

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 16, 1975

75-144

Mrs. Ford Says She Does Not
 Believe in Premarital Sex

WASHINGTON (BP)--In a letter responding to critics of her nationally-televised comments on premarital sex, First Lady Betty Ford says she does not believe in premarital sex and had difficulty in expressing her convictions on it in a brief television interview.

Thus far, Mrs. Ford has received more than 19,000 letters against her comments on the CBS Television program "60 Minutes" and 8,000 supporting her. The controversy was sparked when she said she "wouldn't be surprised" to find that her 18-year-old daughter was having an affair and suggested "premarital relations with the right partner might lower the divorce rate."

"I wish it were possible," Mrs. Ford's letter says, "for us to sit down and talk to one another. I consider myself a responsible parent. I know I am a loving one. We have raised our four children in a home that believes in and practices the enduring values of morality and personal integrity.

"As every mother and father knows, these are not easy times to be a parent. Our convictions are continually being questioned and tested by the fads and fantasies of the moment. I believe our values to be eternal, and I hope I have instilled them in our children.

"We have come to this sharing of outlooks through communication, not coercion. I want my children to know that their concerns--their doubts and their difficulties--whatever they may be, can be discussed with the two people in this world who care the most--their mother and father.

"On '60 Minutes' the emotion of my words spoke to the need of this communication--rather than the specific issues we discussed."

"My husband and I have lived 26 years of faithfulness in marriage. I do not believe in premarital relationships, but I realize that many in today's generation do not share my views. However, this must never cause us to withdraw the love, the counseling and the understanding that they may need now more than ever before.

"This is the essence of responsible parenthood. It is difficult to adequately express one's personal convictions in a 15-minute interview. I hope our lives will say more than words about our dedication to honor, to integrity, to humanity and to God."

"You and I, they and I, have no quarrels," she concluded.

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Bichkov, Claas Named to
 European Baptist Offices

Baptist Press
 9/16/75

BILTHOVEN, The Netherlands (BP)--Alexsei Bichkov, general secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) in the USSR, was elected to a two-year term as president of the European Baptist Federation at the EBF's annual meeting here.

In another vote, Gerhard Claas, present general secretary of the Baptist Union of West Germany, was named secretary-treasurer-elect of the EBF, a regional fellowship of Baptist bodies in Europe.

Claas, associate secretary-elect of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), succeeds C. Ronald Goulding of London, also a BWA associate secretary, who will step down after 10 years with the EBF and move to Washington, D. C. to head the BWA's new division on evangelism and education.

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Bichkov, 47, a former architectural engineer, preached and worked at his secular profession until 1969 when he became a full staff officer with AUCECB, the officially-recognized Baptist body in the Soviet Union. He became general secretary in 1972.

Danish Baptist General Secretary Knud Wumpelmann was named vice president of the EBF. Besides Bichkov and Wumpelmann, John Merritt, executive secretary of the European Baptist Convention (English-language), and Theo van der Laan, general secretary of the Union of Baptist Churches in The Netherlands, were elected to the EBF executive committee.

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Baptist Student Spends A
Harrowing Summer in Angola

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
9/16/75

DALLAS (BP)--God became more real to Bo Jackson this summer than ever before.

Jackson, a 21-year-old summer missionary commissioned by the Baptist Student Union (BSU), spent his summer in war-torn Angola.

During the 10-weeks there, he watched soldiers storm a palace, was held prisoner by drunken rebel soldiers, ministered to starving and injured people, and did many of the menial tasks necessary to missionary life.

At the end of his term, he and the other Southern Baptist missionaries made a harrowing 1,000-mile trip to the relative safety of nearby South West Africa.

"I had no idea there was going to be fighting," Jackson said. "When I went to Washington to get my visa, the lady told me I had better take my helmet. I didn't know what she was talking about."

Jackson, a former Texas BSU president, soon found out.

"I arrived at the airport (in Luanda) about 12:30 a.m. Saturday. The airport was super crowded. You could hear shooting. I was kind of bewildered," he admitted.

Missionary Curtis Dixon briefed the young man on the situation, telling him the nation will become independent in November, and various factions are now fighting among themselves for control of the new government.

"I don't think I can remember more than four days in Luanda when things were 'quiet'. Even on days when the news said things were 'peaceful' there was scattered shooting," Jackson said.

"I think the only thing," he continued, "I could do was to hurt with the people. Even though the various groups fought, it was the ordinary people who paid for everything. A lot of them were forced out of their homes.

"I saw a lot of men who were separated from their wives and children, and people who had lost sons. It is a civil war," he said.

In his time there, Jackson learned a little of the Portugese language.

"I got to speak at one of the churches. I told the people I enjoyed the family feeling I have in a church group. I told them I hope that one day Angola will be reunited as a family, as the love of Christ united us into a family.

"Quite a few of the people started crying . . ."

For the first three weeks he was there, he worked with missionary Harrison Pike in an attempt to ship food to refugees in North Angola by truck.

"The first time we tried to take it north ourselves, we went through three or four check points where we were searched. When we got to Caxito, a little town, about 200 men were there.

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"They took us prisoner. They were real upset that we were trying to take food to the refugees in the north. They told us the people in the north were their enemies."

Finally, the rebel leader turned the missionaries back to Luanda, but not before Pike and Jackson had been held prisoner several hours.

"It was kind of like a dream . . . a game. I thought it was not really happening to me. It was like the things that go on in the movies. It was pretty sobering as we sat in the little room. Some of the guards were drunk, and we realized they could have killed us and no one would have known.

"I wondered if it was really worth it. . .

"I felt closer to God a whole lot of this summer. . ."

Jackson made several other trips during the summer, going through checkpoint set up by the rival forces.

On one trip, he handed out gospel tracts to the soldiers at the checkpoints.

"Gifts are very important to them, and it is a very high status symbol to have a book. They all wanted a book, so I was able to pass out the gospel tracts," Jackson said.

The missionaries were notified by the American embassy, August 8, that they should leave the country immediately. The Curtis Dixon and Bert Suttom families already were in South Africa.

The Harrison Pikes, journeyman Tress Miles and Jackson were still in Luanda.

Jackson had airline reservations, but when he arrived at the airport, he was told all confirmations had been dropped and the airlines were four days behind schedule.

Jackson left early Monday with the missionary entourage, heading for the border with South West Africa, roughly 1,000 miles away.

They went first to Nova Lisboa where they picked up the James Holland family. From Luanda to safety, they passed through 41 checkpoints.

They had taken diesel fuel with them, and used their "last bit not far from the border."

"Some missionaries gave us 40 liters of fuel to put in the land rover and when we arrived at the border, none of us had more than five liters left. One of the cars managed 38.6 miles per gallon. Usually, it got about 28.

"I think God had a whole lot to do with it," Jackson said.

"It was a great relief to reach the border. We had to stop on the Angolan side and unload every single thing out of the cars. It took about two hours," he said, relating the missionaries had taken clothing and other personal items rather than larger items because they did not want to make it appear they were leaving the country permanently," Jackson added.

After arriving in South West Africa, Jackson rested for a day or two and then went on Windho to catch his flight back to the United States and to his senior year at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos.

The trip, he said, "gives me a far greater appreciation of God and the fact he does 'pull things out of the fire.'

"It was a deeply spiritual experience to get out of Angola.

"I was in the truck by myself on the long trip, and I spent a lot of time thinking, singing songs, praying and reviewing scripture memory verses.

"It brought home a great reality of God, one I had never had before," he said.

And, he added, the trip has made "me more aware of the needs of people . . . Things are happening all over the world . . . we have no conception of . . ."

Bicentennial Feature

Imprisoned Baptist Minister
Endures Murder Plots, Abuse

CULPEPPER COUNTY, Va., April, 1770--(BP)--A Baptist minister whose crime was preaching the gospel told of spending five months in bleak Culpepper County jail, enduring torture, abuse and insults.

Officers seized the minister, James Ireland, while he was pronouncing the benediction at an outdoor Baptist meeting last November. They charged him with conducting worship services without authority from the state church of Virginia.

Following a trial, at which he was not allowed to make a defense, Ireland was imprisoned and he and others who expressed sympathy for his cause were repeatedly threatened and persecuted, he said.

At least two outright attempts were made on his life during the imprisonment, Ireland said. The first was an effort to blow up his cell with gun powder. Ireland told how the explosion, set off at night, made a lot of noise and did some damage to his cell, but he escaped unharmed.

Another time, the jailer and a doctor attempted to poison the prisoner. They not only admitted the plot but another physician, who examined him later, said he had been poisoned, Ireland noted.

Ireland said his "persecutors" also inflicted these abuses:

1--Burned pepper and brimstone and blew the smoke into Ireland's cell. The minister pressed his mouth to cracks in his cell to escape suffocation.

2--When Ireland attempted to preach to crowds gathered outside his cell window, horses were ridden into the groups and listeners were trampled, threatened and beaten.

3--Charged Ireland's friends and supporters four shillings and eight pence each to visit the preacher while he was in prison.

4--Put drunken rowdies in the same cell with the minister.

In spite of persecution, Ireland's spirit appeared unbroken. He dated letters of encouragement to his friends, "From My Palace in Culpepper." Sympathizers supplied him with firewood, food and water.

Ireland faces a second trial in March, 1770. He posted bond in order to prepare his defense and to renew the fight for his personal freedom as well as freedom of religion in Virginia.

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Prepared for Baptist Press by the Southern Baptist Historical Commission, Nashville.

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CORRECTION

In the BP mailing of 9/15/75, story headlined, "Baptist Executive on ABC-TV's 'Directions' on Bicentennial," second graph, second line, the day and date are Sunday (not Saturday), September 21.

Thanks--Baptist Press