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'Lifer' Prison Inmate Has,  
T aches N w Life in Christ

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By Bonita Sparrow

NASHVILLE (BP)--His name is not Paul, it is Leon. He is not a Jew, but a black man inside stone walls of a stern prison on the Caribbean Island of Grenada.

He has been there eight years. He has life to go. But Leon's life in jail offers reminders of the First Century ministry of the Apostle Paul.

Since committing the murder that put him there, under sentence of death, Leon has become a Christian. Paul was also a Christian, but it was his preaching of the gospel that landed him in jail in the first place.

Leon's life in jail (the death sentence was commuted after two years) is gradually making a difference--both with the other prisoners and to the prison administrators. And that is where the similarity to the Apostle Paul's ministry lies. Paul continued his Christian writing and teaching while in prison.

Credit for the Christian growth that led to Leon's unique ministry, is laid to the Radio and Television Commission, a Southern Baptist agency supported through the Cooperative Program.

Paul M. Stevens, Radio and Television Commission president, related the second chapter of Leon's story. The first chapter was written after Leon heard "The Baptist Hour" a radio program produced and syndicated by the Radio and Television Commission and began a correspondence with J.P. Allen, the commission's vice president of audience research and response.

Leon had just become a Christian. He wanted to know how to live a Christian life.

In the months that followed, Allen encouraged the neophyte. He sent material to teach Leon more about "soldiering" for Christ and, at Allen's own expense, sent additional books, occasional candy, and once, money for an eye examination and glasses.

The correspondence was highlighted by a trip to the Caribbean where the Radio-TV Commission filmed Leon's story. It was on that trip that, in an unprecedented act, prison officials granted special permission that allowed Allen to baptize Leon in the Caribbean that flows outside the prison walls.

Allen returned to Fort Worth. Leon remained in prison. The correspondence continued and Leon grew taller in the Christian faith.

Today Leon is the acknowledged leader of a Christian group inside the prison, and a widening circle of men outside who have been discharged.

"The group evolved slowly over the last two years," Stevens said. "It began without advance planning, from Bible study conducted by Leon at night in his cell with those in the prison who showed some interest."

Allen, knowing the group would need Bibles for continued study sent Leon a package of "Soul Food," a special printing of "The Living New Testament" with illustrations for blacks.

Leon's response was enthusiastic. "I don't think there is a better name for this book than 'Soul Food'," he wrote. "I want you to know we are all eating up this food, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, the officers, and my brothers in the group."

"Grenadians catch at the 'Soul Food' as though it is something that drop from heaven." He also mentioned that the Bible study group had grown to 24, with 13 already out of prison.

"Those that are out, I understand, are keeping faithful to the Lord," he reported. "We had a program over the radio Sunday before last. The Lord is doing a wonderful work in the prison."

Another letter told of 13 prisoners being allowed to attend a local communion service.

"The people on the outside wanted to know what's going on at the prison," Leon wrote. "It never happened before, the atmosphere change. The conversation around the yard is different to when I first came."

Leon's reports were verified by a letter to the commission from "The Christian Group in Her Majesty's Prison."

Painstakingly typed, and signed by 13 men, the letter thanked the commission for sending the Bibles, reported active work for God and stated firm intentions of "continuing in our hope of salvation," promising, "No doubt, you will be hearing more of us in the near future."

Stevens said the commission immediately dispatched 75 more copies of "Soul Food" to the prison, knowing they would soon find their way throughout the island.

Leon's letter confirmed it. "After I gave all the men here the book, I sent to friends on the outside with large families. If that friend put it down, one of the family will pick it up.

"We now keep our own service on Sunday mornings at 7:30," he said. "Each week a different brother brings the message, reads a portion of scripture, and try to explain it with the help of God."

"This Christian community, in prison and on the outside, is important to our future Baptist work in Grenada," Stevens said. "This development took place in August (1975), about the same time that Mr. and Mrs. Manget Herrin opened Southern Baptist work there."

"Herrin visited the commission before he left, to learn how he could help continue what had begun," Stevens said.

Allen's letter to the Herrins summarized the commission's estimate of what the future may hold in Grenada.

"It may well be that Leon's prison sentence has made one of the unique contributions to the Island of Grenada," Allen wrote. "Literally dozens of men have met Christ because of Leon's simple, yet profound ministry."

"These men could be extremely effective in your work if you could find some way to harness their energies."

Leon's and Allen's letters aren't the letters of the Apostle Paul, but they are serving some of the same purposes--to encourage, to inform, to bring persons to Jesus Christ and new life.

The third chapter of this ministry--that of the Herrins and their mission work--has not been written. But it is expected to be a bright one because, years ago, the Radio and Television Commission beamed "The Baptist Hour" to a soul in prison.

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East Africa Missionaries  
Form Two Organizations

Baptist Press  
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BRACHENHURST BAPTIST ASSEMBLY, Kenya (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania) voted at their annual meeting here to form two separate organizations of missionaries.

The missionaries serving in Kenya and Tanzania have been joined administratively into one organization called the East Africa Mission. Effective Jan. 1, 1978, they will have two organizations, the Kenya Baptist Mission and the Tanzania Baptist Mission.

Davis L. Saunders, one of the founders of the East Africa Mission and now the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa, said political divisions within the two countries was the reason for the division of the mission.

Southern Baptist Missionary Dale G. Hooper said missionaries hope the reorganization "will improve the effectiveness of Baptist witness in East Africa, and especially assist development of the two national conventions."

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The East Africa Mission was formed in August, 1956, in Oshogbo, Nigeria, with three missionary families. The first missionaries to live in Kenya were the Wimpy Harpers, who moved in October, 1956. The first missionaries in Tanzania were the Davis L. Saunders family, who moved in December, 1956.

Missionaries entered Uganda in 1962, when Dr. and Mrs. Hal Boone began work there. Uganda was a part of the East Africa Mission until 1967 when the Uganda Baptist Mission was formed with seven missionary couples.

During the meeting, the missionaries collected nearly \$5,500 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions from the 50 couples and 14 single missionaries present.

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### Bicentennial Feature

Imprisoned Baptist Preachers  
Make Pulpit of Jail Window

Baptist Press  
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CHESTERFIELD, Va., February, 1771 (BP)--Two Baptist evangelists imprisoned because they refused to quit preaching the gospel have turned their prison sentence into a revival meeting. As they preach through the iron bars of their cell in Chesterfield County jail, many hearers are being converted, observers say.

The ministers are William Webber and Joseph Anthony. They were arrested in December, 1770, and charged with disorderly conduct. Their offense was preaching without the authority of the state church of Virginia in Baptist meetings.

Tried in January, Webber and Anthony were ordered to post bond that they would not preach again in the county. They told the court they could not comply in good conscience and would go to prison first. The court tried to silence the Baptists by confining them to jail, but the sentence has only heightened the fervor of the evangelists.

Webber and Anthony no longer can go to their congregations; now their congregations come to them. The Baptists preach twice a week to the throngs gathered outside the jail.

Their cell window has become a pulpit. Placing their Bible and hymnbook on the window sill, the prisoners preach from the jail. The grating before them confines the preachers to their cell, but their voices carry easily to those on the outside.

The Baptist cause scarcely flickered in Chesterfield County prior to the arrest of the evangelists. Authorities are expected to end their abortive attempt to silence the evangelists by setting them free.

Webber and Anthony came here from Goochland County where Baptists are gaining strength. The preachers were invited to conduct meetings here by residents of the county, but they discovered on their arrival that the authorities permit only ministers of the established church to preach.

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