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Missionaries Observe Flood
From "Upper Room" viewpointBy Shirley Smith
Southern Baptist Missionary

RECIFE, Brazil (BP)--Yes, we had a flood. The newspaper said it was the worst flood in history to hit a large Brazilian city--30,000 families were left homeless and more than 100 people lost their lives.

Recife is called the "Venice of South America" because it is full of rivers and canals. There is flooding practically every year in the low-lying regions by the Capibaribe River.

On the morning of July 17, a neighborhood boy came to my back door saying he had heard over the radio that we were going to have a flood. Turning on the radio, we heard peak flooding would occur between 6-10 p.m. then reports changed it to 11 p.m., then 1 a.m.

Later in the afternoon, D. Fredrick Harner, also a missionary, arrived from Garanhuns, a city about three hours drive west of Recife. He had found the main highway closed because of flooding, so he returned to Garanhuns and headed southeast, coming into Recife from the south. Little did he know what he was in for at our house.

By 11 p.m., the water was about three blocks away; but we felt, in light of the information about "peak time," it would not get in our house. However, about midnight water came up from the sewers in the street in front of our house--so we got busy. My husband Wade, "Fred", our housekeeper Joanita and I lifted everything we could up on chairs or benches, the refrigerator and stove, washer, dryer, sofa, chairs, beds, buffet, desk and chests. In an hour, we had everything up. So did our neighbors--and we all expected the water to come in no more than a couple of feet, if at all.

We have a room over our housekeeper's quarters which we were having remodeled into a guest room. Little did we know we would be the guests. We carried mattresses, food, lantern, campstove, water, and clothes for the children up to this room, which we call our "upper room."

Just as we started to leave the house to go upstairs, the water began coming in the drain in our showers in the bathrooms. At 8 a.m., the water was over our heads in our back yard. It was 5 feet deep in our kitchen, study, living and dining rooms and 6 feet in the bedrooms and bathrooms.

By early evening the water had drained from the house; but, because of snakes, we were afraid to enter the house to begin the salvage operation. We spent our second night in the upper room.

Early the next morning we entered the house, and what a shock! It looked as if a giant had picked up the house, dumped it into a huge pail of muddy water, shaken it and set it back down again. All our work had been to no avail. The water had gotten so deep that everything we had lifted up just floated and turned over into the water. A 2-3 inch layer of stinky, brown, sewer mud was on everything. It was a mess.

It takes a crisis like this to make us really appreciate friends. Without them, I don't think I could have ever faced all that mud.

Many came to help. Harner and Senor Guedes, a man who works at the seminary where we teach, pulled everything out of the house into the back yard. The mattresses were so heavy and slick that they had to roll, tie and drag them out.

Maria Madeira, a seminary student, came and scrubbed walls and floors along with Joanita. Mr. and Mrs. J. Frederick Spann appeared to say they wanted us to come live with them until our house was in order. Missionaries Martha Hairston and Donna (Mrs. Donald E. Turner) kept all the small "MKS" (missionary kids) while their parents were cleaning mud from their homes.

Sunday afternoon when we returned from lunch at the Spanns', we found six people from our church scrubbing the living room walls and floors. They had gone to Sunday School that morning and found out several church members' homes had been hit by the flood; so they decided to divide themselves into teams and go help. This was Christianity in action.

Things are beginning to appear orderly now, but much is left to be done. The Baptist Mission's (organization of missionaries) executive committee met last night to request funds from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to repair mission houses damaged by the flood. (The funds have been granted.) Flood waters entered nine of the 12 houses owned by our mission in Recife.

We are thankful for many things, among them, life. We thank God that we had an "upper room" and we were kept safe during the flood. And we are thankful for friends.

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Note: Shirley (Mrs. Wade H.) Smith is a Southern Baptist missionary stationed in Recife, Brazil.

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Baptist Missionary Relates
Tense Exodus from Angola

Baptist Press
9/15/75

LUANDA, Angola (BP)--Letters recommending their immediate evacuation were waiting for the Southern Baptist missionaries when they returned from their morning errands.

The journey from the war-ridden Angolan nation to the safety of South West Africa was to take them 48-hours, through 42 checkpoints and across 1,000 miles.

Evacuating would be Mr. and Mrs. Harrison H. Pike, Mr. and Mrs. James V. Holland and their three-year-old son, Loren, journeyman Tress Miles and summer missionary Bo Jackson. Two other families assigned to Angola were in South Africa on leave.

"Since November of last year, companies had been evacuating their families from Luanda. We as a mission (organization of missionaries) first evacuated women and children from Luanda in May," Mrs. Pike said. "Now to leave Angola when there was so much to be done, with so many people depending on us, was a hard choice to make."

Plans were set in motion. They decided to leave after church Sunday morning. Early on Sunday morning camping equipment, mission records, food and water, diesel fuel, personal belongings, dog food and one of the two German Shepherd dogs belonging to the Pikes were packed into the lead truck of the convoy. Three vehicles would go to Nova Lisboa where the Hollands would join the Pikes, Jackson and Miss Miles.

The service that morning was particularly meaningful. The Pikes said goodbye to their congregation, including their son's mother-in-law. Just days earlier some children stopped playing war to ask the missionaries for something to decorate the walls of their rooms at home. Mrs. Pike had promised them something. Sunday three of them, scrubbed and nicely dressed, showed up at services.

"It was difficult to tell them we were leaving Luanda--for a time. We gave them big posters from the reconciliation campaign and some Bible picture cards we had made; and we entrusted to their care some Gospels of John and tracts to share with their friends. We promised we would be back when we could, then we would make many other things to beautify their homes and their lives."

"It was a beautiful, sunshiny Sunday," Mrs. Pike said. "Many of those kilometers (on the way to Nova Lisboa) were through tall elephant grass, picturesque scenery which we love so well, free of people and signs of war; yet we never got out of the possibility of danger in all those 450 miles."

When they arrived at the Hollands' home at 10:30 that night, they had seen hundreds of soldiers and been through 24 checkpoints. From the first checkpoint until the last, Pike would step from the truck, extend his hand, and identify himself by name and as a missionary. They handed out Gospels of John and tracts, always in friendly conversation, said Mrs. Pike.

"Each checkpoint held its own challenge. Each was different," she said. "We sensed our Sunday had been a real evangelistic opportunity. Carolyn, James and little Loren (the Hollands) were already in bed when we rang their doorbell."

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When the door opened and Carolyn saw Harrison, she hugged his neck and said, "I knew you'd come!" For four days Nova Lisboa had been the center of intense fighting but the Pikes had not known.

"When we told them of our evacuation plans, James began telling us the terrible reports he had heard of people trying to get to the South West Africa border, of confiscations of cars, of looting, of raping and beatings. Yet we had the experience from Luanda to Nova Lisboa to give us faith to believe that our God would continue to be sufficient. Our only hope to evacuate would be to reach the border."

The missionaries packed and repacked. Cars had to be refueled. The German Shepherd would stay with mission property there. The missionaries slept only two hours.

The night before the missionaries had seen Loren's little American flag. They draped it from one of the sun visors. Each time they were asked at the checkpoints for their party card, Pike would point to the little American flag, explaining their country had requested they leave Angola until peace could be restored but that they were missionaries and would return.

They encountered fighting, difficult checkpoints and hunting fuel for the convoy. There was one series of three checkpoints said to be impossible to pass. With some difficulty and much discussion they were allowed through the first but told they would not possibly get past the second. There was little resistance at the second, but a warning that the third was impossible to pass. They continued, praying as they went. Simultaneously soldiers on both sides of the road at the third checkpoint waved them through.

"We had already lived through many miracles," Mrs. Pike said, "and had seen many on our exodus, but certainly this was the greatest to that point."

They decided to camp at an airport. As the convoy reached its destination, drivers turned off headlights and maneuvered the four vehicles (the Hollands' car had been added) into a square so the men could sleep in the middle and the women in locked cars.

"Peace and calm surrounded us. Then Carolyn heard someone approaching and mentioned it to me. I, in turn, spoke to Harrison; but by then all of us could see silhouetted around us perhaps 25 soldiers with guns. Harrison immediately identified us and discovered Christians in the group, Mrs. Pike said.

A very tall member of the group assured them the soldiers did not look for an attack that night but felt the missionaries would be safer within the barbed wire fence of the airport and between the buildings. At 6 a.m. a mortar shot served as an alarm clock, and they quickly broke camp.

At last the final checkpoint was reached. The Angolan soldiers wanted to see what the missionaries had. Willingly they took out suitcases and one by one showed what had been brought. Loren handed out hard candies to the other children, and they all handed out tracts and gospels. Mrs. Pike taught the children the song "My Best Friend Is Jesus" and promised to return to teach them more songs and stories.

Jackson played his guitar, and everyone talked. One official even invited Harrison to come back through on September 3 to attend his wife's birthday party.

The gate opened for them, and 48 hours, 1,000 miles and 42 checkpoints after leaving the Christians in front of the church in Luanda, the missionaries stood on South West African soil.

They joined hands and sang the Doxology.

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Southern Seminary Library
In SOLINET Computer System

Baptist Press
9/15/75

LOUISVILLE (BP)--The James P. Boyce Centennial Library of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here has gone "on-line" with the Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET), a nationwide system of computerized cataloging.

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SOLINET links the seminary's library with the major research collections at universities from the Ohio River to the Gulf of Mexico and from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic.

Boyce Library is reportedly the first from a Southern Baptist Convention seminary to go "on-line" with SOLINET. Only six theological seminaries in the Southeastern United States currently have access to the network.

Ronald Deering, director of the Boyce Library, says catalog cards for the library will be produced from material stored electronically in the data base. The cards will be automatically produced by the computer, fully typed in alphabetical sequence and ready for filing.

Deering said the "new mechanization, cooperative computerization, and networking orientation will literally revolutionize library procedures.

The seminary library is connected to the computer by long-distance telephone lines. Materials at other member libraries are available when the appropriate codes on a keyboard are punched.

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Baptist Hospital Hosts
World Champ 'Rocky' Valdes

Baptist Press
9/15/75

BARRANQUILLA, Columbia (BP)--Police had to contain the crowds at Baptist Hospital here when world middle-weight boxing champion Rodrigo "Rocky" Valdes checked in for emergency surgery on his right hand, hurt in an automobile accident.

Southern Baptist missionary surgeon, Dr. George H. Kollmar, operated on the athlete. The boxer will not return to the ring for several months, according to El Tiempo, daily newspaper in Bogota, which reported Valdes' injury and his surgery at Baptist Hospital.

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Baptist Executive on ABC-TV's
'Directions,' on Bicentennial

Baptist Press
9/15/75

NEW YORK (BP)--A four-member panel of leading national churchmen, moderated by ABC Television's Frank Reynolds, generally agreed here that the role of the church must be concerned both with persons and their spiritual problems and such legislation that focuses on persons and their needs.

Speaking to a Bicentennial emphasis during a taping of a "Directions" program, titled, "Conscience of America, 1776-1976," set for airing Saturday, September 21, (1-2 p.m., eastern time) were Porter W. Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, Nashville; Harvey Cox Jr., noted author and professor of divinity at Harvard University; Robert Gordis, professor of philosophy at Jewish Theological Seminary, New York; and Msgr. George Higgins, secretary of research for the U. S. Catholic Conference, Washington, D. C. The program was produced in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, Fort Worth.

Routh said the discussion noted, in general, that the Declaration of Independence didn't necessarily grow out of spiritual ideals alone in the colonies at that time. But, rather, other political and economic considerations were also of concern to the colonists.

The four generally agreed, Routh told Baptist Press, "that spiritual ideals expressed in the Preamble to the Declaration--i.e., equality, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness--still have meaning in 1976.

"The question is whether the role of the church should center on legislation or the relations of persons to ideals stated by our forefathers.

"We pretty well agreed that it is not either or, but both. I am concerned that the church not become just another lobbying organization. Rather, we need to be interested in persons and their problems; this might involve legislation, but primarily our concern must be the individual's relationship with God," Routh said he told the panel.

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CORRECTION INSERT:

In Baptist Press story mailed 9/11/75, entitled 1975 World Relief Gifts Exceed \$1 Million Mark, insert the following sentence at the end of graph five: Funds for the last two items dealing with missionary needs were appropriated from current board funds, not from relief funds.

Thanks--Baptist Press