

July 27, 1971

## **Christian Service Corps Worker Gives Irontown Church Strength**

IRONTOWN, Ohio (BP)--When Lamar O'Bryant came to Irontown Baptist Chapel two years ago, four members made up the congregation. He and his wife Joyce and their two sons doubled the congregation.

Now the church membership has nearly quadrupled to 31 members, and its recent Vacation Bible School enrolled 141 persons. Other church activities have grown rapidly, with 70 attending Sunday School, 38 involved in Royal Ambassadors and 26 in Acteens.

O'Bryant, now pastor of the church, came to Irontown as a Christian Service Corps Volunteer through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. The Christian Service Corps, a completely volunteer program, is designed to involve laymen and women in mission work on either a short or long-term basis.

O'Bryant left a prosperous position as superintendent of a building construction company in Atlanta to go to Irontown, an industrial town of 16,000 people.

As a CSC (as they are usually called) volunteer, O'Bryant provides his own livelihood and his own transportation to and from his mission field.

The O'Bryants are two of 70 concerned Southern Baptists who have volunteered as Christian Service Corpsmen. These volunteers participate in every area of Baptist work--survey workers, Vacation Bible School directors, interim pastors, evangelism leaders, literacy workers and creational leaders, construction workers--the list goes on and on.

Fifty-five layworkers are involved in the CSC short-term program in which a person serves on a mission field from two to ten weeks anytime during the year. Twenty-three layworkers are active long-term corpsmen. The volunteer in this case, moves to a mission field, takes a job, and remains as long as he wishes, from one year to a lifetime.

The department of special mission ministries of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board processes the applications of volunteers. Information is sent to a missionary contact who then helps the volunteer secure secular employment and housing.

Most of the CSC workers go to the Northeast. Although the volunteer may request a certain area, volunteers, especially long-term, are encouraged to work in the pioneer mission areas--the Northeast, Midwest, Northwest, Alaska and Hawaii.

"There is no one geographic location where we assign people," said Don Hammonds, secretary of the board's special mission ministries. "If they have a preference we try to locate them there. We encourage the volunteers to go to areas where leadership is needed."

Volunteer leadership also is needed in the area of summer missions, Hammonds said. Each summer the special mission ministries department involves more than 850 college students for ten weeks in work on a mission field.

"An older CSC volunteer can sometimes add maturity to summer mission work," Hammonds said. "Where there is a need for student summer mission work there is also a need for other volunteers like the CSC."

"Really we are in an area that is untapped--the area of laymen," he said. "They don't have to be highly educated and in many cases don't have to hold important places in their home church."

Hammonds said the possibilities of volunteer service is endless.

"Lawyers could go into an area and be available for legal aid; journalist could go into an area and provide his skills in communication, a movie producer could film an area and through television make the local situation known; pastors could spend a week or two as evangelists--there are sources of people seldom thought of," he said.

The sources of the Christian Service Corps--the Layman--is indeed untapped. And the source of his ministry--the mission field--is just as untapped," Hammonds said.

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W. R. Tolbert, Former BWA President,  
Installed as President of Liberia

7/27/71

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON (BP)--William R. Tolbert Jr., a Baptist clergyman, was installed as president of the Republic of Liberia in Monrovia following the death of President William V.S. Tubman in London.

Tolbert, who had been vice president of Liberia since 1951, was president of the Baptist World Alliance from 1965-1970. The Alliance is a fellowship organization composed of Baptist groups in 124 countries with a membership of 31 million.

As president of the worldwide Baptist organization, Tolbert travelled widely, touching every continent. He often combined official state visits with a strong Christian witness.

In July 1970, Tolbert presided over the 12th Baptist World Congress in Tokyo, Japan. He had been elected president of the worldwide Baptist organization in July 1965, at the 11th Baptist World Congress in Miami Beach, Fla.

At the time of his election as president of the BWA, Tolbert was vice president of Liberia. He was also pastor of two Baptist churches, president of the convention of Baptists in Liberia and the father of eight children. When the vote of Baptist Congress was announced, Tolbert said, "I commit myself as a servant of God and an instrument in his hands. I recognize my inescapable duty to do all that lies within my power to bring all men unto God through our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

At the same congress in Miami, Tolbert addressed the BWA Commission on Evangelism and Missions. "Christianity is on trial," he said. "The church must show its dynamic in modern life. One way we can do this is to let the gospel shine through the whole life. Too often we have isolated Christianity into one area of our lives and operated on different principles in the areas of economics, politics and social life. Christianity must not remain outside; it must be a part of every area of life," he said.

Throughout the five years of his presidency, Tolbert travelled across his own African continent to both East and West Europe, to the islands of the Caribbean, to North and South America, to Asia and to the Southwest Pacific. It was unavoidable that a man of his political position must always wear the hat of his high office and newspapers everywhere took note of his visit to both state officialdom and Baptist church groups.

When Tolbert visited Israel a few years ago in his official government capacity, officials of the Jewish state asked him what they could do to make his visit more interesting. "I would like to attend a Baptist service while I am here," he replied. So Israeli officials hurriedly contacted a Baptist missionary and set up arrangements to escort Tolbert to the next scheduled service. When he was asked to speak, he told the congregation--including his Jewish hosts, "I appreciate the opportunity to witness for my Lord in every place I visit."

Tolbert was born May 13, 1913, at Bensonville, Liberia. He received his education in the public schools and graduated from Liberia College in 1934, that same school, now the University of Liberia, made him a doctor of civil law in 1952.

Tolbert entered public life at the age of 23, as disbursing officer in the treasury department of the Liberian government and later served eight years as a member of the Liberian House of Representatives. He was elected vice president of Liberia and president of the Senate in 1951, and was re-elected in 1955, 1959, 1963, 1967 and 1971.

Tolbert . was 40 years old and already vice president of the country when he asked the Baptist church at Bensonville to ordain him to the ministry. He has since served two churches, the Zion Praise Congregation at Bensonville, and the Mount Sinai Church which he founded in Liberia's Todee District.

He was elected president of the Liberian Baptist Missionary and Education Convention, Inc., in 1958, and still holds that post. Before becoming president of the BWA, he served as vice president of that organization from 1960 to 1965.

Tolbert is married to the former Victoria A. David, daughter of a distinguished jurist. Mrs. Tolbert serves as president of the Baptist women's work in Liberia and frequently addresses international religious gatherings.

Tolbert had planned to attend the annual meetings of the BWA Executive Committee at Wolfville, N.S., Canada, August 2-6. He notified the alliance office two weeks ago however that because President Tubman was making plans to be in Europe, he must therefore remain in Liberia during the President's absence. Death came to Tubman in London.