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**Nurses Treat Thousands
In Nairobi Slum Clinic**

by R. J. Derwent

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--In the edge of a valley of mushrooming slum villages in Nairobi, Kenya, three Southern Baptist missionaries are trying to offer a better and healthier life to thousands of African youngsters.

Twice a week dozens of mothers, dressed in the colorful robes of several tribes, wait their turns outside the clinic under the scorching East Africa sun. On their backs or in their arms, snugly wrapped, they carry their babies. Once inside the tiny bare-walled room, the babies are given vitamins and, if they are ill, medicines or other needed treatment. Some of the mothers receive vitamins too.

Since it opened in January, the clinic has treated many hundreds of tiny patients, despite a pressing shortage of time and money. Whenever it is open, at least 50 mothers with their children squeeze into the room, three at a time. Sometimes the daily tally of patients is as high as 80, and it is not difficult to see why the number is growing.

Here in Mathare Valley, 65,000 people are crowded into a straggling series of mud-walled villages where the houses are separated by alleys so narrow that the passerby is in danger of injuring both shoulders on opposite rows of jagged-edged tin roofs. This slum valley is estimated to be the home of more than 30,000 children, many of them young babies. The clinic is the only one in the 2 1/2 miles of village communities.

The Mathare Valley shows symptoms of one of "new" Africa's toughest problems: the influx of country-dwellers into towns where there are no houses or jobs for them, and the gradual disappearance of the old rural way of life with the lack of a substitute way.

The missionary women who are trying to teach mothers how to give their babies a healthy start in life are doing an essential job. Until they came, nobody did it.

Facilities are poor. The lack of hygiene is appalling. Flies and dirt abound. Until recently the people drew their water from open streams running down through the villages; in the dry season there was sometimes no water at all.

The clinic is housed in a center, built by self-help workers, which includes a sewing room and a toy workshop. Each Wednesday and Friday the missionaries dispense medicines and vitamins supplied by the local Baptist association. They also offer something no less vital--advice to the young mothers.

The women who have cheerfully taken on this job are Mrs. Davis L. Saunders from Charleston, S.C., Mrs. Thomas A. Jones from Toccoa, Ga., and Mrs. Milton E. Cunningham Jr., from Texas City, Tex.

Mary Saunders went to Africa in 1951, Barbara Cunningham in 1957 and Nancy Jones in 1969. Mrs. Saunders and Mrs. Jones are registered nurses.

When I called at the clinic, the trio was struggling to cope with a room full of squalling infants and long-suffering mothers. Outside, a line of others waited in the fierce heat. Youngsters at one of the valley's do-it-yourself primary schools romped in the dust nearby.

The clinic was so cramped that the nurses could scarcely avoid jostling one another. When they opened the medicine cupboard door, it would bang against a heap of cardboard boxes full of packets of dried milk. The boxes were the only available seats.

As the mothers filed into the chaotic little room, Mrs. Cunningham weighed the patients. Across the room, but still within touching distance, the other two missionaries worked furiously with bottles, spoons, syringes, eyedroppers and other paraphernalia.

Mrs. Saunders, feeding a week-old infant with an eyedropper, said; "We're trying to get new mothers to bring their babies here once a week for vitamins. We often have to give the mothers vitamins, too, to help their milk. In a place like Mathare Valley, mothers' milk is the safest and best."

She broke off to advise a mother concerning the care of her baby. Then as the table at her side was crammed with bottles, measuring vessels, glasses, plastic containers and other equipment--she went down on one knee to record details of the baby's condition and the treatment given.

Upon leaving, each mother paid a nominal fee of one East African shilling (about 14 cents). Those who cannot pay, and there are quite a few who cannot, may have their babies treated free.

Soon it was time for the clinic to close. "I have one o'clock," said one of the missionaries, glancing at her watch. But outside, a crowd of mothers still waited patiently, keeping off the sun with umbrellas.

The clinic was very late closing that day.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: R. J. Derwent is a young English journalist who has been working in Kenya for four years.

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Baptists Find Out How
It Feels To Be A Beggar

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by James Lee Young

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--Thirty Baptist pastors, laymen, missionaries and students from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary near here found out personally how it feels to beg for food, and see a person pass by as if you weren't there.

The 30 participants in the Institute of Urban Studies sponsored by the seminary were dropped on the streets of San Francisco without money and asked to obtain food and transportation any way they could.

It was probably the most "devastating" experience of the institute, according to Francis M. DuBose, director of the institute and professor at Golden Gate Seminary in nearby Mill Valley, Calif., and George A. Torney III, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in San Francisco.

The institute offered a variety of learning experiences in an effort to communicate what is happening in America's cities and how the church can minister to the needs of people living in urban centers.

Institute participants encountered leaders in the black and Mexican-American struggles on their own home turf, participated in "rap" sessions on urban life with experts in the field, worshipped in widely-divergent churches seeking to reach urbanites, and toured trouble points in the city where the needs are overwhelming.

One of the participants, Joseph C. Strother, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in San Bernardino, Calif., described the impact of being a "beggar" during the institute.

"As I walked down Market Street in old clothes, unshaven and broke, I looked the people over," he said. "All my pride, personality and previous conditioning were pulling me back as I approached the first person and asked, 'Excuse me, will you share a quarter to help me get a meal?'"

"The man went on by as if I didn't exist, just as I have done a thousand times," Strother said.

As he walked around the city, Strother met a man named Bob who had just been discharged from the Merchant Marines. "He was drinking and had no money, so I tried to give him something--the encouragement to trust Jesus Christ, the only person who would not let either of us down," he added.

"In the park at Union Square, there were a lot of people begging--a few for money but most of them for attention and love. It saddened me to sit on benches next to retired, elderly men all dressed up in their blue suits, white shirts and outdated ties...with no place to go and no one who cares about them.

"As I ambled out of Union Square," Strother continued, "I overheard a familiar quotation: 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have I give thee.' Turning quickly, I watched a man extend a wine bottle to his brother."

After begging for his supper, Strother collected about \$2.50. "Fortunately some people did care...It gave me a great sense of security," he said.

Walking into a dingy cafe, he bought a 99 cent chicken dinner. "The waitress grumbled about having to work there," he observed. "A young but tired-looking brunette walked out with \$7.00 she had won playing the pinball machine. Upon leaving, a young blonde in the corner asked me crisply, 'Do you want a date?'"

The experience of being a beggar was not the only personal encounter with people of the city during the institute.

An art teacher from San Jose, Calif., Bob Mestemacher, staged an experiment with the pastor of a Bay area Baptist church that, according to Torney, "really caused some of the people in our group to think."

Unshaven and dirty-looking, Mestemacher sat on the steps of the church as members entered for the Sunday evening service. In his hand, he held a brown paper bag that looked like it might contain a bottle of wine. Actually, inside the bag was a Bible.

No one asked his name as he sat on the church steps. Indeed, few took notice that he was there, but passed him by sitting on the steps. Later, he slipped into the church and sat down on the back pew.

After a few introductory remarks by the pastor, the service was opened to anyone who wanted to speak.

Mestemacher stood up, identified himself and talked about whether or not the church was really meeting needs, or "whether we were just trying to get numbers and people into the church."

The pastor later said that at the moment Mestemacher stood, the reaction seemed to be, "Oh, my goodness, how did this guy get in here?"

There were other experiences aimed at allowing the participants to get the feel of the needs of the city. The group took in a drama session at "The Intersection" where the use of four-letter words offended some, but painted a clearer picture of the city and its grim harshness.

Mestemacher was one of those offended by the use of four-letter words in the drama. Later he told the group, "You know, I really don't understand myself. Here I can get so upset over a four-letter word and look at a ghetto and feel nothing."

Participants in the institute agreed, however, that they often for the first time felt deeply about the needs of the city.

"Nothing could make you more aware of what it is like to be without hope than to wear old clothes and see yourself melt into the crowd of hopelessness in a matter of a few minutes," Mestemacher said. He called it an experience of "the living dead."

John Click, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Wichita, Kan., said he found himself "feeling the frustrations of Mrs. Rogers at WAPAC (Western Addition People's Action Community), a black group...as she waged a lonely battle against entrenched power structures in the city.

"I felt her powerlessness," Click continued, "If I had been in her place, I wonder how long I would have remained off the streets and refrained from violent demonstrations."

DuBose and Torney said they felt the Institute, co-sponsored by the seminary and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, has far-reaching possibilities for methodology in theological training.

It means less lecturing and more getting into the middle of what's happening, DuBose said. "If we don't have this dimension, then we're going to miss something very vital and basic...if seminary training is to be meaningful," he said.

The emphasis was on less lecturing and more encounter. Participants played a simulated game building an entire city on paper, and the players discovered some startling facts about themselves, Torney said. "We found we messed up the city worse than the politicians."

The group also visited the Mission Coalition Organization where a political force of Anglo, Mexican-American, Oriental, and black groups works for the Mission District in the corridors of city government.

They saw a multi-media view of San Francisco which Torney prepared "not for tourists but for missionaries." They also visited the Christian World Liberation Front at the University of California in Berkeley and toured the North Beach area where barkers and hustlers vie for paying customers at nudie shows.

They engaged in dialogue with the author of Black Rage, Price Cobbs, a psychiatrist at the University of California. Other resource personnel included Robert Lee, professor at San Francisco Theological Seminary and author of Cities and Churches, and Mr. Wendell Belew, director of the Missions for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Impact of the overall experience was expressed by Golden Gate student William H. Smith of Owensboro, Ky., who said that for the first time he felt he really was being prepared "for the job of ministry I want to do."