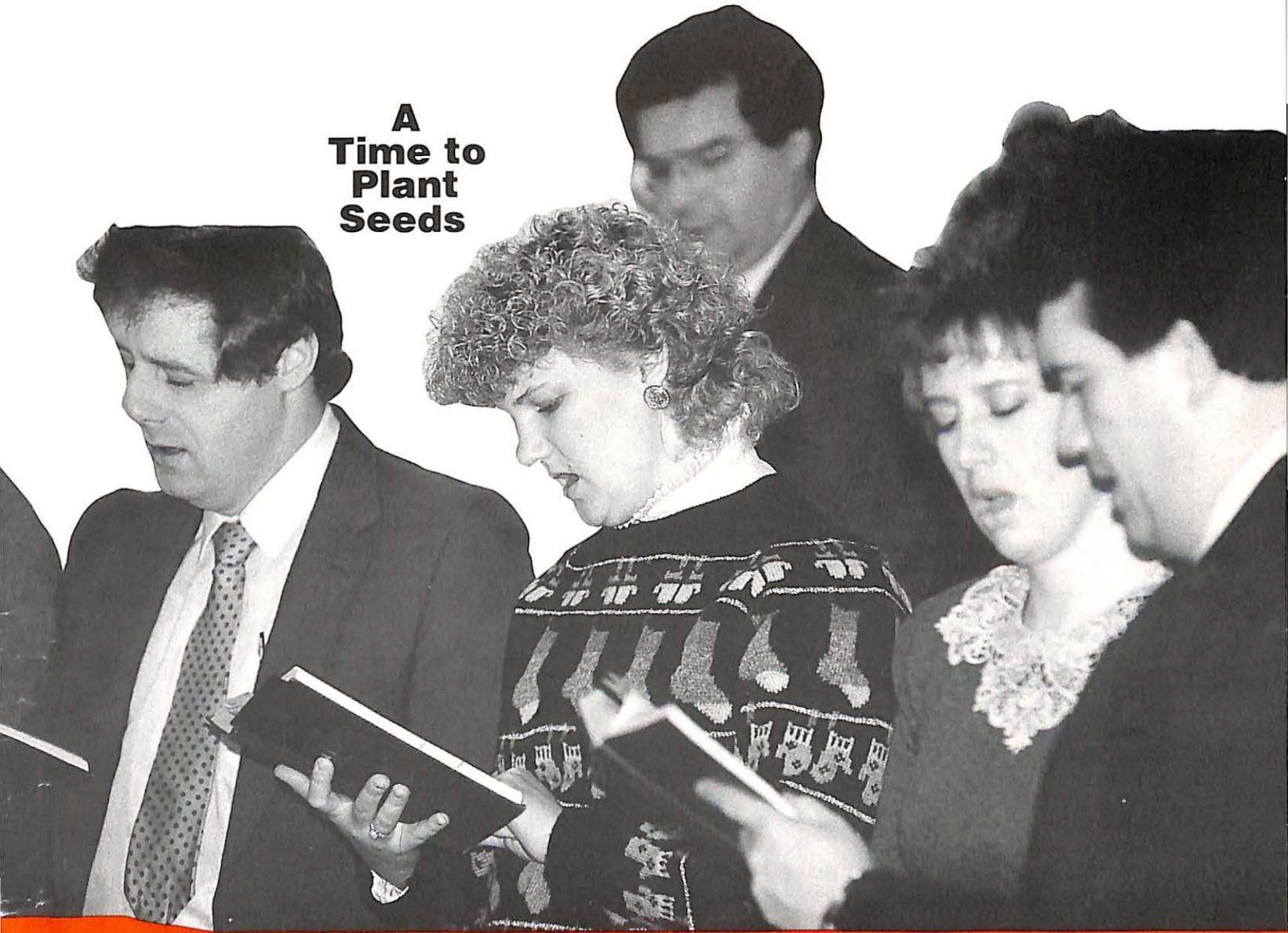


APRIL 1991

BAPTISTHERALD

**A
Time to
Plant
Seeds**



Friendship Sunday

Executive and Finance Committees Revise Ministry and Giving Goals for 1991

OAKBROOK TERRACE, IL. The N.A.B. Conference Executive Committee and Finance Committee, in a joint meeting, February 22 and 23, set the 1991 budget goal at \$6.6 million, froze salaries, and discussed the possible merger of two departments as well as two committees.

They also received a report from Dr. John Binder, executive director, that the General Council sessions scheduled for June will not be held but will be postponed to July 29-30 in connection with the Triennial Conference in Milwaukee, WI, July 30-Aug. 4, 1991.



Committee members

- revised the N.A.B. Conference Mission and Ministry Goal down by \$800,000 from \$7,400,000 to \$6,600,000 as the result of the \$805,000 shortfall in 1990. Of great concern was the shortfall in the Established Ministries section of the budget, which did not have sufficient undesignated support for some basic ministries such as church planting ministries, the college and two seminaries, the area ministers, and the ministries and personnel of the International Office.

As a result, this action

- freezes salaries for six additional months which means no salary increases for 18 months for the Conference International Office executive staff and support personnel as well as the area ministers. This does not affect the increase in salaries for missionaries and church planters.
- holds back filling the vacancy in Estate Planning ministry for at least 10 months.
- cuts funding for **Vision 2000** in half.
- reduces staff at the Conference International Office.
- postpones the replacement of the present computer system, which

does not adequately meet the needs of the user departments at the International Office.

- reduces the Conference subsidy to N.A.B. College/Edmonton Baptist Seminary and N.A.B. Seminary by \$28,000 each.
- removes one position in the Church Growth Ministries Department and postpones employing a full-time youth ministries person as well as an associate for urban-ethnic ministries.
- reduces the number of church starts from ten to seven in 1991.
- postpones appointing a third missionary couple to serve in the Philippines.
- postpones the appointment of a missionary doctor for the Mambilla Plateau in Nigeria.
- postpones opening the new mission field in Mexico.
- eliminates seven short-term missionary positions in Nigeria and Cameroon.
- reduces World Relief projects by \$10,000.
- reduces operating budgets for overseas mission fields by \$25,000.
- postpones the renovation of the International Office building, originally set to begin in January 1991, to the fall. The project was cut back by \$49,000 and will then

be amortized over the next five years at no cost in 1991.

The Executive and Finance Committees also

- received reports on the 1991 departmental ministry goals.
- discussed merging the Church Growth Ministries and Area Ministries Departments. It was pointed out that the departments overlap in the areas of church planting and church growth. The Committees affirm the proposed plan in principle but are seeking the input of the area ministers and the Church Growth Board who meet in April.
- proposed that the composition of the Executive Committee be changed, and that the Executive and Finance Committees be combined into one committee. This will be discussed further at the joint meeting to be held in May. Recommendations will then be made to the General Council and to the Triennial Conference delegates.

The two committees plan to meet again in joint sessions on May 3 and 4 to set the budget goal for 1992, review giving, and make final recommendations to the General Council. □



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Witnessing to the New Age

by Benno Przybylski

How can we witness to persons who have no longing for redemption but seek enlightenment; who do not feel that their problem is sin but simply ignorance? How can we proclaim the existence of God to those who claim that they themselves are god; who believe that they can create their own reality?

While the obstacles to witnessing are real, there is no need for pessimism—only for renewed commitment! Indeed, in some ways the New Age Movement has created an exciting new environment conducive to meaningful witnessing.

A generation ago, most North Americans were neither interested in nor convinced by the existence of spiritual realities. Today more and more people are intrigued by the spiritual world.

Communication with extraterrestrial forces is viewed as a fact of life. Death is increasingly seen not as an end but a beginning. It is estimated that as many as 50,000,000 Americans believe in reincarnation.

How do we, as Christians, tap into the New Age obsession with other worldly realities and experiences? From a New Age perspective, Christianity has nothing to offer. It is seen as part of the problem rather than the solution. New Age spirituality looks toward the religions of the East and paganism for its example and inspiration.

But has the New Age Movement in fact rejected Christ? It is my observation that we must distinguish between Christ and an often distorted North American Christianity. The New Age Movement has rejected the latter but not the former.

The Christian skeptic might respond that those seeking or adhering to New Age beliefs and practices are not interested in the least in what Christ has to offer. The skeptics claim that New Agers look to the demonic world for solutions to

life's problems because they love the devil more than God. I am not convinced by this analysis.

Rather, our society is marked by so much despair that there is a genuine longing for redemption. The fact that so many people are turning to the demonic world for hope is not so much a sign of their utter depravity but rather concrete evidence that the devil can take on the appearance of a prince of light.

In bringing the good news of salvation through Christ to the New Age, words are not enough. While evil must be denounced and basic Christian doctrines and values clearly enunciated, people today are looking for a spirituality that is deeper than words.

As Christians, most of us know a great deal. We can argue quite eloquently about theories of eschatology, the nature of the Trinity and biblical morality. Yet, when you take a realistic look at your existence, has the thought ever crossed your mind, "Is this the abundant life"?

So often our faith has little impact upon the everyday affairs of our life. It is not a source of hope and joy that has transforming power. Christian churches have too many bitter, egocentric, unloving members.

In witnessing to the New Age, we must demonstrate not only a renewed mind but also a renewed heart. People want to see a faith that works, that shows relevance to all aspects of life; that provides meaning not only for our personal inner life but also has practical application to controversial public issues

such as ecology and peace.

Is Christ big enough to deal with all of life? Is He relevant to all the pressing issues of our day? Yes, He indeed is! It is this message that we must proclaim in word and deed.

The New Age does not have an exclusive on the new. In fact, the only genuinely new is found in Christ.

The Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come!" Here Paul is proclaiming a Gospel that is truly holistic, that encompasses all of life. This is the good news that the New Age is searching for.

What does the new creation look like? Clearly Paul is referring to the first creation. Yes, in Christ, we can essentially recover what Adam and Eve lost in the fall.

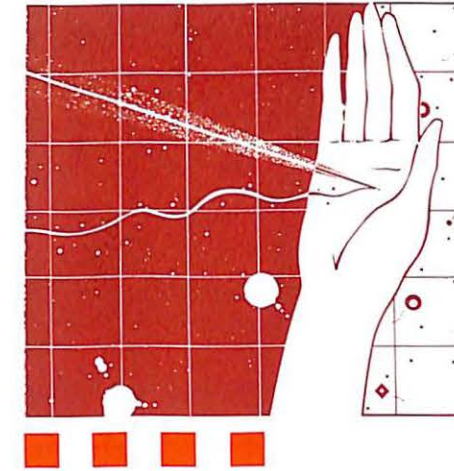
We can re-establish a proper relationship to God. We can once again show forth His image, or as Jesus puts it, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). In Christ, the sky is the limit. A Christian has tremendous worth and potential.

Adam's relationship with God was marked by intimate dialogue. New Age adherents strive to communicate with the spiritual world. Prayer—not channelling—is the answer.

However, others will not be impressed if our prayer is limited to one-way communication. Not monologue but only true dialogue with God will catch the interest of the New Age.

The new creation not only has a renewed relationship with God but also with others, self, and nature. When God created Eve, Adam responded with the words: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man" (Genesis 2:23).

To the modern mind, this statement may appear too reserved and



unromantic. This is far from the truth.

Genesis 2:23 provides the first clear example of Hebrew poetry. With a bit of poetic license, we can say that Adam invented poetry in order to describe Eve! It is this type of appreciation that marks the relationship between the new creation and others.

What are some of the traits that give concrete expression to the new creation's appreciation of another person? During the Witness Task Force Meeting, July 9-10, 1990, in

The New Age Movement—it has rejected a Christianity marked by an ever increasing array of rationalistic doctrines but devoid of the power of God; a Christianity that speaks a great deal about spiritual values but is marked by blatant materialism; a Christianity that boasts of lofty moral values but is racked by scandal. The New Age Movement has not been able to reject Christ, because it has not been able to have a close look at Him.

Oakbrook Terrace, Dr. Donald C. Posterski suggested that generosity must be high on the list.

In our materialistic society where the emphasis is placed on taking, Christians should stand out as those who are willing to give. For example, unless you are ready to leave a generous tip, don't think that you will impress the waitress with your prayer before the meal!

Now consider the new creation's relationship to self. After the fall, Adam was ashamed of himself. Yet as a new creation, he had no feelings of inferiority. While in the end the New Age human potential movement provides a false sense of self-esteem, in Christ we can celebrate true self-worth—that of being children of God.

Last, but in no way least, the new creation can have a relationship to nature as God intended it to be. After all, God said: "and let them rule . . . over all the earth" (Genesis 1:26).

As Christians, we should be at the forefront of the environmental movement. We have been entrusted with the task of being stewards of God's creation. How do we witness to those who yearn for a holistic experience of life? By showing that in Christ we can be a new creation; that in Christ it is possible to be men and women who in word and deed portray a meaningful relationship to God, others, self, and nature.

While institutional Christianity is beset with many faults, let us never forget that Christ will always remain the answer to our needs. Let's proclaim the gospel of the new creation, and this world will take note. □



Dr. Benno Przybylski is Professor of New Testament at Edmonton Baptist Seminary, Edmonton, AB.



Friendship Sunday



Grace Baptist Church— A Time to Plant Seeds

by Warren Wetherbee

There are a number of models for Friendship Sundays around the world today. Grace Baptist Church, Racine, Wisconsin, has observed Friendship Sunday for a number of years but has clearly changed the purpose in the last two years.

This has come about as a result of an evangelism strategy that has incorporated Friendship Evangelism. In some circles, this has received a bad rap. Some feel Friendship Evangelism never gets to the point of asking a person to come to salvation. Yet Grace has found Friendship Evangelism to be the most natural response to God's call to go out into our world to tell

people about Jesus Christ. Friendship Evangelism is a philosophy of ministry that moves thousands of dormant Christians to befriending and encouraging their non-Christian friends to investigate the claims of Jesus Christ. At Grace Baptist, this is still a growing movement, but one that is having a tremendous impact upon our ministry.

On the average, few Christians today have a lot of unchurched friends. We seem to gravitate to Christians socializing with Christians. A recent Sunday school class proved this to be true when 28 out of 30 people said that they had less than five unchurched friends that they socialized with on a regular basis. This, in most cases, has been the result of misunderstanding the concept of separation in the Bible.

At every opportunity, we call attenders at Grace to be people who live in a real world to associate with people who live in that world. We call them to develop friendships to a point where they can talk about God freely with these friends. But here's the catch, what do you do when we whet the appetites of our friends, and they want to know more about this living God?

Three Steps in the Conversion Process

We have found that there are three steps in the conversion process.

➤ **Seed planting.** An individual can hear about a living God and how He is entering 20th century life.



➤ **Watering.** The environment enhances the seed that has been planted. Make sure investigators feel they are accepted and welcome as they enter our church doors.

➤ **Harvesting.** Specially planned time when an individual can hear the Gospel clearly and be given an opportunity to respond to that message.

Friendship Sundays at Grace come under the category of **seed planting**. Every part of the service is designed to communicate the truths of Christ in a contemporary fashion.

• One or two **contemporary choruses** (written in the past three years) works well since many of the friends attending Grace have had a church background, and the singing is not offensive to them.

• **Bible reading** with a short anecdote that ties the reading to a present life situation.

• **Contemporary special music** reflecting the style of music that they normally are attuned to.

• **A message**, honed and sharpened, relating to a present day issue like the fear of death.

There is no invitation given, no embarrassing ribbon pinning (although we do have name tags for all people who attend that particular Sunday), and no extended offerings. Announcements are spoken in a way that a person who visits for the first time can understand what's going on. The offering is prefaced with a statement that this is for the regular attenders at Grace.

We want people to leave saying that they were welcomed, felt comfortable, and would hope to come back again sometime. If we accomplish that, we know that a good seed has been planted. Hopefully, a harvest will result in the succeeding months.

At the present time, we have three Friendship Sundays a year as well as ten other seed planting events throughout the year. The result is that 28 percent of our annual growth is now through conversions. Our goal is that this will grow to 50 percent through the 90s.

Friendship Sundays—a time to plant seeds. □



The Rev. Warren Wetherbee is Pastor of Discipleship and Evangelism, Grace Baptist Church, Racine, WI.



Friendship Works!

by Randy Beck

Twenty-seven guests! Not bad for a church plant with 30 members. We were ecstatic at Oakland Hills Baptist in Rochester Hills, Michigan, as our guests came to Friendship Sunday on Oct. 16, 1990. From this group, two families continue to attend on a regular basis, and another couple attends our small group Bible study. Friendship Sunday proves to be an effective way for us to introduce our friends and acquaintances to our Church.

Positive Experiences on this Special Day

This special day offers several positive experiences to the Church, because it involves everyone in a specific event. Children, teens, and adults bring friends. One family was open to attend because their children were friends with the children of a church family.

This Sunday gives us a specific reason to invite people. We often forget to approach people as going to church becomes a weekly routine for us. Friendship Sunday helps us zero in on the immediate task. We work better when we focus on specific events.

Instead of asking someone to be a guest "sometime," the specific date designates a point of mutual commitment. Not everyone we ask is able to come, but we find that people express more comfort in discussing a particular Sunday.

Our guests seem more comfortable because they come with friends. They view others as extensions of those friendships. A key to helping guests feel comfortable is



Friendship Sunday, an effective way for us to introduce our friends to our Church, gives us a specific reason to invite them.

the time of fellowship we offer around the refreshment table.

One family who had just moved to the community came because their neighbors had befriended them. They commented that many in the Church were like them—approximate age, children, and similar careers. We find that such an event brings people who match the demographics of our Church.

Finally, everyone celebrated the success of the event. When we looked around, we saw that people came because they were invited. Not only was the number of guests exciting, but also our confidence grew as we realized others would come on future Friendship Sundays.

Oakland Hills tried several ways of outreach over the past year, but nothing brought the positive results and feelings like this successful event. Our Church has adopted this event as a means of outreach in 1991.

Pointers We Used

We asked several churches about their Friendship Sundays and reviewed materials from Dr. Elmer Towns of the Church Growth Institute (1-800-553-4769).

A nonthreatening emphasis was provided for our guests. The service focused on the theme of friendship. We will do others on the family, children, careers, and finances.

We targeted people who did not attend an evangelical church. Even though we enjoy a great time with friends who miss a day at their church to visit us, it does little to impact the community for Christ. We emphasized **who** came more than **how many** came.

Every aspect of the worship time was upbeat, well-done, and involved our people. We did not bring in a guest speaker or special music because we wanted our guests to gain an accurate picture of our Church so they would not be surprised on a return visit.

We plan to offer regular Friendship Sundays to continue outreach. One guest said, "We went to church before we moved to Rochester Hills, and we know we should go here. Thanks for inviting us."

We Followed Up

Every guest received an appropriate follow-up from our church. We made doorbell visits to unchurched guests and gave them a gift as a token of our appreciation. I wrote each family a personal thank you. Our Sunday School teachers and junior church workers contacted the children. We involved five children who attended on Friendship Sunday in our Christmas program. We continue to follow-up our guests with an occasional phone call and update letters. Once the door opens, we do not want to close it.

Our next Friendship Sunday will celebrate spring. What a way to begin such a beautiful season! □



The Rev. Randy Beck is pastor of Oakland Hills Baptist Church, Rochester Hills, MI.



Friendship Sunday Changed Our Lives

During a Saturday cookout last August with our friends, Joe and Carolyn Hudson, the conversation turned to churches. Bonnie and I had been talking for some time about looking for one where we wouldn't have to drag our four boys kicking and screaming each Sunday and where God's Word is taught instead of repeating memorized liturgy. They invited us to meet them the next day at Grace Baptist Church in Racine, WI.

As we walked in the following morning, we were greeted and welcomed by a young man who turned out to be Pastor Jerry Worsham. He must have noticed us as a group he hadn't seen before. What impressed us most was the genuine warmth and friendship

displayed by so many people.

Several weeks later in a class for prospective members, Pastor Jerry told the group that he believed all of us had been led to Grace with a purpose. We knew then that we had found our church home.

Small groups being an integral part of Grace, Bonnie and I have joined both a Sunday and Wednesday evening group. Chris and Scott are active in the Cub Scouts, and Ryan and Michael are involved in the junior and senior high youth groups.

Growing together in Christ as a family is an unbelievable joy. We have made many new Christian friends and continue to learn about God's promise for us. □

— Don and Bonnie Amundson

As a result of Friendship Sunday, Don and Bonnie Amundson, Ryan, Mike, Chris, and Scott are active in Grace Baptist Church, Racine, WI.



Called to be God's Servant

by Gerhard Poschwatta

Some ask whether he ever regrets leaving his business life. "My answer is 'no,'" he says convincingly. "There are no regrets. I feel that the ministry is the highest calling a man can receive. And I know that the ministry has stretched me more than anything could have. I, myself, have gained the most being a minister for the Lord. My heart is filled with deep gratitude to God and to all the many people who worshipped and served the Lord God with me. For more than 25 years of ministry, I shout, 'To God be the glory!'"

As a 16-year-old lad, Gerhard Poschwatta found himself in a Russian labor camp in the Ural Mountains of Siberia: disappointed, hopeless, and hurting.

"My country had lost the war; I was thousands of miles from home with no hope of ever returning; worst of all, I had just found out that my good, praying mother had died in that same camp two months ago. Through clenched teeth and with tears in my eyes I muttered, 'God, I don't understand you!' For 15 years, I nursed a grudge against God."

How did God move Gerhard Poschwatta out of that situation and out of that state of mind? How did He prepare him to become a minister?

"It took a string of miracles, a lot of loving and much patience," recalls Pastor Poschwatta. "The Lord Jesus had said that He would leave the ninety-nine and go after the one which is lost. That's what He did for me."

Through the ensuing years, the Lord healed Pastor Poschwatta's bitterness. "Instead of blaming God for my hurts and pains," he says, "I can praise Him for all things, even when I don't understand. I have come to know Him as God over all and in all." The Lord also taught him that he could not make it on his own. "I was and still am a very independent person—self-sufficient and basically proud," notes Pastor Poschwatta. "Yet, I know that I need Him, my Lord—and I need my

family and my spiritual family, my brothers and sisters. The Lord does change hearts and attitudes; He is in that business."

It is most amazing to Pastor Poschwatta how the Lord set the details for his life far ahead, so that it became possible for him to become a minister for the Lord.

"God gave me a wife who supported me and stood by my side through the many changes we experienced. I had not asked Him whom I should marry. He led us to each other and stood by us as we followed His calling. My wife Helga has supported me by using her abilities in our common ministry. Her mother, Omi Grube, who for 30 years has been a mother to me, is a steady source of support, inspiration, and help in our home and ministry."

God provided the necessary funds for him to train for six years, including high school and one year of university, and to support his family. "We already had a family of four children. Although we had just immigrated to Canada, the Lord blessed our new venture in business, so that within five years, we had the financial means we needed." But God changed Gerhard Poschwatta's interests, and he became a student in mid-life.

"Where before, I had not read even the headlines of a newspaper, let alone a book, I became so fascinated with God's Word that I started to study and read with great interest."

Pastor Poschwatta says that God

provided many people who helped to motivate and "cheer him on."

"Through his eloquent and persuasive preaching, the Rev. H. J. Waltereit, our pastor at McDermot Avenue Baptist Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba, awakened in me the longing to communicate God's truth and grace to others. Dr. A. S. Felberg, then President of Christian Training Institute (now North American Baptist College), persuaded me to come there to start my formal education. He often encouraged me to continue, when I was ready to quit. My professors, the late Bernhard Schalm as well as Arnold Rapske, and others became my friends and role models.

At times during these 25 years, Pastor Poschwatta says he lost heart. "I felt so unworthy and inadequate. I felt my ministry would soon come to an end. The Lord showed me time and again that I should not trust in myself but in Him. Many times He sent people to encourage me. My steadfastness to continue has come from God through the prayers of faithful people in the churches we served and of my family and my own. Also, the genuine, gracious friendship of many pastors has been a source of great encouragement."

When he is asked what the greatest joy in his ministry has been, he responds energetically, "Preaching the Word, although the preparation of sermons has been and still is a trial for me. To win

people to the Lord, to teach them, and to lead them through baptism gives me much satisfaction."

There are side-benefits to ministry. "Being a pastor, I have been challenged more deeply and have received more blessings than otherwise would have been possible. God worked on me to become a more godly husband and father," he notes.

The Poschwattas have six children. "They sometimes found it a real challenge to be 'pastor's children.' This often caused me to examine myself whether I lived what I preached. To be a model for others has been a heavy weight upon me and often caused me to despair. Only through God's forgiveness have I been able to continue and even change."

As an evangelist and deeper life speaker, Pastor Poschwatta has visited a number of North American Baptist Conference churches and met many wonderful people. "They have enriched my life. In 1971 and 1972, the Saskatoon Revival touched my life, and I experienced the direct and powerful working of the Holy Spirit in my life as well as in many churches here in Canada and even in Germany," he says. "I have witnessed how the Lord worked out many critical situations in our churches. I have recognized that He is gracious, faithful, and very patient with His church and with His children."

When asked if he experienced



Gerhard and Helga Poschwatta

problems, Pastor Poschwatta responds, "Yes, some small, some tall. But the Lord works them out in His own way as soon as I turn them over to Him. Often I recognize that I am the biggest problem to myself. However, I have forgotten and forgiven all the difficult situations and people. There is no heaviness in my heart against anyone. My heart is filled with praise to God, who saved me, called me, and enabled me to be His servant for 25 years." □

Gerhard Poschwatta has served as pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Medicine Hat, Alberta; Rowandale Baptist Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Grace Baptist Church, Kelowna, British Columbia; and is pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Calgary, Alberta.

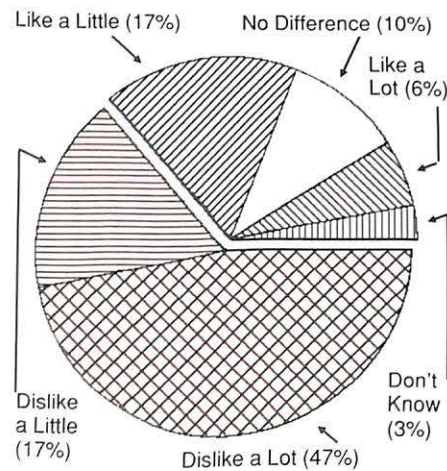


How People Who Visit a Church Want to be Treated

Many churches spend considerable time and effort encouraging unchurched people to visit their worship services. Once an unchurched person visits a church, how does that person really want to be treated? A new study, *Never on a Sunday: The Challenge of the Unchurched*, by the Barna Research Group of Glendale, CA, examines this issue.

What the Unchurched Would Like to Experience as a Visitor

How much would you like it if visitors were identified during the service, to let members know where visitors are sitting?



Visit the worship services of ten different Protestant churches in America, and you will likely be treated in ten different ways. Some churches ask visitors to wear nametags; others have visitors stand up and identify themselves at some point in the service; others don't do anything special to recognize guests.

The question is: how would the visitors like to be treated?

The nationwide survey of more than 900 unchurched adult Americans revealed that many visitors dislike receiving special attention simply because they are new at the church.

Unchurched respondents were asked for their reactions to nine different ways that churches might treat newcomers. In general, people expressed the desire to find out more about a church they are visiting, but they wanted to do this without being made the object of undue attention.

Least Liked Approaches

The least popular method of treating visitors was when churches ask the newcomers to stand, or raise their hands, or in some other way identify where they are sitting. Sixty-four percent said they would not like this (including 47 percent who said they would dislike this a lot).

Another common approach to recognizing visitors is asking them to wear nametags. This, too, was disliked by the unchurched. Sixty-three percent felt they would dislike being asked to wear a nametag when visiting a church.

George Barna, president of the Barna Research Group, noted that the problem with these approaches is that they put the spotlight on people who would rather remain anonymous, at least at first. "Many unchurched people are uncomfortable returning to church," Barna explained. "They don't know anyone in the congregation; they

don't know the traditions of the church; they're often not sure what to expect next in the service—and then suddenly they become the focus of the entire congregation."

Barna added that many unchurched visitors are interested in getting to know people, and want more information about the church. But they want to do this in their own time, on their own terms, and they don't want to be thrust into a situation they perceive as threatening or embarrassing.

Non-Threatening Ways of Encouraging Visitors to Return

The study found that there are non-threatening ways of encouraging visitors to return. One of these is by providing visitors with written information about the church, its beliefs, and its programs. Seventy-four percent of the respondents said they would like this.

Seventy percent felt they would like to receive a thank you letter from the pastor the week after their visit. Sixty-seven percent had a positive feeling about members approaching them after the service, to greet them individually. It would seem that all of these methods require identifying visitors in some way, which is why many churches ask visitors to stand during the service or wear nametags. However, realize that 56 percent of all unchurched adults said they would like for a church not to treat them any differently than it treats its regular attenders. Are the unchurched being unrealistic in their expectations?

One key to growing a healthy church is to facilitate meaningful relationships among people." As the report notes, "visiting a church is a relatively uncomfortable experience for many people. Tactics which put the visitor on the spot, however well intentioned, are likely to cause more harm than benefit.

Not necessarily, Barna says. "There are ways of showing visitors that the church is concerned about them without invading their privacy. For instance, have literature about the church available in the pew racks, or on a table in the

lobby, instead of stopping the service, having the visitors stand up, and having ushers hand them information about the church. Try to promote an attitude in the church whereby the 'regulars' try to get to know anyone with whom they are not familiar, instead of just greeting the visitors. This will also facilitate more and closer relationships among people who regularly attend, which will be noticeable to newcomers. One key to growing a healthy church is to facilitate meaningful relationships among people."

As the report notes, "visiting a church is a relatively uncomfortable experience for many people—especially those who have been outside the mainstream of church life for a time, and are cautiously consider-

ing whether or not to start attending. Tactics which put the visitor on the spot, however well intentioned, are likely to cause more harm than benefit." □

We Want To Know

What methods does your church use to welcome visitors? What has been most effective in helping them feel they would like to return and eventually become a part of your church? We would like to hear from you. Address your comments (150 words or less) to Readers' Respond, c/o Baptist Herald, 1 So. 210 Summit Ave., Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181.

What the Unchurched Would Like to Experience as a Visitor

Experience	Would Like This A Lot	Would Like This A Little	Make No Difference	Would Dislike This A Little	Would Dislike This A Lot	Don't Know
• Ushers gave visitors information about the church, its beliefs, its programs	38%	36%	10%	7%	7%	2%
• Visitors received a thank you letter from the pastor during the week after their visit	37	33	12	7	8	3
• The church did nothing special for visitors; treated them like members	33	23	20	15	7	2
• Members of the church came up to visitors after the service, to greet them individually	30	37	11	12	7	2
• Visitors received a phone call from the pastor or someone else from the church to thank them for visiting the church	28	35	12	13	11	0
• The church hosted a reception after the service for all visitors	24	36	15	12	11	3
• The pastor or someone else from the church visited visitors at home during the week following the service	13	21	10	19	34	2
• Visitors wore nametags	8	13	14	20	43	1
• Visitors were identified during the service, to let members know where visitors are sitting	6	17	10	17	47	2

The Family and the Image of God

by Thomas A. Zimmerman

We, as Baptists, dedicate our children to the Lord to mark the importance of rearing children in a Christian home. We do not participate in infant baptism and have stood by believer's baptism after conversion to mark one's entrance into salvation and the church. The practice of dedication indicates our value on what happens to children in our home prior to conversion. This not only makes an important religious and moral value but also acknowledges the family as an institution of religious learning.

Developmental psychology, which includes such thinkers as Freud, Erickson, Mahler, have indicated the power of parental influence on the developing personalities of children. They have also indicated the way children perceive and misperceive the actions and behaviors of parents. Theorists like D. W. Winnicott have said that it is not only the parent's actions alone that influence child development, but the interactions of children's and parents' perceptions

and misperceptions. The years of infancy and early childhood are the formative years for attitudes, awareness, and socializing.

In parenting seminars, I often tell parents that we are like gods to our

children. We are their first experience with "all-powerful" beings. Since the human infant is helpless, it is up to the caregiver to anticipate, acknowledge, and act to care for needs. The all-powerful



caregiver also introduces the infant to peace, security, and comfort.

Our success in helping infants and children to feel secure, loved, and warm may contribute to their capacity to someday feel secure, loved, and warmed by God. In turn, the joint failures of parents and children may give grist for the work of the Spirit in bringing the lost to Christ.

The power of this is brought out when someone realizes they have difficulty trusting God because He seems to evoke their fear of anger, just as a parent did. Or consider the person who fears committing his or her life to Christ for fear of being controlled or shamed as happened with a parent. In these cases, it is not that God is too angry or too controlling, but that God is perceived that way through the impact of early experiences.

In her pioneering study on the effects of childhood upon the perception of God, Anna Marie Rizzuto has given some powerful case histories to illustrate the above. Rizzuto gathered extensive histories from psychiatric inpatients and also asked them about their perception of God. She then identified parallel statements about parents and family and perceptions about God. Consider the following parallels from the case of Bernadine (p. 16, see sources).

About God: "I do not pray, because I feel that God will not listen to me if I don't follow the rules. If I am in distress, I do not resort to God because He doesn't listen."

Parents/Family: The member of my family I felt the most distant from was my whole family, because they never listened to what I felt or wanted, just what they felt and wanted.

Let me close with a quote from John Bright's *Authority of the Old Testament*: "Jesus loves, me, this I know, For the Bible tells me so." "Now the Bible does so tell us, and it is very well for children to be taught as much. I confess that I cannot hear the song, banal though some may think it, without many haunting recollections. But if I believe at all in the love of Christ, it is not just because "the Bible tells me so"; it is because the Bible's assurance to that effect has been tested in experience and found in one way or another to be trustworthy. Had it not stood the test of experience, I should scarcely be prepared to believe it, in the Bible or not."

About God: If I receive an absolute proof that God does not exist, I will be happy because I won't feel guilty.

Parents/Family: If I could change my past, I would like to change my parents and my religion, because they make me feel guilty.

About God: In my way of feeling, for me to fully please God, I would have to be another person, because I don't please Him.

Parents/Family: I could never please my parents. I was so concerned about pleasing them that I made myself miserable.

The perceptions about God of which Bernadine speaks were not

necessarily learned in Sunday school material. Nor were they lessons which her parents intentionally set out to teach. They were formed in the family crucible, where Bernadine first learned about relationships. Being unable to grow beyond her family experiences, she transfers what was learned to God.

What the importance of the dedication of children in Christian homes acknowledges is that a most significant kind of learning happens at home. A committed, caring parent can be instrumental in growing a child's perceptive capacity to experience the richness of God. How God is experienced by people is entwined with their experience with family. Doctrine, preaching, and Scripture are not the only sources of learning about who God is.

Some of our statements about God may not only include our experience of the revelation of God the Father but also contain revelations of who we are as human perceivers.

Bernadine's experience of God as angry judge reveals not only God as limit-setter, but also Bernadine as one who has experienced more judgment than grace and, therefore, has limited ways to connect with the grace of God. □

Tom Zimmerman, D.Min., is a chaplain/counselor with the Samaritan Counseling Center of the Bay Area, Houston, TX, and a member of Anderson Road Baptist Church in Houston.

Sources: Rizzuto, Anna Maria, *The Birth of the Living God*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979. Bright, John, *The Authority of the Old Testament*, Abingdon Press, 1967, reprinted by Baker Book House Company 1975.



Rural Church Youth Find Challenges in the Inner-City

by Brenda M. Arndt

Pastor Dan VanGerpen and his wife Arlis, Brenda Arndt, four other adults, two college students, and eleven senior high youth formed the group that ministered in inner-city Chicago.

"It was a stretching experience not only for those who went but also for Valley Baptist Church of Milbank as well. It was a new experience for this rural South Dakota church. By sharing our experience, we hope to encourage other small churches to risk planning such a trip. It was a life-changing experience for all involved."



"This trip has not ended, it has only begun," Pastor Dan Van Gerpen stated as we talked about the various experiences we had on our trip to inner-city Chicago in August 1990. There North River Community Church (NRCC) hosted us. The goal of staff and members of this Church was to expose us to inner-city ministry and to open our eyes to the needs of their community, the various other communities in Chicago, and the needs of the world, starting with our own neighborhood in South Dakota.

What was the impact of this trip on our youth? "My attitude toward prostitutes and bums on the street changed. I guess I thought of them as being there by their own

decision. But most of them do what they do to survive!" said one youth.

We offered a three-day program for children. We were only with them three mornings, but as one of our group mentioned, "I could not believe their hunger for love and how well they accepted us." We came away strengthened by the love they showed and sobered by the fact that they receive so little but need so much.

During the week, we were challenged by the statement, "Inner-city has more to offer the middle-class than the middle-class has to offer the inner-city." We realized how little we sacrifice for others and for the cause of Christ. One of our group remarked, "The people of NRCC choose to live within the



We met in a park near the Church, which is located near the port-of-entry in Chicago, where refugee families live. We had a theme for each day's program. One day, we dramatized the story of Zacchaeus and another story on how to find God.

mobile, low income community, risking and sacrificing many things for themselves and their families, in order to develop a community of relationships and of interdependence, where God's love can be seen and shared."

One college student felt challenged to reevaluate her priorities and summarized the week by noticing the staggering differences between the proportion of those in need to those receiving help.

We know our trip has only begun! What we learned in one short week will impact our thoughts, our future decisions, and our ministry as we join others in working to expand the Kingdom of God. □



Brenda M. Arndt is a senior in the Master of Divinity degree program at North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD.



Most of our group had never been with people who couldn't speak English. For us, this was a stretching experience.



Our youth loved, held, and played with the children, who really enjoyed this attention.



We taught songs, played games, and presented puppet shows. The children and those parents who came with their children sat in awe as they watched the puppets. The children liked to climb behind the blankets, used as drapes, to see how the puppets worked and then to work them.



How's Your Nursery?

by Lyle E. Schaller

"Tell me about the nursery here on Sunday morning," I asked the thirty-one-year-old mother who was holding her firstborn child, a smiling eight-month-old girl.

"I'm sorry, but I'm not the one to answer that question," came the reply.

"Why not?" I asked. "You told me a minute ago this was your firstborn child, and I know you've been an active leader here for at least three or four years."

"I would never consider leaving my baby in that nursery!" declared this mother sharply. "Have you seen it?"

"Yes, I have seen it, but I wanted your opinion," I explained. "Why won't you leave your baby in the nursery here?"

"First, it's in a corner of the building on the lower level where the floor is below grade. It's a moldy room.

"Second, in case of fire, the only escape is through the fellowship hall and up a flight of stairs.

"Third, children up to three years of age are left in the same room with babies. A two-year-old may throw a steel truck into a crib and hit my baby.

"Fourth, there is no running water in that room. After nursery attendants change a diaper, do they go down the hall to wash their hands?

"Fifth, when they're short of help, they ask junior high girls to

help. I'm not leaving my baby with a twelve-year-old girl!

"Sixth, they have no way of keeping track of which baby belongs to which adult. With different volunteers week after week, there is no way they can identify babies with the proper parent. A stranger could walk in, pick up my baby, and walk out without being challenged.

"Finally, the room is dirty, and I doubt if they change the sheets in the cribs more than once a week. The room needs a good cleaning, and the sheets should be changed after the first service before the

second service. I refuse to put my baby in a crib where another baby may have deposited a bunch of germs on the sheet a half hour earlier!

"That's seven reasons why I won't leave my baby in that nursery. Is that enough? I can give you more."

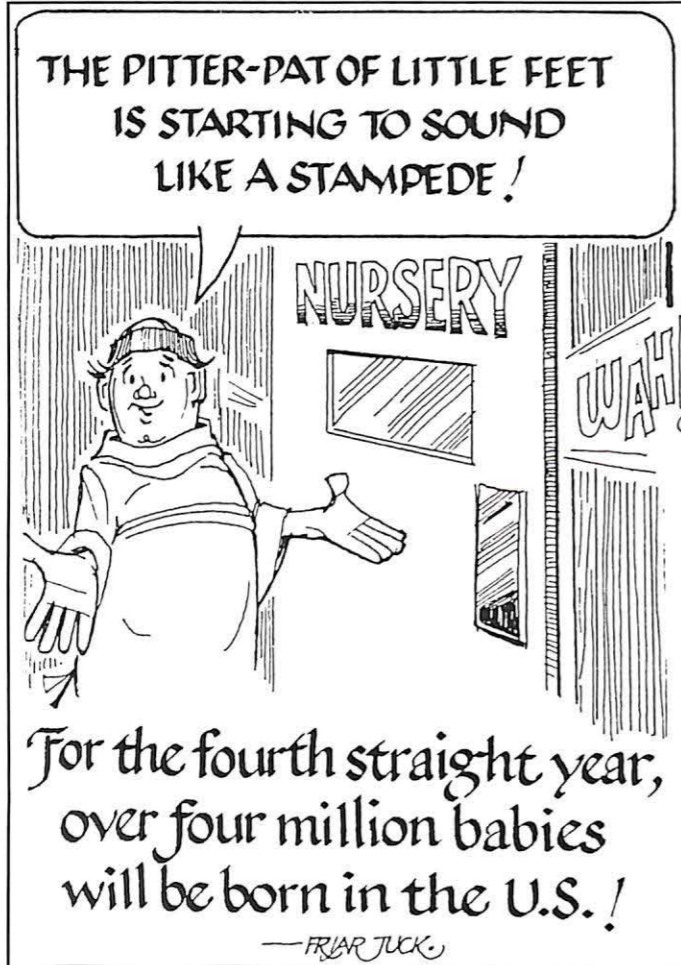
That evening, I summarized her list of objections while meeting with the trustees. "That nursery was good enough for our babies back when my wife and I were raising a family," grumbled a trustee born in 1921. "I don't see why it's not good enough for today's parents."

What Year Is It?

In evaluating the quality of your nursery, ask what year is it? If next year turns out to be 1947, that nursery prob-

ably will be acceptable by contemporary standards. If next year is 1992, that means the nursery in your church should meet the standards of 1992, not the standards of 45 years ago.

For the first time since 1964, the number of live births exceeded four million in 1989, so 1992 could be described as the fourth consecutive year of the biggest baby boom in American history. For churches seeking to reach and serve this new generation of parents, the nursery is one of the most valuable components of that strategy.



It also should be noted that the number of mothers giving birth to their first baby after the mother's thirtieth birthday was slightly more than 250,000 in 1987 and probably exceeded 260,000 in 1990. By comparison, in 1970 only 55,000 first-born babies were delivered by women who had passed their thirtieth birthday.

Today one in six firstborn babies is born to a mother past thirty. Twenty years ago that ratio was one in twenty-five. As a general rule, older mothers project higher expectations of the nursery for their first-born child than do younger mothers.

Who Will Use the Nursery?

- The mother of today's baby will make the crucial evaluation of the quality of your nursery—not the elderly male trustee, the elected leadership of your congregation.
- The first-time visitor who is the parent of a baby. If the nursery is unacceptable, that parent may continue to church-shop elsewhere next Sunday.
- Those parents who place their baby in the nursery while they participate in your weekday programming. Are they fully satisfied with your nursery?

Questions to Ask As You Evaluate Your Nursery

If you conclude the time has come to evaluate the nursery in your church, you may want to raise additional questions.

- How many parents refuse to leave their baby in your nursery? Why?
- Who inspects your nursery? The trustees? The pastor? The Christian Education Committee? The custodian? Perhaps the best answer is a committee consisting of four mothers, each of whom has a firstborn child less than ten months old (they do not have to be members to be part of your inspection team), plus one or two militant and articulate leaders

who are grandmothers.

- Do you reserve off-street parking spaces close to the entrance nearest the nursery for single mothers?
- Do you have a counter next to a wet sink where diapers can be changed and the caregiver's hands washed after changing that diaper?
- Does the sign above that counter instruct the caregivers to disinfect the counter after use?
- At peak hour of use, does the number of cribs exceed the number of babies? In other words, do you expect more or fewer babies next week than were here this week?
- Do you keep toddlers in the same room with babies in cribs?
- Is the same trustworthy adult present every Sunday morning to welcome parents and to reinforce the parents' trust in the nursery?
- Do teenagers come in during the week and scatter the toys around the room used for toddlers?
- Are the toys in the toddlers' room appropriate for that age group?
- How often are the work surfaces, trays, tables, and toys that children may put in their mouths washed and disinfected?
- Is a tray or plastic container highly visible that is labeled, "Toys to be washed before use"?
- What is your system for recording the names of parents, and where they can be found in case of emergency?
- What is your security system to guarantee a stranger will not come in and walk off with someone's baby?
- Do the caregivers arrive at least ten minutes before the first baby is expected to arrive, and are they prepared to stay for at least five minutes after the normal time for the departure of the last baby?
- Is the room clean? Moldy?
- Are there no small parts of toys that could be ingested or inhaled by very young children? Do the workers know the proper procedure

if a child chokes?

- Who washes the sheets, towels, and other linens? How often?
- Is the nursery conveniently located in relationship to the room most frequently used by mothers of young children in weekday programming?

Is Your Nursery an Outreach Ministry?

If the nursery is one part of a larger strategy for reaching and serving parents of young children, it may be useful to raise three other questions.

- What is the quality of the women's restrooms? The comparison should not be with the restrooms before they were remodeled back in 1962 or with the restrooms in the church down the street. The best comparison is with the restrooms in that new shopping mall that young families patronize.
- Do you have an attractive meeting room conveniently close to the nursery on the same floor that is an attractive place for a Sunday school class that includes parents of very young children? Can this room be used for weekday programming for parents who expect to bring their babies and leave them in the nursery? Or do you expect parents to participate in weekday evening programming far removed from where they will leave their babies?
- If the nursery is used by outside groups and organizations that meet in your building, what are the expectations of each group in regard to use of the nursery? How do members of outside groups know about these expectations?

If you are seeking to reach this new generation of parents of this latest baby boom, these are a few of the questions you may want to ask about the nursery in your church.

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Why Hasn't the Church Been Witnessing?

MAMBILLA PLATEAU, NIGERIA. The Chaplain of Killayang Dispensary baptized three people at Mbasso one Sunday.

One of those baptized was a man who had brought his very sick child to the dispensary for treatment. Every day the Chaplain at the Dispensary, Pastor Genesis Amang of Killa Church, witnessed to this man and prayed for his child. The child was healed, even though the father did not believe the child would live.

The father said, "I saw the power of prayer; through this, I became a Christian." This man and his two wives were baptized.

He asked the church this question: "Why hadn't the church been witnessing"? Pray that this will wake up the church to be more faithful in witnessing.

Fishing News from the Philippines

by Gregg and Maria Evans

LEGAZPI CITY, PHILIPPINES. Jesus said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Vic, a young man in his mid-twenties, has been swimming from one pond to another (Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Fundamentalist, SDA, various evangelical groups) asking questions and never being fully satisfied with the answers.



This has been going on so long that most groups stopped trying to hook Vic. He has a reputation for nibbling but never biting.

We are pleased to be the church that finally landed Vic. He will probably always be full of questions—hard ones that come from careful study—but his days of flitting from pond to pond have ended. Vic was baptized along with four others on October 7. —Missionaries Gregg and Maria Evans serve in church planting in Legazpi City, Philippines.

Short-termer Finds Transition into Japanese Life Tough

by Sheryl Grunwald



TSU, JAPAN. Transition into life in Japan was pretty tough. Settling in had one setback after another! Curriculum lost in the mail—severe problems with a wisdom tooth, eventually extracted—doubt-filled days about my decision to work in Japan.

However, God taught me a crucial lesson. A typhoon hit Japan the end of September—the worst in 30 years. I watched it blow over some of the trees next to my apartment; other trees stood firm.

A short time later, while studying Psalm 1, I read this quote by Chuck Swindoll: "The roots grow deep when the winds are strong." The words hit me full force. I

began to realize the difficult "winds" I was experiencing were causing me to dig my roots down deeper into God and His Word. These times strengthened my relationship with God, and He sustained me. Tough times come, but God is right beside us. —Missionary Sheryl Grunwald is a teacher in Tsu, Japan.

Bienerts Involved in a Variety of Outreach Ministries

by Keith Bienert

PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL. It doesn't take much to start a ministry among boys in this community. I offered to play soccer with some of the boys of our church and their friends. After the game, we have a devotional and a snack. Their enthusiasm and the number who responded overwhelmed me. Now more than 20 boys regularly participate, and some attend our Sunday school.

What's better than going to watch a soccer game on TV with your drinking partners? The answer: Watching the game on TV at home with the pastor and doing a Bible study following the game.

Luiz's drinking friends tease him about going to church. We are hoping that my friendship and God's Word will lead him to salvation.



Being threatened with legal action for getting involved in people's lives is one way Satan uses to discourage us in ministry. Having counselled someone attending our church to break off an adulterous relationship, the other partner has become malicious and threatening. We trust that God will be at work to resolve this very complicated situation.

Renata, an eight-year-old girl who began attending our Sunday school, brought her mother to a special program. During a follow-up pastoral visit, I gave her a New Testament. She gave us an opportunity to share the Gospel.

However, Satan was at work, and the father who is involved in spiritism has forbidden them to attend our church. We trust and pray that God will use His Word in this home to win the victory over Satan's schemes.

More than 60 children and 20 adults attended our Brazilian children's festival. It was cramped and noisy, but it was worth it.

We have completed two evangelistic Bible studies in the homes of nonChristians and hope to reap this fruit and more as we continue this program of evangelism.

We have a ladies' ministry, ministries to junior boys and junior girls as well as a Sunday school program. Pray for their new church. —Missionaries Keith and Lilyane Bienert serve as church planting missionaries in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Witnessing to a Student Group

by James Mische

MBU, NIGERIA. One Sunday a local student organization asked me to show videos at an afternoon gathering and preach a



message.

"I thought the tape, 'A Thanksgiving Promise,' would be appropriate, since it was about an American teenager who makes a promise that he finds very difficult to keep.

Halfway through the showing, our student hosts asked us to stop the video. They wanted a 'Christian' video!"

They had expected to see the slaying of Goliath or some other very dramatic story from the Bible.

Unfortunately, we don't have any tapes of this type, except for the **Jesus** film that they have already seen several times.

I spoke about the different types of sheep in the Bible. Expecting only 20 or 30 people, the visual aids I had prepared were totally inadequate for the crowd of more than 100 students.

So, instead of using pictures, I asked students to link arms to make a sheepfold and look over the fence at the world outside, showing how some sheep try to stay in the door—partly in and partly out—and how some sheep are just plain lost.

Half of the students confessed Christ by raising their hands to indicate that they were inside the fold, while others heard the offer of salvation and were invited to enter Christ's fold. We hope to continue

working with this group and to get some tapes for these students to view. —Missionary Jim Mische teaches at Mambilla Baptist Theological School, Mbu, Nigeria.

Witnessing in a Factory in Japan

by Reimer and Nobuko Clausen

KAMEOKA SHI, JAPAN. The city of Kameoka Shi does special things for handicapped people. A lot of volunteer organizations work to meet the needs of these people. Some people who come to our church record library books on tape for blind people.

Very close to our church is a factory that provides employment for handicapped people. As a result of our contacts with these volunteer groups, the factory invited us to sing Christmas carols and bring a program. Since then, we have spent a lot of time getting to know the people and establishing relationships.

I decided not to come in as a salesman of religion, but to get to know the people and try to minister to them. In this city, where there are such deeply imbedded old Japanese religions, pray that we could touch the people with the love of Christ.

—Missionaries Reimer and Nobuko Clausen serve in a church planting ministry in Kameoka Shi, Japan.



PRESIDENT'S FOCUS



Easter Every Day

by Manetta Hohn
WMF president
Kelowna, BC

Easter has come and gone, and we have . . .

- saturated ourselves with the gospel account of Jesus' death and resurrection;
- joined in Easter services with glorious hallelujah hymns;
- rejoiced in the living hope we have as God's children; and
- enjoyed the church filled with people, beautiful flowers reminding us of new life, and perhaps a family gathering.

This is all part of the joyous celebration of our living Savior. However, in this atmosphere, it is easy to overlook the fact that Jesus lived a WHOLE life and that He had a great deal to say about how we should live ours as His followers, living Easter not only every Sunday, but every day.

As we celebrate the resurrection, we can easily pass over the many admonitions Jesus gave us for daily living.

- In Matthew 7:21, Jesus is more concerned about our walk than our talk. He wants us to do right, not just say the right words. Our living cannot be separated from our believing.
- Jesus also instructs us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44). Loving our enemies and treating them well shows that Jesus is Lord of our life. This is possible only as we give ourselves fully to God because only He can deliver us from our natural selfishness.
- Matthew 6:33 instructs us to give God first place in our lives and then all our needs will be met. This means turning to Him first for help, filling our thoughts with His desires, taking His character

for our pattern, and serving and obeying Him in everything. People, objects, goals, and other desires can quickly dump God out of first place if we don't actively choose to give Him first place in every area of life.

- Matthew 7:15 warns us to beware of false teachers. Our world is filled with them. Jesus says to beware of those whose words sound religious but who are motivated by money, prestige, or promotion of their own ideas. We can easily tell who they are because, in their teaching, they minimize Christ and glorify themselves.
- Another admonition is for us to love each other, just as Christ loved us (John 15:12). He loved us enough to give His life for us. We may not have to die for someone, but there are other ways we can sacrificially love others: listening, helping, encouraging, giving are just a few. Do we know of someone who needs this kind of love today? We need to give all the love we can and then try to give a little more.
- In Matthew 11:29-30, Jesus asks us to take His yoke, wear it, and let Him teach us. A yoke is a heavy wooden harness joining two animals for the purpose of working together. It often became a burden when one animal did not cooperate. For us, this yoke is subjection to Jesus and His ways for our lives. They are not hard or difficult under His direction. A loving reliance on Jesus, a loving submission to His authority, and obedience to His commands make all yokes easy, all burdens light. May we celebrate Easter every Sunday—no, EVERY DAY—as we

rejoice in our living Lord, obey His word, and remain faithful to what He is calling us to do. □

Lana Bertsch Is WMF Scholarship Recipient



Miss Lana Bertsch, daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. Delvin (Evelyn) Bertsch, Morris, MB, was one of the 1990-91 WMF

Scholarship recipients. Lana will graduate from North American Baptist College, Edmonton, AB, on April 28 with an Associate of Arts in Religion degree. She writes as follows:

"Over the past two years, I have had the opportunity to study at North American Baptist College. I am thankful that the Lord has been shown to me in such areas as my studies, team sports, or just socializing. My time at N.A.B.C. has been busy but enjoyable, and the things I have learned here I will never be able to forget or replace.

As I complete my studies, I am thankful for the way I have been able to grow in Christ, in the way He has planned for me. I anticipate what He has in store for me in the future. One of the most valuable things to me has been prayer support from my friends and family. The power of prayer has become very real to me. Thank you, ladies, for your prayer support and your financial support. □



"The Merry Widow"

(or Hospitality: A Biblical Imperative for All)

by Christa Eckert
Cleveland, Ohio

Shortly after I was widowed, people invited me to their homes for Sunday dinner; they met me for lunch; or they came to my home and shared a meal. After a year or so, the invitations dwindled. I had always loved to entertain when my husband was living, but I wondered how I could do it without him.

I looked for occasions to invite people to my home. I learned a lot from this experience and want to share it with anyone who loves to entertain but doesn't have the courage to do it alone. I was a little scared, so I began by inviting three widows. I thought it would be nonthreatening and easy. That was a mistake. It was a sad pity party. I vowed never to do it again. (I haven't.)

I realized I needed people of all ages and backgrounds when entertaining. I invited the new choir director and his family for Sunday dinner. He and his wife were happy to accept my invitation. Their three little children filled the house with laughter. We sang, we talked, we played, and we ate. Never did a Sunday afternoon pass so quickly.

Another opportunity for opening my home arose when I had a baby shower for a young woman whose family refused to acknowledge the young man with whom she had eloped. No one was giving her a baby shower. I ached for her. I sent out a dozen invitations. We had the most wonderful surprise party for this young woman and her husband. They have a second baby now, and her family has embraced the two grandchildren. But it was tough going at first when she needed love and acceptance.

"Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13). That is the purpose of entertaining: to share, to give, to care about the needs of others, and the Lord will bless you in return.

Entertaining visiting missionaries is always a special blessing. I had an open house for a missionary couple one Sunday after the evening service. That was quite a daring move; I had no idea how many people would come, so I sent out a dozen written invitations, just in case. A dozen people came, but not the twelve I had invited. The Lord knew just whom to send to my home—those who were truly interested in meeting the missionaries and not the ones I thought would come. Among the guests was a young woman who would spend the following summer in Cameroon.

Singing, too, has always been part of my life. I invited the ensem-

ble in which I sang for a rehearsal party before the Christmas holidays. That was a hectic time for ensemble members and their families. It was somewhat painful for me, because my own family was so far away, and I sensed the pain of loss even more during the holidays. But concentrating on the music truly prepared my heart for the Advent season.

When a young singer came to town to perform in our local opera company, I had lunch with her. Then I realized that she did not know any people in this town, except the professional singers who were also hired to sing in the opera. I called a few of my music and art lover friends and invited them to meet our featured soprano before opening night. We had a midweek buffet party for her. We ate and talked and sang so loud that the neighbors asked me, the next day, if anyone was getting married (meaning me). No, not yet, I said.

Serving on a church board also gave me opportunity to entertain at my home. It really made the business session go a lot quicker and smoother, because the members of the board wanted to socialize and eat.

"Offer hospitality one to another without grumbling," the Bible admonishes (1 Peter 4:9). That is the key to entertaining, with or without a spouse. Enjoy the people you invite, get to know them personally as you share a meal with them. As a result of opening my home, I have received various invitations in return, not from the people who were my guests of honor, but, surprisingly, from many other party givers. □

2000

Our Strategic Focus On The Biblical Imperatives

COMMISSIONED TO WITNESS

Praise God for people receiving Christ as Savior and for His growing church

■ CRESTON, NE. Pastor Marlin Mohrman extended the right hand of fellowship to four young people who were baptized at Creston Baptist Church. —*Henrietta Scheffler*

■ ASHLEY, ND. The Rev. Gordon Voegele baptized and welcomed eight new members into the fellowship of Ashley Baptist Church. —*Florence Kranzler*

■ SPRINGSIDE, SK. Pastor Richard Grabke baptized 14 young people upon confession of their faith in Jesus Christ. They were welcomed into Springside Baptist Church's membership along with seven adults who joined the Church by testimony. —*Ruth Pullman*

■ ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL. Pastor Jim Vyleta baptized four adults and welcomed them into the fellowship of Tri-Community Baptist Church. One of these four had recently responded to an invitation for salvation at a Sunday worship service. "Their testimonies were a real blessing and challenge to our hearts," says Pastor Vyleta. This service brought several family members to Church and helped Tri-Community break its attendance record by having 114 people. "Pray that we will be able to grow spiritually and numerically," says Pastor Vyleta.

■ PORTLAND, OR. The Rev. Randy Kinnison extended the right hand of

fellowship to eleven people as they were received into membership at Bethany Baptist Church.

A Concert of Prayer was conducted with pastors and congregations of several area churches united for worship and prayer. —*Herbert Halstead*

■ BELLWOOD, IL. One husband/father publicly gave evidence of his new faith in Christ as he was baptized and joined First Baptist Church. That day another family of three responded to the invitation to receive Christ and join the Church. Bill Kresal is pastor.

Black Hills area churches hear missionaries

■ RAPID CITY, SD. Committed Ambassador for Christ (II Corinthians 5:19, 20) was the theme chosen for the annual Missions Conference at South Canyon Baptist Church. Mountain View Baptist, Spearfish, and Gillette (WY) Baptist joined South Canyon for this three-day conference. Participating missionaries were the Rev. Peter Evande and Dr. Rod and April Zimmerman of Cameroon; Beulah Carpenter, Chad; Bud Acord, Shiloh Ministries; and Bud Fuchs, associate director of missions.

"Our prayer is that this is not tradition nor just repetition, but that we may be set on fire as committed ambassadors of Christ becoming involved in the vision for reaching the lost,"

reports Mrs. Herb Decker. Dr. Jack Smith is pastor of the Rapid City Church.

Springside holds revival meetings

■ SPRINGSIDE, SK. The Rev. Bill McLeod, Canadian Revival Fellowship, held meetings along with Harold Fields ministering to the children at Springside Baptist Church.

"It was a special time of spiritual renewal for the adults and children," reports Ruth Pullman. The Rev. Richard Grabke is the pastor.

Schuster leads spiritual growth seminar at Ochre River Church

■ OCHRE RIVER, MB. Grace Baptist Church held a Spiritual Growth Seminar with Siegfried Schuster, associate professor of Church Ministries, Edmonton Baptist Seminary. "This was great spiritual food for all who attended," reports Jean Roos.

All departments at the Church take their turn ministering once a month at the Personal Care Home. The choir sang at an interfaith service and took part in the community outreach, Country Gospel Music Night (to preserve Gospel music). Grace Church also participated in the Community Christmas Carol Festival as an interfaith outreach. More than ten choirs took part.

Several missionaries and the New Day team visited Grace Baptist. "We praise and thank the Lord for all these opportunities we have to serve Him, as we seek to be His lighthouse in this area. Our prayer is that as the seed is planted, growth will be seen and God will bless it," reports Jean. The Rev. Reinhold Wilde is pastor.

Tacoma church hosts crusade

■ TACOMA, WA. Calvary Baptist Church cooperated with several other area churches in hosting the Sutura Twins Crusade of Mansfield, OH. "We enjoyed good singing, special music, and personal testimonies. The meetings were highlighted by forceful 'straight from the shoulder' preaching, making the Bible truths clear and effective," reports Earl Shadle. Donald Burnett is pastor.

Tacoma church views film series

■ TACOMA, WA. Calvary Baptist Church presented the film series of Harold Morris' experiences while in prison. The goals of the film of this author of *Twice Pardon* is to reach young people so they never have to experience prison and to present the way of salvation. Donald Burnett is pastor. —*Earl Shadle*

Do You Need a Friend?

■ FARGO, ND. Our world has many lonely and discouraged people who need a friend. Jesus can be their true friend, and you can help with the introduction. The Board of Missions and Evangelism at Metropolitan Baptist Church has produced a tract, written by Pastor Dennis Hoffman, that may be used in outreach to others.

Tracts are unique tools for evangelism. They are inexpensive, clearly written in a language easily understood, and are brief, taking only one to two minutes to read. They provide spiritual truths of wisdom and comfort found in God's Word, the Bible. They also give an introduction to knowing God personally in the person of Jesus Christ.

Your part is distribu-

tion—making them available to others, either through personal contact or random placement. A few may be left in magazine literature locations wherever people may be waiting. Doctors, dentists, banks, or business offices make good locations along with hotel/motel lobbies, phone booths, bus, and airport terminals. Keep some in your purse or pocket for hospital and nursing home visits. Include with (not in

place of) your tip for services received in restaurants, taxis, or by car repair, parking lot, paper boy, and pizza delivery people.

Enclose with a personal note or greeting card. Look for opportunities to introduce Jesus to others who need a true friend. The tract, "Do You Need a Friend," is available by writing Rev. Dennis Hoffman at the Church. —*Jan Broeckel*

COMPELLED TO SERVE

Northwest Fellowship reaches out to their ethnic communities

■ CHICAGO, IL. Northwest Fellowship Baptist Church, a product of the merger of Mayfair Park and Foster Avenue Baptist Churches, in the past year has seen five people accept Jesus Christ as Savior, 18 people baptized, and 44 welcomed into Church membership.

Pastor Hero Ulrichs says, "The growth is exciting, but even more so are comments like, 'How many ethnic backgrounds are involved in the Church?' and 'Your Church family looks a lot like the community.'"

Six Greek evangelistic Bible studies are being held, ministering to about 75 Greeks. A Spanish ministry has also begun. Some other outreach ministries include door-to-door visitation, giving small gifts to the community to introduce ourselves, new resident mailings, prospect calling, vacation Bible school, Friendship Sunday, outreach fellowship times, Summer Sun-Station (children's day camp), Awana Club, and Kids in the Kitchen (children's cooking classes).

"One of the Church's goals is to be a body of caring believers from all types of ethnic back-

grounds who desire to worship together and reach our community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ," says Pastor Ulrichs.

The new excitement and vision to minister and serve the community is because of God's specific work among members. Newcomers are attracted by the warm, friendly, and accepting spirit among the people. They enjoy the fellowship opportunities and are spiritually nurtured by quality teaching and preaching.

Lay volunteers play a big role in the worship service. Unity and sacrificial giving of time and talents in the music and children's ministries make worship a time of celebration of gratitude to God for His blessings and provisions.

Schauer's ministry noted at Hebron Church

■ HEBRON, ND. The Rev. Herbert and Mary Schauer were honored for their 15 years of ministry at First Baptist Church. During this time, lives were rededicated, souls saved, and persons baptized, young families bring children to Wednesday activities and Sunday school, two Bible studies meet, and a newly organized Christian Education Board exists. Pastor

Schauer started a musical request night twice a year with the offering designated for a new church building, dedicated in 1985.

The Schauers retired in Hebron on Dec. 30, 1990. Their daughter, April, and her husband, Dr. Rodney Zimmerman, are missionaries to Cameroon.

"We praise the Lord for answered prayer in sending Pastor Terry and Sharon Stoltenow to shepherd this flock," reports Delores Kit-zan.

Organist recognized at Manitowoc Church

■ MANITOWOC, WI. As part of the 140th anniversary held at First Baptist Church, a surprise recognition was given to Mrs. Alice Gates, who has served for 28 years on a voluntary basis as church organist.



She began her service as a teenager when she played for the Sunday school. She assumed complete responsibility as church organist in 1962, playing for the worship services, Church choir, weddings, and funerals.

Eureka church hears Schnabel on marriage

■ EUREKA, SD. The Rev. Perry Schnabel preached a series on marriage and also held a child dedication service at First Baptist Church.

David Grosz, a member of the Church, spoke and showed slides on his work of ministering to natives through radio, medical care, and church planting in Alaska.

The Men's Brotherhood hosted a "singfest" with musical groups from the Baptist churches in Herreid, SD, and Wishek, Ashley, and Venturia, ND, participating. A time of fellowship followed. —*Irene Kusler*

Valleyview Church commission Hufnagels

■ VALLEYVIEW, AB. Missionary appointees Dale and Marcella Hufnagel were commissioned at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Dec. 9, 1990. Dave Thomas, chair of Deacons, spoke. The Hufnagels began French language study at Laval University in Quebec City, Jan. 14, 1991. —*Lavina Heppner*

McIntosh church holds two special services

■ MCINTOSH, SD. The men of First Baptist Church hosted a community Valentine Banquet and concert with the Melody Chords, an octet from Turtle Lake, ND. The Sunshine Bible Academy drama team, *Ekklesia*, presented the drama, "The Body of Christ," followed by a potluck dinner. The Rev. David L. Ling is pastor. —*Irene Schuh*

2000

Our Strategic Focus On The Biblical Imperatives

2000

Our Strategic Focus On The Biblical Imperatives

CALLED TO WORSHIP

Alpena church experiences growth in 1990

■ ALPENA, MI. Ripley Blvd. Baptist Church has looked back to the activities and accomplishments of 1990. "We are encouraged. We are a growing church spending much time in prayer," reports Mary Coy. There were 16 baptisms and new members, family outings, many testimonies, musicals, Sunday school class begun for toddlers, and a prayer chain led by the WMF. Almost everyone is involved in leadership or participation. "We will continue in 1991 following in the direction God would have us go," says Mary. The Rev. Frederick

Sweet is pastor.

Round Lake Church holds Prayer Concert

■ GLADWIN, MI. One hundred thirty-seven people attended the "Concert of Prayer" service at Round Lake Baptist Church. Pastor Robert Brown encouraged the congregation to actively engage in seven different types of prayer including silent, small group, and simultaneous prayers. Scripture reading and special music highlighted this service. Members of the congregation participated in scripture reading, giving testimonies, and prayers—especially for our servicemen and women in the Gulf. —*Colleen Clarey*

COMMANDED TO CARE

Paul Church provides Christian alternative to Halloween

■ PAUL, ID. A Christian alternative to Halloween was held on October 31 at the First Baptist Church. Youth leaders, Donald Dean and JoAnn MacRae, organized an All-Church Party with games and a fun

cake walk. "For a first time event, we were really excited about the 40 youth and parents who attended," said JoAnn MacRae. "One young girl came with her parents who rarely attend church. We saw God's blessings in several small ways that evening." The Rev. John Ziulkowski is pastor.

COMMITTED TO GIVE

Ebenezer holds building fund banquet

■ EBENEZER, SK. "We will rise up and build," were the words chosen by the building committee of Ebenezer Baptist Church. A Building Fund Banquet

was held for members and friends at the Holiday Inn in Yorkton. The Rev. Wayne Jorstad was master of ceremonies, and the Rev. Gerald Scheel, pastor of Faith Baptist, Regina, was the speaker. The music was

provided by Terry and Patricia Patzer and Jan Voth. An offering was received for the building

fund. "Everyone was challenged to give and serve the Lord in our community," reports Martha Dreger.

CHALLENGED TO GROW

Spiritual renewal emphasized in Michigan church

■ ROCHESTER HILLS, MI. Over several months, church planter Randy Beck preached a series on spiritual renewal that has resulted in several positive things as God has moved within the people at Oakland Hills Baptist Church. "We are experiencing a reaffirmation of our people to one another and the ministry to which God has called us," says Beck. "Our worship times have been

meaningful through the leadership of Tim Barr."

The Church started the nomination process to select deacons; they began junior church for 3- to 6-year-olds as well as a Wednesday evening Friendship Company for this same age group; a Bible study for couples was initiated; and the Church held a friendship evangelism seminar. This is a church planting church supported through the N.A.B. Conference's established budget.

ANNIVERSARIES

Pilgrim Church celebrates 25 years

■ VANCOUVER, BC. Sunlight filters through the window of a half-finished church and falls on the face of a carpenter working inside. The scene is from a 1965 home movie on the construction of Pilgrim Baptist Church in Vancouver, BC. Twenty-five years later, 160 people crowd into the Church to watch the film and celebrate Pilgrim Baptist's silver anniversary. The church, started with help from its mother church, Immanuel Baptist, began with 103 members pastored by the Rev. Gerhard Gebauer.

Today, Pastor Garry Kirk and his wife, Dawn, who have been at Pilgrim for five years, serve 105 members. The numbers haven't increased much in 25 years, but the congregation has become more colourful with members from Ghana, Hong Kong, and Korea. The transforma-

tion probably wouldn't have happened if it were not for the move in the late 70s from all-German services to German and English. Pastor Walter Schroedter, who succeeded Pastor Gebauer, oversaw this transition. It started in 1976 when an English language Sunday school was introduced.

Today, Pilgrim's multicultural Sunday school thrives. There are also English and German Sunday morning services, Bible studies, and an English Sunday evening service. Pastor Siegbert Zukowski leads the German services.

During Pilgrim's history, its three pastors have conducted 132 baptisms and 20 marriages. And over the years, church members have donated two and a half million dollars.

Many former Pilgrim members who had moved away returned October 13 to gather with current members to reflect on

Pilgrim's past.

Pastor Schroedter, Pilgrim's longest serving pastor, spoke at the anniversary celebration, just as he did 25 years ago at the birth of the Church. He called the Church to look forward and urged the congregation to evaluate if it needed to sharpen its focus for the rest of the 20th century and to continue spreading Christ's message. His message was based on Hebrews 2:9. —*Mi Jung Lee and Tom Parry*

Manitowoc church ministers for 140 years

MANITOWOC, WI. First Baptist Church celebrated its 140th anniversary on June 2 and 3, 1990. The Church was organized June 2, 1850, as the Town of Kossuth—German Baptist Church. At the time, the State of Wisconsin was two years old.

During 1849 and 1850, a number of German-speaking settlers from Memel, East Prussia; Hanover, Germany; and Switzerland established farms in the timber areas northwest of Manitowoc. Some of these had a Baptist background from Europe.

The Rev. William Edward Grimm served as pastor. He lived in Milwaukee and pastored a church there.

Twenty-seven adults became charter members of the new congregation. Worship services were held infrequently at the beginning because Pastor Grimm served several pioneer congregations in Wisconsin. He travelled by boat from Milwaukee to serve the new group in Manitowoc. Deacons, such as H. Gruschus and F. Anthold, who were farmers by trade, often preached.

In 1851, the congregation purchased two acres of the Schmittmann farm for \$4. The next year, a log house church building was erected by the members led by Andreas Rutz. This one-room meeting house, costing \$21.30, was used for more than 30 years.

By 1856, 28 members left the rural church to establish a Baptist Church in Manitowoc. However by 1890, the city congregation disbanded when many moved to Milwaukee to find employment because of a severe depression.

By 1873 a German-language Sunday school was established in the rural church. A white frame church was built even though the church did not have a pastor. In 1894, a parsonage was built. The congregation averaged 100 members.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the congregation gradually began to use English.

During World War II, Baptist families immigrated to Manitowoc. The Church relocated to Manitowoc and changed its name to First Baptist on July 28, 1943. The congregation worshipped at the Lincoln Park Fieldhouse until they built church facilities in 1955.

Christian Education Position Available

North American Baptist College is accepting applications for a tenure-track position in Christian Education. Applicants should possess an earned doctorate in Education/Christian Education, as well as practical church experience. The position involves teaching at both College and Seminary levels.

In accordance with Canadian immigration laws, preference will be given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada. Submit inquiries, applications, or resumes by May 15, 1991, to Dr. J. Walter Goltz, N.A.B. College, 11525 - 23 Ave., Edmonton, AB, T6J 4T3, (403) 437-1960.

McKernan Baptist Church, Edmonton, AB, will celebrate its 40th anniversary Oct. 18-20, 1991,

Special events include

- a Friday evening banquet
- a Saturday brunch for charter members
- an informal historical Saturday evening get-together
- combined Sunday school and worship service on Sunday
- Sunday afternoon service concluding the celebration

For more information, contact Mrs. Lillian R. Sass, secretary, Anniversary Committee, 11103 - 76 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T6G 0J9, (403) 436-0611.

IN MEMORIAM

■ HARVEY ARNOLD STANKE (78), St. Paul, MN; born Jan. 26, 1912, to Paul and Rosa Stanke in St. Paul, MN; died Jan. 4, 1991; married Esther Marie Heckmann, Oct. 7, 1935; faithful member, treasurer, and trustee, Redeemer Baptist Church, St. Paul, MN; survived by his wife, Esther; daughter, Carol; son, Dean; seven grandchildren; brother, Elmer; the Rev. Rubin Herrmann, pastor, funeral service.

■ HENRY MOSER (85), McIntosh, SD; born July 23, 1905, to Wilhelm and Margaret (Walker) Moser; died

Responding to a need, the Church ministered to Laotian Hmongs from 1979 to 1988.

First Baptist Church is dually affiliated with the North American Baptist Conference and the American Baptist Churches of the U.S.A. Supporting missions has been a high commitment of this Church.

Pastors serving this congregation: William E. Grimm, 1850-55; H. Norrtorf, 1851; M. Schmidt, 1854-56; A. Freitag, 1873-78; John Miller, 1880-85; Interim pastors Schwendener and Oehlgard, 1885-89; George Engelmann, 1890-93; W. F. Herrmann, 1895; C. Hoffman, 1896-99; Theophilus F. Baumgaertner, 1900-10; Bernard Matske, 1911-14; George Englemann, 1915-21; Henry Hirsh, 1923-24; Herman Palfenier, 1925-30; Jacob C. Kraenzler, 1931-37; Edgar Englemann, interim, 1938; Reinhold Siegmund, 1939-40; Hugo Lueck, 1940-43, 1946-47; Lawrence E. Wagner, 1943-46; J. C. Schweitzer, 1947-48; Eldon Janzen and Caroline Kreiman, 1948-49; Ewald M. Wegner, 1949-51; Harvey Rakow, 1952-67; and Bruce Huffer, 1968 to present.

Sept. 6, 1990; married Martha Quenzer, Nov. 4, 1931; active member, Building Fund treasurer, deacon, trustee, Sunday school superintendent and teacher, First Baptist Church, McIntosh, SD; predeceased by his parents; five brothers, six sisters, and one grandson; survived by his wife, Martha; two sons: Henry (Teresa); Bernard (Sharon); daughter, Irene (Ervin) Schuh; 14 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; two brothers: Philip and William; one sister, Lydia (Allen) Blayney; the Rev. David L. Ling, pastor, funeral service.

We'll Help You Give More Effectively

It is our desire to help you in developing your lifestyle of giving. In this article, we want to explore various ways in which you can give to North American Baptist Conference, as well as other charitable interests, during your lifetime.

► Gifts of Cash

Naturally, a gift of cash is the easiest gift to make. And it carries with it the highest charitable deduction percentage. Gifts of cash are deductible up to 50 percent of adjusted gross income, with a five year carryover for contributions which exceed your deduction limitation in the year of the gift.

► Gifts of Property

Property can also be a desirable gift to a charitable organization. Your cash flow may be insufficient for you to make a substantial gift, but you may have property, such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, or real estate, which can be transferred without severely affecting your cash flow.

When property has not appreciated in value, it is deductible up to 50 percent of adjusted gross income, just as gifts of cash. However, if your property has appreciated in value, the charitable deduction is limited to 30 percent of adjusted gross income.

If you cannot utilize all of the deduction in the year in which the gift is made, you have a five year carryover for any excess.

However, a gift of appreciated property carries with it distinct advantages. The gain on appreciated property, which would be taxable to you as ordinary income if you sold the property,

will not be taxable if you transfer the property to a charitable organization, assuming that your property has been held "long-term."

► Bargain Sale

Another very effective way to transfer property to a charitable organization, when the value of the property is greater than your desired gift, is a bargain sale.

A bargain sale is a simple transaction where you sell property to a charitable organization for less than the fair market value.

If the property has appreciated in value, the gift portion is deductible as an outright gift of appreciated property, and the sale portion is treated as a sale of the property. The cost basis is prorated between the gift portion and the sale portion, and capital gains on the sale portion will be taxable, while capital gains will be avoided on the gift portion.

► Combining Family and Charitable Gifts Through a Specially Designed Trust

Lifetime gifts to charitable organizations can be combined with

lifetime gifts to family members, through a charitable lead trust.

If your desired gifts to family members exceed the amount which you can give to them tax-free, you can place the property in a trust paying income to a charitable organization for a period of years. And at the end of the trust period, the property from the trust will be distributed to family members tax-free.

For information on these ways to give and their tax implications, mail the response coupon requesting your free copy of our special planning report, **We'll Help You Give More Effectively**. There is no cost or obligation. □

(Neither the Development Department nor the N.A.B. Conference is engaged in rendering legal or tax advice. For advice or assistance in specific cases, the services of an attorney should be obtained. The purpose of this article is to provide information of a general character only.)

Please send me the special planning report, **We'll Help You Give More Effectively**.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Province _____ Code _____

Birthdate _____ Spouse's Birthdate _____

Mail to: Dr. Constantino Salios, North American Baptist Conference
1 South 210 Summit Avenue, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois 60181-3994
(708) 495-2000

Cameroonian leader attends Presidential Prayer Breakfast

WASHINGTON, DC. Dr. Solomon Gwei, secretary general of the Cameroon Chamber of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, and Fisheries in Cameroon, West Africa, attended the Presidential Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC, January 30 to February 1.

Gwei learned about the prayer breakfasts in 1987 when he was in Washington, DC, to receive a distinguished award for his contribution to African agriculture. A year later, Dr. Charles Wright came to Cameroon to talk to leaders in Yaounde, the capital city, about starting a prayer breakfast there.

Gwei invited university students, government officials, business leaders, private sector members, and people from all walks of life to his home for a prayer breakfast. "Actually," says Gwei, "we meet the second Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. for our 'prayer breakfast' instead of in the morning. People from various denominations: Baptists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Full Gospel, Roman Catholics—meet in our home. We don't mention our denominational affiliation, but we talk about our common faith in Christ. We read the Bible and then pray for our nation, our continent of Africa, for the world, and for our personal problems."

Their prayer "breakfasts" have a planned pattern: "First, we pray prayers of confession. We deliberately search our hearts, confess sin, and experience the assurance of forgiveness. Then we pray prayers of adoration. We thank God for Who He is. These prayers are followed by prayers of thanksgiving for what God has done for us, for our country, and for the world. We close with prayers of supplication. At this time, we pray for personal problems and for others with problems. We lift up our leaders as well as those in other parts of the world. We thank God for the changes in



Dr. and Mrs. Solomon Gwei

Eastern Europe. We pray for the United States. Sometimes we divide into small groups, and each group prays for special parts of the world. We're aware of what is going on around the world."

After prayer-time, members of the group counsel with those who seek spiritual help. "Some have received Christ as Savior," he says.

Cameroon is undergoing economic, political, social, and religious crises. "We have neglected the spiritual application to our country's problems," explains Gwei, "so we are now trying to mobilize our country to pray."

On Feb. 1, 1990, they started another prayer group for the VIPs who are extremely busy. "We began meeting the first Thursday of every month in my office," says Gwei. "Then we moved from house to house. Now we meet in the Cameroon Bible Society's director's office."

"God answers prayers," notes Gwei, who gives an example of the power of prayer. "There had been much tension in Cameroon. So we prayed to God to intervene in the life of our country, and He did."

After the President's speech to the whole nation, promising democratic changes, the tension dropped. These changes include allowing minority political parties and free-

dom of the press.

The President also announced that he would make changes in his cabinet. "We prayed for these announcements of change," recalls Gwei. "We went to each cabinet member and asked to meet to pray with each one personally," says Gwei. "So far, we have met with 17 Ministers in the President's cabinet, prayed with them, and presented Bibles to them. They are happy to accept the Bibles. We have prayed with people up to the second ranking person in government—the speaker of the National Assembly, the secretary general (prime minister) who is a Muslim."

Gwei says they, as Christians, used to hide their Bibles as they went about their business. "But we realized that soldiers do not hide their guns, so we, as soldiers of Christ, do not hide our Sword of the Lord, our Bibles."

Gwei is also involved in ministry in the Cameroon Baptist Convention. Elected in 1990, Gwei serves as vice chair of the Cameroon Baptist Convention and is vice chair of the Board of Deacons at Etougebe Baptist Church in Yaounde. Gwei says this Church averages 700 worshippers at a service.

This Church, meeting in temporary facilities, presently has a building fund drive.

So far, the Church has collected 20 million francs toward the goal of 75 million francs (about US\$300,000) needed to build the church facility. The Church had a goal of more than 120 million francs but had to cutback this goal. It is difficult to raise the funds as the economic crises in Cameroon is serious. Some have gone without a salary for 24 months.

Dr. Gwei received his seminary training in Nigeria and in Switzerland and is a graduate of Princeton University and the University of Michigan. □

Between the Rocks and the Hard Places

by Lewis Petrie

Life is not all serious for the missionaries on the Mambilla Plateau in Nigeria, Africa. They have fun also, especially when visitors come by road up the steep incline to the top of the escarpment on their way to Gembu, Nigeria. Recently Herman Effa and I visited our missionaries and the people of the Mambilla Baptist Convention in Nigeria.

The road from Serti is extremely rough. Huge rocks and boulders tug at the wheels attempting to steal the steering wheel from the driver's hands in an unguarded moment. Just when you think you have endured the worst part of the journey, there comes another rocky section that rattles your body and jars your brain into senselessness. The journey from the bottom of the escarpment to the top takes approximately three hours.

My whole nervous system entered into a temporary numbness that I did not think would ever pass. The missionaries enjoy observing the reactions of the dazed visitors who make their way through the "rocks and the hard places" to the Gembu compound.

There are other "rocks and hard places" on the Mambilla Plateau that have nothing to do with the poor road conditions. These other "rocks and hard places" can be just as difficult to absorb in your heart and mind as the bumps on the road are on your physical being.

I am referring to the quality of life on the Mambilla Plateau in Nigeria. Everywhere there is poverty—people caught between the "rocks and the hard places" of not having enough to eat, clothes to wear, or medicine for

illness.

There is ignorance—people caught between the "rocks and the hard places": people unable to read or write, or who lack knowledge of primary health care or how to plant the right foods. People are caught between the "rocks and the hard places" of not having clean water, proper sanitation, or primary health care and hygiene to protect against disease.

In all of these "rocks and hard places," the children of the Mambilla Plateau are trapped the most.

The North American Baptist Conference supports the Mambilla Baptist Theological School in Mbu. There we train men to become pastors, evangelists, and missionaries to their own people. It is exciting to see this School firsthand and to meet the students, faculty, and staff. But here, too, is a "rock and a hard place."

The students must bring their families with them to live on the campus. There are many, many children—beautiful children, lovely children, children for whom Jesus died on the cross of Calvary. These same children are sick, hungry, and

dying children. While we were there, one father came to the missionary to ask him to take his child to the dispensary in Gembu.

Between "rocks and a hard place." It costs money to go to school, and it costs to provide for a family. They must choose between a "rock and a hard place." What would you choose? They choose to be educated so that others may hear the good news of Jesus Christ. A "rock and a hard place . . ."

Together, we wait for the day when "every ravine shall be filled up and every mountain and hill shall be brought low and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough roads smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Isaiah 40:3, Luke 3:5-6).

Until that day we ask for your help. Pray for the church in Mambilla, Nigeria. Give sacrificially so that physical, medical, and spiritual needs can be met. Thank God for the few "rocks and hard places" in our own lives. □

The Rev. Lewis Petrie is Development Director, North American Baptist Conference, Oakbrook Terrace, IL.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

Ministerial Changes

■ **Jamie Maldonado** to pastor, Grace Baptist Church, Monte Vista, CO, effective Feb. 12, 1991.

Welcomed

■ **Allen and Lorraine Unger** and family were welcomed to the pastorate of Emmanuel Baptist Church of Valleyview, AB, on January 13, 1991. —*Lavina Heppner*

■ **Terrence and Marsha Midkiff** and family were welcomed to the pastorate of Immanuel Baptist Church, Beulah, ND, at an installation service on Feb. 10, 1991.

Terrence is a 1990 North American Baptist Seminary graduate with a M. Div. degree. The Rev. Ralph Cooke, North Central area minister, welcomed Pastor Midkiff into the Northern Dakota Baptist Association. The Rev. Dan Heringer and his wife Janice of Goodrich, ND, served as interim pastor of Immanuel Baptist church until Pastor Midkiff arrived Jan. 27, 1991.

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How I "Almost" Met Billy Graham

by Larry Burd

In June of 1982, I attended the Boston Billy Graham Crusade and School of Evangelism. At the hotel, where I stayed, I met two men—a pastor and a student at Gordon-Conwell Seminary. We had much in common, since I was a pastor and a graduate of Gordon-Conwell.

I was excited to hear Billy Graham was speaking at the School of Evangelism. For many years, I had hoped to meet him personally. I suggested to my two friends that we go early to the Armory, where the meetings were being held, so that we would be the first to go in. If we sat up front, we might have the opportunity to meet Dr. Graham. My friends laughed at me and told me that I would never be able to meet him personally.

"Maybe not," I replied. "But let's try."

The next morning my friends reluctantly got up earlier than they wanted to. After a quick breakfast at MacDonalds I was anxious to head for the Armory. However, it was raining and my friends decided to go back to the hotel. They were convinced we would never be able to meet Billy Graham. I was disappointed, but determined to go through with my plan. While I stood outside the Armory waiting for the doors to open, I met a Boston policeman. God opened the door for me to share my personal testimony with him. I told him how I came to know Jesus Christ as my Savior. Then I explained God's plan of salvation.

Time passed quickly. The doors to the Armory opened, but I continued to share Christ with the

As much as I had wanted to meet Dr. Graham, I believe I was where God wanted me to be that morning. There is no joy that compares with the joy of knowing Jesus Christ personally and introducing Him to others. Perhaps someday I will also have the joy of meeting Billy Graham.

interested policeman.

When my friends came by, I was still talking to the policeman. On their way into the building, they smiled and told me they would save me a seat.

When it was time for the School of Evangelism morning session to begin, I went into the Armory and sat down with my friends. They smiled again and one of them said, "You won't believe what happened to us. Billy Graham is staying at our hotel. He was in the lobby when we went back there after breakfast. He introduced himself and chatted with us for a few minutes.

"Larry, you are the one who wanted to meet Billy Graham, and we are the ones who met him!" □



Rev. Larry Burd is pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Bethlehem, PA.

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