

91-Year-Old: 'No Time For Retirement'

By RON BROWN
Globe-News Religion Writer

A.B. White of 1137 Trigg will be 92 on Oct. 16.

Although many people his age have retired, White said "there is no time for retirement" for the work he is doing.

A self-proclaimed 'missionary' for many years, he was appointed last year as a missionary of the Christian Services Corp. of the Baptist Association Home Missions Board.

"I've been visiting and telling Amarillo people about their relationship with God since 1947," White said. "And I have no plans to quit now."

"As long as I'm able to ... I don't have any plans to quit or retire."

White was born on a farm in Benton County, Tenn., near the city of Holiday.

"My parents were poor ... we mainly raised corn," White said, remembering his childhood days.

His memory — remarkably clear for a man of his age — brought back the first time he had ever been to church.

"I remember very well attending church with my sister and sitting on the front pew, when I was only 4 years old," White said.

At 7, he attended a one-room school.

"My teacher that first year has a son living here in Amarillo," said White. "His name is Oscar Kelley."

Recalling his early years on the farm, White mentions events that he vividly remembers — crop and weather conditions, national and international events and even an earthquake that shook their farm when he

was five.

Moving to Texas in 1903, his family settled on black farmland near Sulpher Springs in the small community of Posey.

"My daddy took Texas fever," he said.

On Christmas Day, 1910, near Commerce, White married Nora Harbor. She died in 1971. They had one son, Horace, who died in 1970.

One grandson, Bobby Dale White, lives near Canyon. He has four great-grandchildren.

"In 1919 I quit farming and moved to Childress," White said. "I started working for the J.R. Scott Feed Store — only supposed to work several months — but ended work 22 1/2 years later"

After moving to Dallas for 18 months, he returned to Childress.

In 1947 White moved to Amarillo and began working for Bell Peoples, former mattress works. After retiring from there, he opened his own shoe repair business on 7th between Polk and Taylor.

"It was in the spring of 1972 that I really started working for the Lord," he said.

"I couldn't sleep, couldn't be still ... around 3 a.m. a small voice inside me asked me why I didn't make my own job," White said. "The voice said I wouldn't make any money, but would sure cure a lot of loneliness."

It was then that White began taking a community census, as he called it.

"Really, it was just a way for me to find out if a person was a Christian."

White covered the Sunrise, Humphreys Highland, Fairview and the Sanborn areas during the next several years.

"I hardly ever went out that I didn't have a profession of faith."

Everywhere White would go — and for that fact everywhere that he still goes — he asks people if they are a Christian.

"The last 7 1/2 years have been the most rewarding days that anyone could have," he said.

White has three books, containing more than 500 names of people who have made "a confession of faith" with his help.

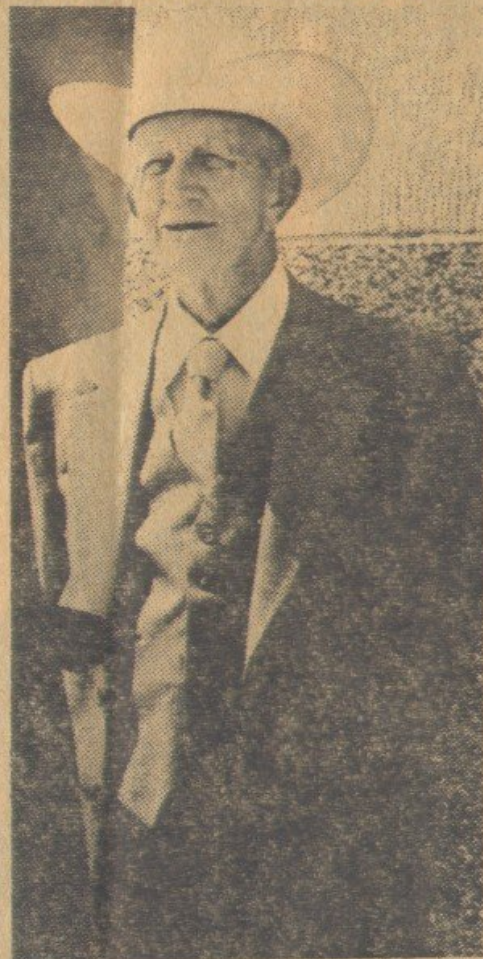
He has written and distributed more than 2,200 copies of a 13-page pamphlet titled "A Lesson on Soul Winning."

"Many people have made a profession of faith after reading that book," he said.

"When Christ left — he left the job of reconciliation to the church," White said. "Does he expect all the people in the world to go to the church or us to go to the people?"

For those who are Christians, White said, "Make it a habit to go to church ... if you are a Christian ... the Lord expects you there!"

A member of Grand Avenue Baptist Church, White said, "In 1972 I was looking for people who were lost ... or a Baptist who was not going to



A.B. WHITE

church ... and I'm still doing that today."

As he rubbed the fish-hook on his coat, representing a "Fisher of Men," a gleam entered his eyes as he looked at me and asked me what church I went to — and then — if I were a Christian.