

# Southeastern News

**Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary**

**Wake Forest, North Carolina 27587**

P. O. Box 712  
Phone (919) 556-3101

**RODNEY V. BYARD**  
Assistant to the President  
Home: 536 N. Wingate St.  
556-1485

February 2, 1982

## SEMINARY GROUP HELPS WIVES ADJUST

By: Craig Hardee, staff writer

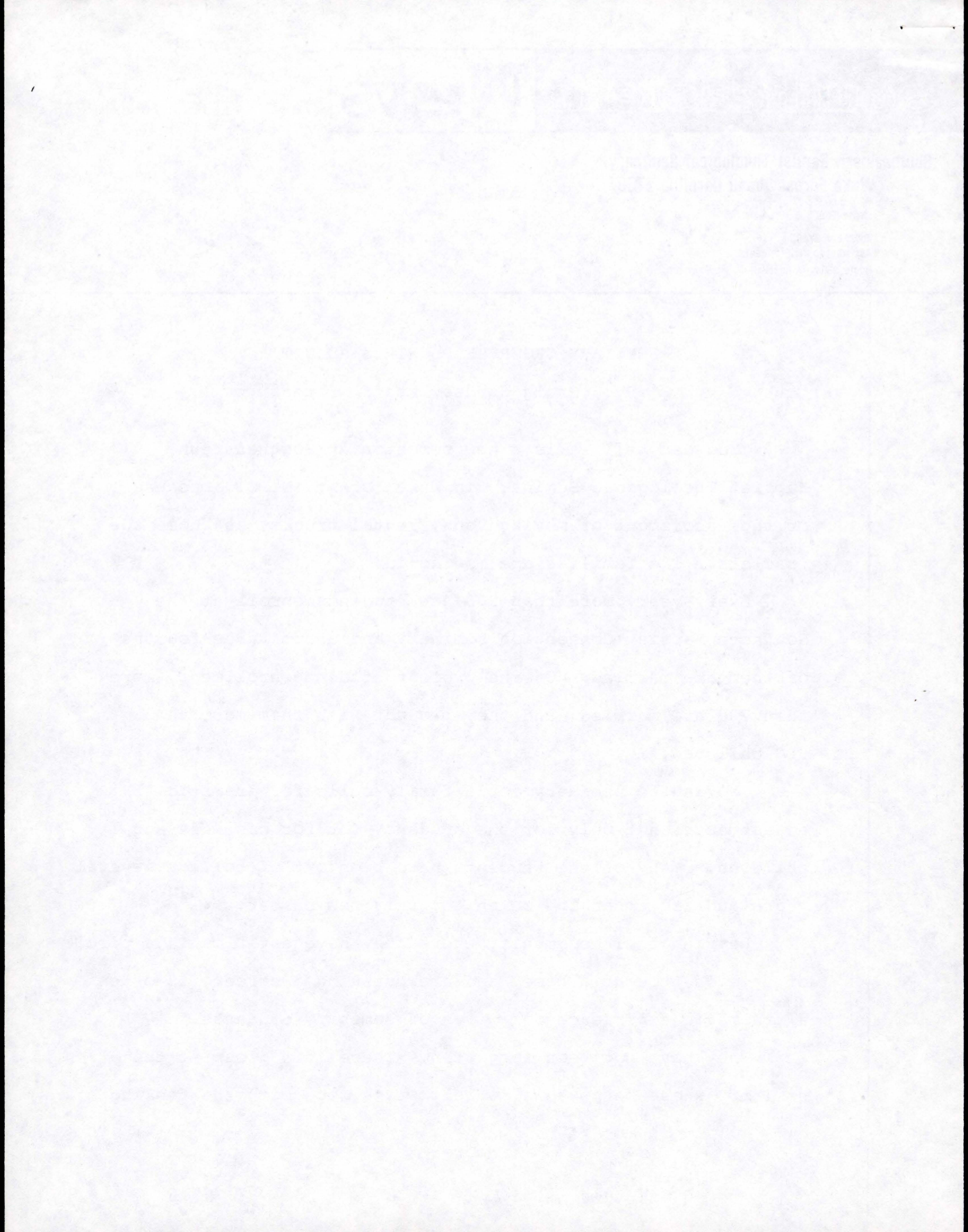
You can tell it is a new semester at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N. C., because of the assortment of moving vans, rental trucks, and homemade trailers. The families are moving in.

Every year, more than 300 new students enroll at the Southern Baptist Convention seminary and about three-fourths of them are married. Of the present student enrollment, more than 700 are married, and they brought with them more than 900 children.

Moving to seminary for a family calls for dramatic adjustments, not only for the student, but for his wife and children. Many of the students have been out of college several years and are embarking on an entirely new career.

Leaving their community where they have established a circle of friends, bought a home, and are pursuing a career, is often a traumatic experience for wives of seminary students.

They have not been forgotten. There is a group at the seminary whose purpose is to help wives cope with the feeling of



being overwhelmed by their new environment. The group has the simple title "Seminary Wives."

As its name implies, "Seminary Wives" is a fellowship of so-called "better halves" of seminarians. The group's task is to keep wives informed about the events and opportunities within the seminary community.

According to Angela Barker, president of the organization, "A primary purpose is to provide fellowship with other wives and share common needs and problems."

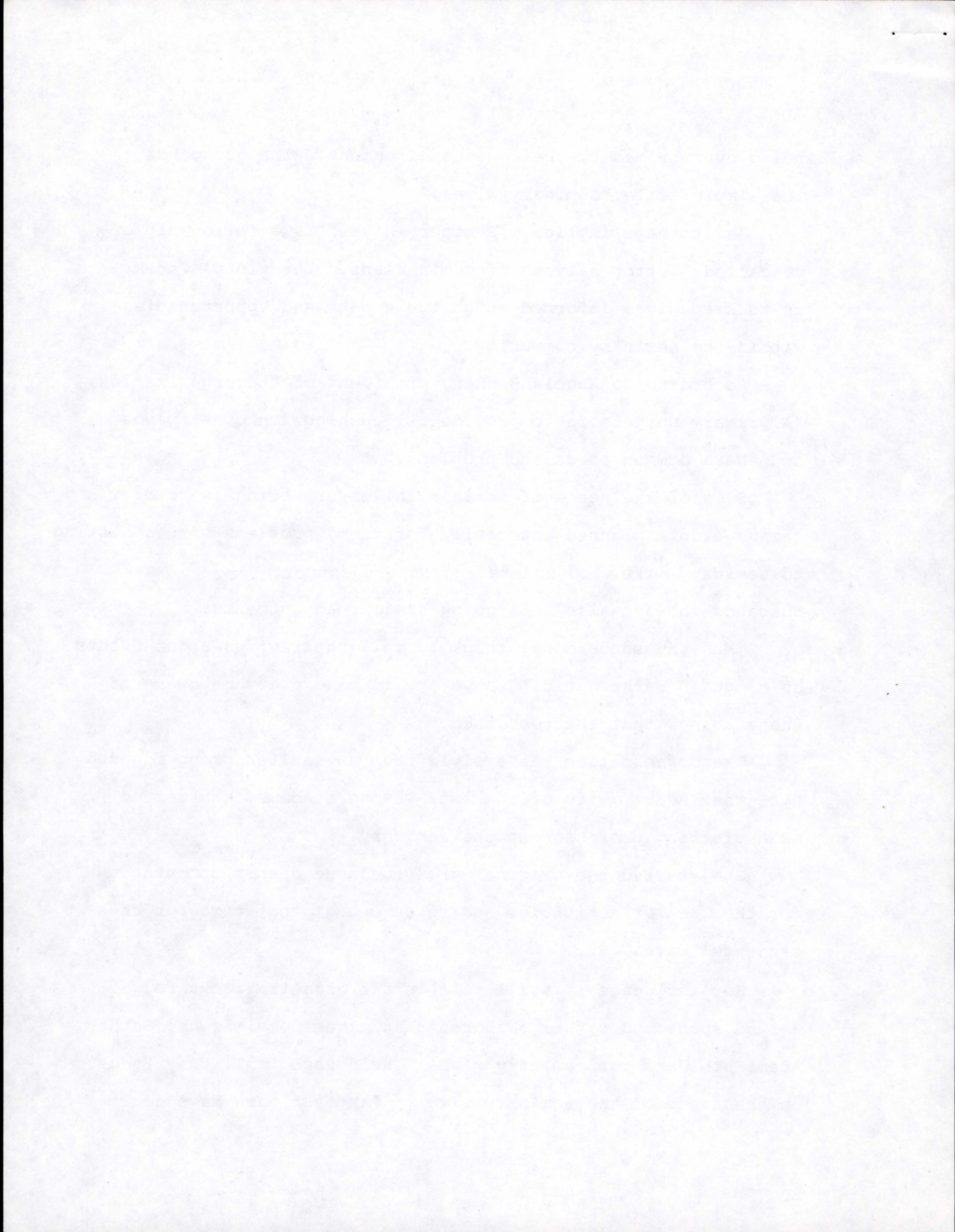
Some of the needs of seminary wives are being aware of campus events planned especially for them, problems with adjusting to seminary life, and understanding and support for husbands who are also undergoing similar adjustments.

"Many husbands don't think to tell their wives about events on campus," Barker said, "so we try to make everyone aware of those things that interest them."

The organization has evolved from an earlier group founded by Esther Adams, wife of the late Theodore Adams, who served as a visiting professor at the seminary.

She started the original group because of her concern for the lack of activities and resources at that time for the students' wives.

Her influence is still felt in the organization through a fund sponsored by her children that makes possible the Esther Adams seminars for seminary wives. Held each fall, they focus on the needs of the seminary wives. Past seminars have dealt



with such matters as coping skills for ministers' wives and personal spiritual development.

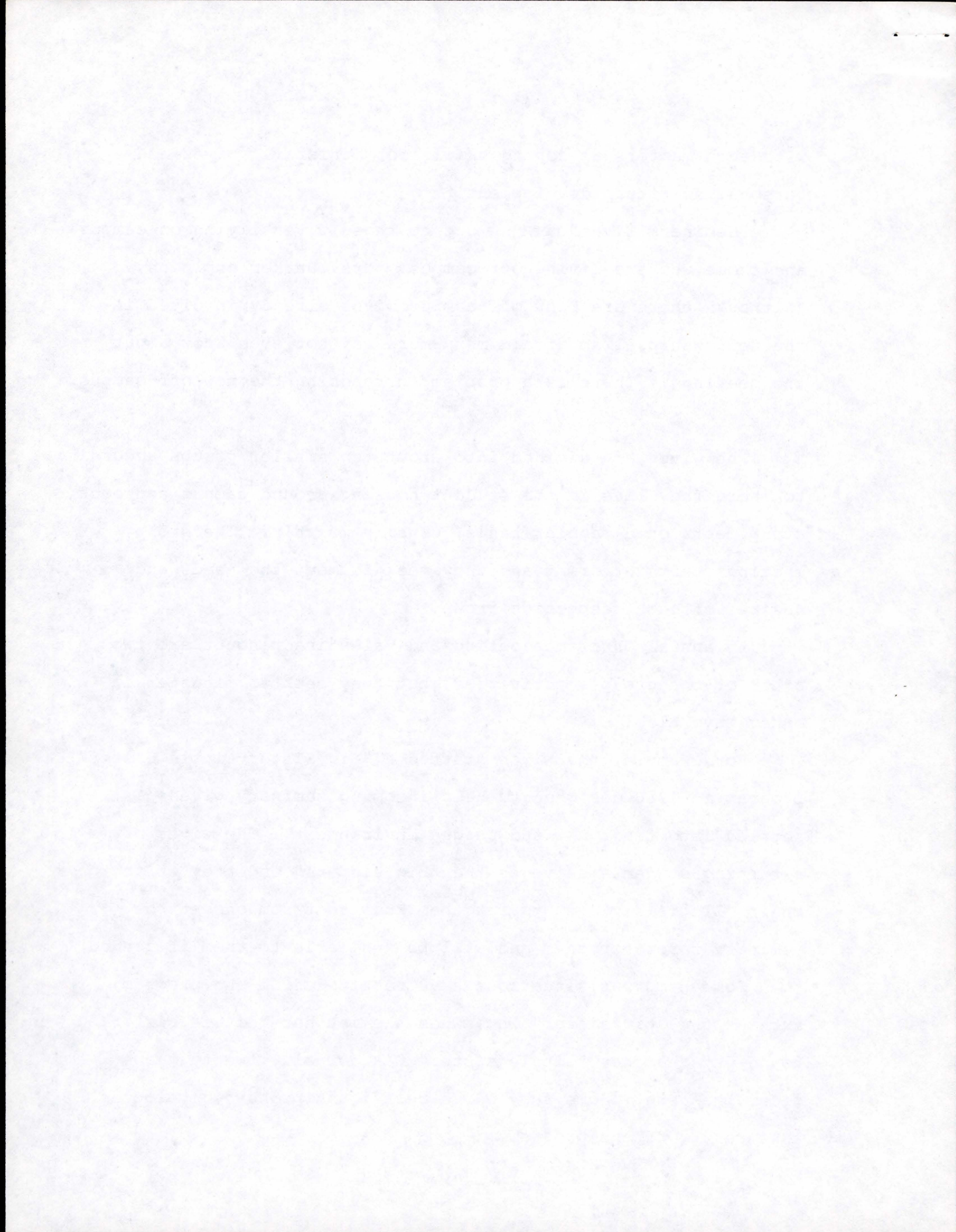
"Seminary Wives" reaches out to those wives living on campus and those who are living off-campus. Mrs. Barker explains, "Although there are many off-campus wives already involved in the fellowship, I am afraid many more may not even know about the meetings. There is a problem in reaching the new off-campus wives."

The wives are divided into about ten smaller groups according to where they live in the student housing around campus and each group meets on a regular basis, usually monthly. The group meetings vary in format and they seek to meet the needs and desires of each respective group.

An annual Christmas outing and Valentine banquet are two other of the group's activities, but they seek to minister in other ways also.

For example, the wives started a "Big Sister-Little Sister" program in 1980 designed to help incoming seminary wives get settled into their new and unique environment. The wives of returning students serve as the "big sisters" and they write to their "little sisters" to let them know that someone at the seminary cares for them and will be available to them if needed.

Some humorous situations have resulted from the program, such as the "big sister" who, when she met her "little sister," found out that her "little sister" was actually twenty years older than she. Some very close relationships have developed as a result of the program.



"Seminary Wives" also works with the Student Council in some of its projects and social events, adding "that special touch." They are visible in the seminary's Red Cross Bloodmobile campaigns, promoting, setting up and giving blood. In addition they frequently provide refreshments for meetings of the seminary's youth.

Supporting, building up, ministering and loving---that's "Seminary Wives" at Southeastern. Even though coming to seminary could be a major adjustment for many wives, "Seminary Wives" helps the newcomers fit right into their new community and life.

-SEBTS-

