

May 15, 1974

"Sand and Sickness,
Death and Despair"

By Ruth Fowler

MARADI, Niger (BP)--Rachel Bandy wakes up each morning to a world of sand and sickness, death and despair. In the midst of it she finds hope for a people she has come to love.

Miss Bandy, a Southern Baptist missionary journeyman nurse, is assigned to the famine-stricken Republic of Niger along with missionary Physician Walter M. Moore and two missionary couples.

Dr. Moore, working 200 miles north of here at Dakoro, and Miss Bandy, stationed in Maradi, are battling the effects of a drought which has engulfed West Africa for two years. The lives of 24,000 refugees in Maradi hang in the balance as part of this battle is waged here.

"I have found the work very heartbreaking and frustrating at times, yet I still love it," Miss Bandy stated. "The refugees are very responsive and very grateful for what we do for them. They're a very congenial group of people.

"Families come and go quickly. One day you may have a patient and the next day go back and the whole cornstalk house will be gone," she said. "One thing this makes me realize is that we have a congregation of people here from all over Niger. They come from every corner, as far north as you can go. When this is over and they are able to leave here, they will go to all corners of this nation. Who knows what will become of the seed planted here?"

She spoke of many things she had seen--people learning to use water pots instead of water skins; people who have never lived in a house, building one of cornstalks; women pounding grass, straw or cornstalks into food; sand as far as you can see; cornstalk stubs in a row where there used to be a garden; and people whose whole livelihood has been cows and goats who have now lost even that to the drought.

"My heart goes out to these people as it hasn't to any other people," she said, "because I've seen their efforts to try to save their family members and themselves and their love for anyone who helps them."

Miss Bandy's day begins at 6:30 a.m. Because she was transferred from Ghana to meet an emergency need, she doesn't speak Hausa, the local language. Often one of the missionary wives makes the rounds with her.

Another of her helpers is Abubakar, a 14-year-old boy. Abubakar speaks no English, but "through my hand gestures and things he's been told," Miss Bandy says, "he can understand what I want him to do."

Dressing wounds, performing minor surgery, changing bandages and distributing liquids and medicines are her basic medical responsibilities. She goes from hut to hut, seeing the critically ill first. She has also prepared health talks to be translated into Hausa to teach mothers how to care for their children.

Many of the people are working hard too. They make mats and stools to sell. They do anything they can to help.

Local government officials are involved in daily grain distribution efforts. They are trying very hard to feed the people but have inadequate supplies, according to Miss Bandy.

I've seen an elderly lady who has been standing in line for hours finally come out with a small amount of grain wrapped in a piece of her own cloth," she said. "The emotion was in her face. She had some food for her family. She had a difficult time keeping tears from streaming down her face."

The task of Miss Bandy and the other missionaries is enormous, and results of their efforts are not always immediately obvious. But their faith remains strong, they assert.

"At first it was very difficult for me to rest because all the impressions I have keep going through my head, but now I feel that I'm here to work and I'll do the best I can. I'll just have to do my work and pray...and let God do the rest."

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Ruth Fowler is a staff writer for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's press office.

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Alabama Tornado Relief
Exceeds \$250,000

5/15/74

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--With additional funds yet to come, Alabama Baptists have made available \$250,707 for disaster relief to aid victims of the April 3 tornadoes that devastated sections of north Alabama.

George E. Bagley, executive secretary of the Alabama Baptist Convention Executive Board, said gifts from churches and individuals thus far total \$213,706.84.

In addition, the Alabama Baptist Convention has made available \$26,000 for the relief effort; the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, \$10,000; and the Baptist World Alliance, \$1,000.

Financial assistance is being made available through Baptist associational missions directors in affected areas, working with local missions committees.

Household items and food in the Baptist relief effort are being received at the Baptist convention building in Montgomery and at Cullman First Baptist Church, Moulton Baptist Church, and Harvest Baptist Church, near Huntsville.

Ira Myers of Montgomery is chairman of the Alabama Baptist disaster relief committee. Earl Potts, church ministries director for Alabama Baptists, is coordinator.

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BAPTIST PRESS

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May 15, 1974

Criswell Will Urge Name
Change Committee at SBC

DALLAS (BP)--W. A. Criswell, a former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president, will present a motion at the 117th annual SBC meeting here, June 11-13, that a committee be appointed to study the possibility of changing the SBC's name and make recommendations.

Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, told Baptist Press he will discuss his plan at a dinner meeting of former SBC presidents and current president, Owen Cooper, Monday night, June 10, at the Statler Hilton Hotel, the convention's headquarters hotel.

He said no exact wording for his motion has been drafted but that he would probably suggest the name Continental Baptist Convention as a possibility for a committee to recommend as a new name for the nation's largest non-Catholic evangelical denomination.

"I favor Continental," Criswell said in an interview, "because others such as General, National and American have all been pre-empted by other Baptist bodies."

Criswell's concern about the name of the 12.3 million-member, 36,600-church denomination surfaced in an article he prepared for publication in the Baptist Standard, news publication of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. It was the last in a series by ex-SBC presidents run by Standard editor, John J. Hurt, who editorially supported Criswell in the same issue.

"The plain and simple truth of the matter is that the Southern Baptist Convention is no longer the Southern Baptist Convention," Criswell wrote. "It is Northern and Western and Eastern as well as Southern."

"We have churches in all 50 states, and we are growing in these areas every day. Why not change the name so that it more nearly describes what we actually are? While President of the convention (1969 and 1970) I would have done it if I could have. I would still do so if I could."

Criswell's Standard article stopped short of saying he would make such a motion, although he confirmed in the interview that he would.

In both his article and the interview, Criswell, known a staunch conservative, disagreed with the view he said some hold that the name Southern Baptist Convention does not refer to a geographical location but to a conservative, doctrinal position.

"Tell me honestly," he wrote, "could not the same conservative, doctrinal position characterize us by another name? The old Northern Baptist Convention became the American Baptist Churches, but the people in their doctrinal position remained just the same" as they were before the change, he said.

He said the name Continental Baptist Convention "would include us all from Maine to California, from Alaska to Hawaii and it could include, he continued, those "churches in Canada who cooperate with us. . . .

"In doctrine, in faithfulness to the Word of God, in evangelistic outreach and in zeal for the conversion of the lost to Christ, I pray that we shall ever remain the same. But in methods, approaches and abilities to use new and more effective means, I could pray that we be up to the latest minute, abreast of the times, serving our Lord in our generation," he wrote.

Criswell acknowledged in the interview that the "same prejudices (linking 'Southern' to a doctrinal position) which have destroyed our ability to change our name in past attempts" will be a factor in Dallas.

But he said that if Southern Baptist state papers and other media and leaders of Southern Baptist agencies would support the move and explain it carefully, Southern Baptists would appoint the committee to study the possibility and the name change would eventually occur.

Hurt's editorial noted, "Our preference might not be confined to Criswell's 'Continental Baptist Convention' nor do we think it is that or nothing insofar as he is concerned."

But the editorial enthusiastically supported the name change and commented that Hurt had "tried several times" to launch an effort to get action on a name change "without a hint of success."

"Those who deal with the secular press," the Baptist editor said, "have never satisfactorily explained that 'Southern' label on our convention. It is a bit difficult, in fact impossible, to argue 'Southern' is a doctrinal distinction when Webster's dictionary confines itself to geographical terminology.

"Anybody want to join us in urging Criswell to make a motion at the convention for a committee to study and recommend?" the editorial concluded.

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African Famine Spreads;
Mission Board Responds

5/15/74

RICHMOND (BP)--During its May meeting, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board responded once again to needs created by spreading famine conditions in Africa with appropriations of \$30,969 in relief funds.

In other action, the board named a new field representative for Eastern Africa and approved the transfer of Mr. and Mrs. Earl R. Martin, missionaries, from Tanzania to the Malagasy Republic where they will begin Southern Baptist mission work.

The board also heard reports from its executive secretary, Baker J. Cauthen, and other staff members.

The Martins' transfer becomes effective Aug. 1, but they won't begin their new assignment until after their furlough and a period of language study in France.

John R. Cheyne, missionary to Africa for 20 years, was named field representative for Eastern Africa. He will assume the new responsibilities Aug. 1.

As field representative, Cheyne will provide a personal link between the board and about 280 missionaries in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

In recent months the famine in Africa has spread to include parts of several countries where Southern Baptist missionaries serve. In light of that fact, the board appropriated \$9,000 for famine relief in Ghana, \$5,000 for relief work in Kenya, \$5,000 for relief through the Baptist World Alliance and an additional \$11,969 for famine relief in West Africa, which came from funds designated to the Foreign Mission Board by Fairfield Baptist Church, New Orleans, after it liquidated its holdings and ceased to exist.

This is in addition to special gifts from churches and individuals which have been channeled through the Foreign Mission Board in recent months.

"The response of individuals and churches to news releases concerning need for famine relief has been gratifying," said H. Cornell Goerner, the board's secretary for West Africa. "Almost every day brings checks and letters indicating concern and prayer support."

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He reported a total of \$22,818 in special gifts received during April designated for relief work in the Niger Republic. During the n same month, an additional \$5,000 was sent to the Upper Volta and \$2,000 to Senegal.

"Because of anticipated flow of special gifts, no additional appropriation for relief in the Niger Republic is being requested at this board meeting," Goerner commented.

In addition to the \$11,969 appropriated for famine relief, the remainder of the \$81,969 received from the liquidation of the Fairfield Baptist Church was designated for several causes. From these funds, \$50,000 will go for upgrading Panama's Baptist Hospital, \$14,000 for additional construction funds for Jordan's Baptist Hospital and \$6,000 for additional operating funds for Baptist Hospital, Eku, Nigeria.

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A Watermelon Cutter Turned
Preacher Turned Educator

5/15/74

By Toby Druin

GRIFFIN, Ga. (BP)--Randall Lolley once chose the ministry over a military career, and now the self-styled "watermelon-cutter-turned-preacher" is president of a seminary.

Lolley, for more than 11 years pastor of First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N. C., has been named president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N. C., where he earned a bachelor of divinity degree in 1957 and a master of theology degree in 1958.

He will succeed Olin T. Binkley, who is retiring on Aug. 1.

"I put out five piles of 'fleece' while deciding what to do," Lolley said here, where he is preaching a revival at the First Baptist Church, "and God soaked all five of them."

Lolley recently returned from an 18-day trip to Europe, England and the Holy Land. He had talked with members of the presidential selection committee from the seminary before embarking on the trip and asked them to discuss the possibility of his succeeding Binkley with the faculty, the alumni council and the student representatives on the seminary council.

When Lolley and his group got to Jerusalem, he said, a letter from Carl Hudson, chairman of the seminary trustees, was awaiting him, relating the positive results of those three meetings.

"That was three of the fleeces," Lolley said.

When he returned to North Carolina, Lolley and his wife, Clara Lou, met with the trustees and the faculty for the remaining two.

"They were positive and affirming," he said. "I felt the door was open and I had to risk stepping through it or back off."

Lolley, 42, and a native of Samson, Ala., has been stepping through those doors since he was a teenager and found himself suddenly one Sunday taking notes on his pastor's sermons and felt God pointing him toward the ministry.

He and some friends formed a youth revival team.

"I didn't preach or sing," he said. "I cut the watermelons."

His senior English teacher brought him to the point of decision about the ministry when she read a term paper he had written and got a Congressman to appoint him to West Point military academy.

"I had an appointment before I knew it," Lolley said. "She created a crisis, and I had to decide to go to West Point or Howard College. Eight days after I got out of high school I enrolled at Howard."

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"I didn't know what sort of ministry was out there," he recalled, "but I knew something was."

During his first year, three people from Reese Baptist Church near his hometown of Troy, 200 miles south of Birmingham, came to Howard College (now Samford University) and asked him to come to preach for them two Sundays each month.

"That's where I saw the face of the Lord--in those three people from Reese Baptist Church," he said. "That's the way the call came to me. A watermelon cutter turned preacher just like that."

Soon he began to preach the other Sundays of the month in his home church and did it all through college, commuting each weekend the 200 miles to the church and then back to college.

"If someone had come and asked me to teach in a theological seminary or write for some Baptist journal, I might have done that," he said. "I was ready for an open door."

"And that's the way I have been called every since--see an open door and decide if that is the way God is guiding me."

Lolley earned a doctor of theology degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Tex., in 1962 and was called as pastor of First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, his first full-time pastorate after associate pastorates in Fort Worth and Greensboro, N. C.

His ministry in Winston-Salem, where he succeeded Ralph Herring, has been far-reaching. Lolley has two momentos in his office that he says symbolize the ministry of the church.

One is a reproduction of a painting of Queen Elizabeth by Joe King, one of the members of the church who paints under the name Vinciata.

The other is a battered, rock-hard shoe left there last winter by a middle-aged derelict who sought a haven from the cold and a new pair of shoes from the church's clothing cupboard.

Lolley keeps the battered shoe beside the beautiful painting as mute reminders of the church's responsibility and the broad sweep of its ministry literally from gutter to royalty--a ministry he has helped shape since 1962.

He will implement the same kind of philosophy at Southeastern Seminary.

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(BP) PHOTO mailed to state Baptist papers.

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