

# (BP)

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

## ---FEATURES

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460 James Robertson Parkway

Nashville, Tennessee 37219

Telephone (615) 244-2355

W. C. Fields, Director

Jim Newton, Assistant Director

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Deaf Student from Kenya  
Finds Hope for Education

By Jimmy Ballard

SEYMOUR, Tenn. (BP)--A year ago, Michael Mwangi Ndurmo of Kenya had little hope of obtaining the college education he so desired.

Michael is deaf. He has been unable to hear since he was seven years of age. He doesn't even know for sure how he lost his hearing, although he thinks it was in some sort of accident.

Yet Michael, 20, completely repudiates the old myth of the "deaf and dumb." A few minutes in his presence and he impresses you as bright, intelligent and charming.

But in Kenya, he had little hope for achieving full potential, for there are no schools in Kenya equipped to teach deaf students.

Today, Michael can see a light at the end of the tunnel. He began a new adventure in learning this summer when he entered Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy here, a Baptist secondary education school located about 20 miles from Knoxville, Tenn.

Harrison-Chilhowee last year began a new college preparatory program for deaf students, and is the only school of its kind in the nation with such a program.

For Michael, it is not only an opportunity to study, but an opportunity to learn a new language---the manual language of "signs."

In Kenya, fingerspelling is rare. Their "signs" are more or less gesticulations, with fewer vocabulary words than signs used for the deaf here.

Michael thus had little hope for obtaining a college education. Most American schools for the deaf do not admit deaf foreign students who have not been trained in manual communication.

He was attending Nyeri Baptist High School in Kenya when Lowry Mallory, a Southern Baptist Missionary and headmaster of the school, became acquainted with Michael. Mallory was impressed with the young student's intellectual drive, and his Christian commitment.

Mallory, now on furlough at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, and Michael's benefactor, J. W. Ichangi in Kenya, initiated the long search in America for a suitable school for Michael.

It was Mallory who heard about Harrison-Chilhowee's deaf education program, initiated last year with five deaf student attending classes with hearing students with the aid of an interpreter-tutor. Impressed with the school's catalogue, he contacted the academy's consultant to the deaf education program, William E. Davis, minister to the deaf at First Baptist Church, Knoxville.

"I believe that you have more to offer Michael than any other school I know about," Mallory told Davis. "I am very excited about the possibilities, and I feel that at last God has led us to the right place for this young man. It is a small miracle that I learned of you."

To further help Michael, Buck Donaldson, the academy's public relations director and former Southern Baptist missionary to Tanzania, was prepared to swap notes with Michael in Swahili to aid in communication with the staff.

When he arrived here in late June, Michael surprised the school's official with proficient use of English, in written form, that is. He makes a few attempts to speak, but they are meager,

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Donaldson said. His command of English, however, is excellent, due to the help of English teachers in the Kenya schools. Donaldson said.

By September, Michael will know four languages: Swahili, English, Kikuyu (his mother tongue), and signs.

This summer, he is being taught the deaf sign language by Mrs. Irma Kleeb, formerly of Fort Worth, the schools interpreter-tutor. He is also taking algebra in summer school with normal hearing students. In the fall session, he will be able to read the signs of the interpreter in the classroom.

About 25 deaf students are expected to enroll in the fall at Harrison-Chilhowee. In addition to Mrs. Kleeb, two more interpreter-tutors serve on the staff.

Deaf educators in America have been arguing for years over methodologies of teaching language to students who cannot hear sounds. Some argue in favor of teaching lip reading to deaf students, while others contend that sign language is the best approach.

According to Mrs. Kleeb, Michael's language progress is astonishing, compared to his peers in America. He is skipping the normal remedial English and reading courses necessary for most deaf students at Chilhowee, entering the 11th grade prepared academically for any course in the curriculum.

An "A" and "B" student at the Nyeri Baptist High School in Kenya, Michael ranked eighth in a class of 38 students despite his inability to hear.

At that conference, Michael also watched carefully the bewildering signs used by deaf people, and came away determined to master this language of more than 1,000 signs. He had never before seen deaf people communicate this way.

His determination increased when he visited the University of Tennessee in nearby Knoxville and met Peter Mba, a deaf Nigerian Ph.D graduate who will return soon to his country to teach deaf students.

Michael is frequently asked, like most foreign students, about his impressions of America and his family and life in Kenya. Replying in written script, he says:

"Dad works in a hospital at Gilgil. Mom stays at our farm, looking after it. I am the fourth born out of 11. Our farm is on a beautiful landscape on the slopes of Mt. Kenya, the second-highest peak in Africa. There the weather is cooler and nicer. It also suits the growing of crops such as tea, rice, maize, and particularly coffee."

As for America, he says he loves it--especially the American food that is common also to Kenya. But he is sensitive to frozen ice cream.

Most of all, he is grateful to Baptists for helping him obtain the education he so desires, and to God for leading him here.

On his arrival here, as Michael rode in the car from the airport with academy president Hubert Smothers and Knoxville deaf minister Davis, Michael could not hear what Davis said, but perhaps he might have felt the spirit of the remark.

"I have the feeling that I am about to see God at work," Davis commented.

BP PHOTO mailed to Baptist state papers

Mexican Boy, Texas Man  
Forge Bond of Love

8/10/72

By Robert O'Brien

LUFKIN, Tex. (BP)--The cultures of Salvador Villalpando and John Duke are as different as the dusty streets of Matamoros, Mexico, and the rich, piney woods of East Texas near here.

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But the bond between the two--which began in Harlingen, Tex., last May and has been forged throughout the summer here--uniquely bridges that gap.

Because one man cared, a boy, whose chances looked dim, may one day return to his people as the teacher he hopes to be.

Diploma in hand from Harlingen's Valley Baptist Academy, Salvador stepped from the platform last May moments after graduation.

But, instead of joy, worry clouded his horizon.

His mind whirled with plans to replace the summer job which had fallen through--the job he had to have to afford matriculation at East Texas Baptist College in Marshall, Tex., in September.

"Salvador," interrupted James Allison, the academy's development director, "meet John Duke. He wants to take you to Lufkin, Tex., this summer and find you a job."

Surprised, Salvador looked into the eyes of the "anglo" insurance agent for a moment--and agreed.

"I had just asked Duke, minutes before, if he could find some help for Salvador in Lufkin," Allison marvels. "He said, 'James, I'm not going to wait until I get home. I want to take him with me now.'"

Soon, Salvador had a job, offered by Ernest Hudgens of the Jewell Hudgens Machine Co. He found help and friendship from Duke's and Hudgens' fellow members at Lufkin's First Baptist Church.

Hudgens has offered to write Salvador a bonus check if he doesn't have enough for school.

But what amazed Salvador the most was his reception by the Duke family.

"I expected Mr. Duke to find me a room somewhere," Salvador says. "But he and Mrs. Duke invited me into their home to share a room with their son.

"You almost never hear of anyone doing something like this," Salvador softly reflected. "It's the most wonderful experience I have ever had."

"We love that boy," Duke says. "He's been a real blessing to us--and a good influence on my son."

Duke, an active member of the statewide Texas Baptist Men's organization of laymen, happily accepted the chance to invite someone of a different culture to live with his family.

"As a Christian," he explains, "I should care about people Christ cares about. As I read it--that's everyone of every description.

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Nigerian Baptist Leader  
Sees Threat in Communism

8/10/72

RICHMOND (BP)--The president of the Nigerian Baptist Convention sees Muslims as "allies with Christians" against what he calls the peril of Communism in his country.

"The growth of Islam (in Nigeria) is not a problem to Christians," declared E. O. Akingbala while visiting friends in the United States.

Forty-five per cent of Nigeria's millions profess Islam and 35 per cent, Christianity, he said.

Akingbala, pastor of First Baptist Church, Kaduna, stopped in Richmond to visit Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials after attending a meeting of the Executive Committee of

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the Baptist World Alliance in Kingston, Jamaica.

"The peril of Communism in Nigeria is the thing we have to face right now," he declared. "It is an undercurrent movement. Communism is atheistic; we fear it. Life in a communistic state (would be) worthless; and denial of God--denial of freedom of worship--we fear more than the civil war just past."

He went on to say that as much as his countrymen dread any repetition of the horrors of war, he is personally willing to risk even another war to retain religious liberty.

Akingbala cited two methods used by Communists to influence the Nigerian mind. One is to offer scholarships to Nigerian students for study in Russian universities. Another is the sending of "experts" to give technical assistance in fields--such as petroleum engineering--where too few Nigerians have the necessary skills to carry on the work alone.

Chinese and Russian experts, he said, come not only with their technical know-how, but with their ideologies as well.

The Baptist leader sees U. S. friendship with Great Britain as an advantage in American relationships with his country because Nigerian ties with the British are still strong. He added that Nigeria's need is such that investors from whatever country will not be driven out.

Akingbala, a member of the Yoruba ethnic group, said he was born to pagans, but saw his mother converted to Christianity.

He studied for three years at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary at Ogbomosho, then received the bachelor of arts degree from Virginia Union University here and a master's degree from Oberlin (Ohio) College.

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BP PHOTO to be mailed to state Baptist paper editors.

Louisiana Board Votes  
To Continue Academy

8/10/72

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--The Executive Board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, in a called meeting described by observers as "emotion packed," voted to assure continued operation of Acadia Baptist Academy in Southwest Louisiana for at least one year, with approval of requests for loans for operational costs up to \$120,000.

The board voted to adopt a motion approving loans "for deficit expenditures up to \$120,000 to allow for opening of the school this fall and the complete and forthcoming school year."

Reason given by the board and school for the need for deficit financing was "lower enrollment and financial difficulty."

Enrollment, the board was told, has dropped from about 200 students two years ago to an anticipated enrollment of 77 students this fall.

One reason for the enrollment decreases, a convention official noted, is the increasing number of Baptist churches that are operating their own private secondary schools, thus cutting down on the number of prospective students for the academy.

Located in a rural setting near Enice, La., in the heart of the French Cajun country, Acadia Baptist Academy was originally founded 50 years ago for the purpose of training south Louisiana French converts who felt the call to the Baptist ministry but lacked formal training. The academy is a boarding high school owned by the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

During the convention's Executive Board meeting, trustees of the school requested support from the convention for three future years of operation.

The motion that was adopted would assure the school's operation for one year, but did not go beyond that, officials noted. A special committee was asked to study the future role of

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the school and report back to the regular September board meeting.

In an open letter to Louisiana Baptists published in the convention's weekly newspaper, the Baptist Message, the president of the academy's board of trustees said that the school's trustees were forced to consider suspending operations for 1972-73 "due to low enrollment projections and the hopelessly high financial deficit."

Gene Christian, president of the academy's board, said that the operational deficit as of Sept. 1, 1972, would be approximately \$20,000. Operation for another session with the present enrollment figures would increase the deficit by about \$100,000 to \$115,000.

An estimated 100 visitors from across the state attended the called board meeting here, many of them expressing hopes that the school would remain open. Many of the visitors were residents of the Eunice area where the school is located.

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Baptists Going to Mexico  
Can Get Special Service

8/10/72

QUERETARO, Mexico (BP)--Baptist groups visiting Mexico to learn about Southern Baptist mission work there may now benefit from the services of a mission education coordinator.

Missionary Richard Steel, stationed here, has been named to that newly created post by the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Mexico.

Steel says his primary purpose in receiving visiting groups will be to present missions and demonstrate how Southern Baptist fraternal representatives function in an indigenous work.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Mexico are called "fraternal representatives."

First priority for scheduling will be given to groups connected with Southern Baptist agencies such as the Woman's Missionary Union and the Brotherhood Commission, says Steel. As scheduling permits, other groups will be accepted from Baptist state conventions, associations and individual churches.

Because Mexico is nearer the United States than other mission fields, many Southern Baptists are able to visit Mexico to see their missionaries at work, he pointed out. In recent years the number of visitors has created a need for someone to take on the responsibility of the new mission education coordinator.

Although his new job will take up much of his time, Steel will continue serving the Zuriel Baptist Association as field missionary.

Interest groups may contact him at Apartado 786, Queretaro, Qro., Mexico.

Groups and individuals interested in rendering services of various kinds while touring or living in Mexico should contact Eugene Grubbs, consultant on laymen overseas, at the SBC Foreign Mission Board, P. O. Box 6597, Richmond, Va. 23230.

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Missionary to Nigeria,  
Mrs. Legg, Dies at 42

8/10/72

MT. PLEASANT, Tex. (BP)--Mrs. L. Gene Legg, 42, Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria died Aug. 9 in a local hospital. He had suffered from a brain tumor since late 1970.

Funeral services were held Aug. 10 at First Baptist Church here, with burial in Forest Lawn Cemetery.

Mr. and Mrs. Legg and their three children had made their home in Mt. Pleasant since early last year when they returned to the states because of her illness.

Appointed by the SBC Foreign Mission Board in 1956, the Leggs were assigned to the

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Baptist Hospital in Kontagora for 10 years, 1960-70, leaving only when a personnel shortage necessitated the hospital's closing.

Mrs. Legg, a registered nurse, was hospital matron, nursing instructor and pharmacist. Her husband was business manager and maintenance supervisor.

In Mid-1966, during a period of political unrest, Mrs. Legg and the children were evacuated from Kontagora to Ibadan, in Southern Nigeria, where they remained for a short time.

A Mt. Pleasant native, the former Mary Leigh Anderson received the bachelor of arts degree from Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and the bachelor of science degree from Baylor's nursing school. Before missionary appointment she was nursing supervisor and instructor at the hospital in which she died.

The Legg children--Beth, 19, Lloyd, 15, and Leigh, nearly 7-- reside here with their father at 607 Redbud.

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HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SBC

LYNN MAY HO  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
127 9TH AVE. NO.  
NASHVILLE TN 37203