



December 22, 1976

76-225

'Missions at
My Doorstep'

By Betty Kennedy

PARKIN, Ark. (BP)--When Doris Wood's husband had his country store near here, he discovered that many of his friends and customers needed another service from him.

They couldn't read and write, so W.B. Wood helped them fill out legal papers and pay bills.

Mrs. Wood wanted to help but didn't know how.

About 12 years ago, she accompanied some young people from Parkin Baptist Church to Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in North Carolina. Since she was involved in many church activities, Mrs. Wood had a hard time deciding which conference would help her work back home.

Then she saw a sign--"Literacy Is Missions." She walked in and stayed with that conference the rest of the week.

When Mrs. Wood returned home she wanted to hold a literacy workshop but couldn't get a leader. Her friend Mildred Blankenship of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's department of Christian social ministries was leading workshops to teach people to teach reading and writing.

A workshop was held at Parkin Church, and Mrs. Wood began to teach in her home. Her first class had eight pupils, but she later began teaching on a one-to-one basis.

Pupils were friends and customers at her husband's store, mostly people she had known for years. She taught people of different races and nationalities.

Then Mrs. Wood was called to conduct workshops. She held one at First Baptist Church, Blytheville, Ark., and in other Baptist churches, but most of her workshops were for other denominations, she noted in an interview.

Mrs. Wood's literacy work has provided many opportunities for a Christian witness, she said.

When the Woods made a trip to Mexico, they met Irma Yescas and brought her back to the United States to learn English. She planned to stay in the Woods' home for six months, but the stay turned into a year and Irma asked Jesus Christ to come into her life.

Irma wrote home and influenced her family, and her father began studying his own Bible. Several family members professed Christ, and five have decided to enter the ministry.

A brother and sister of Irma have stayed in the Woods' home to learn English, along with another girl from Mexico.

Mrs. Wood began to feel that her literacy ministry was part of what she was called to do for God. "I believe every lay person in the church is called to some special ministry," she noted. "Everyone should take their gift and develop it for the Lord," she said, "to reach the fulfillment he intends for his children to have in their Christian life."

So, while she continued teaching her neighbors to read and write, and led workshops to teach teachers, Mrs. Wood found another way to use her talents.

Last summer she helped conduct Vacation Bible Schools (VBS) in five National Baptist (black) churches in her area. Her VBS work actually began 10 years ago through Lena May, a woman who worked in her home and member of the nearby Macedonia Baptist Church, a black congregation. Mrs. Wood and Lena May "talked much about the Lord," and Mrs. Wood saw a need for Bible school at the Macedonia Church. She volunteered to conduct VBS and the church accepted. She conducted Bible school there from 1966-73.

She has led VBS over the past five years at three other area black Baptist churches.

Mrs. Wood teaches in the VBSs but also trains older young people to teach the younger children. Sometimes she orders materials for the churches and occasionally helps find the money to pay for literature. She has secured New Testaments from The Gideons International, and the local Tri County Baptist Association has purchased flags for the Bible schools.

Mrs. Wood has shouldered most of the responsibility for her two ministries herself, a friend observed, but she doesn't feel imposed upon.

She is "just doing what I can, just recognizing the mission at my doorstep."

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Richard M. Styles, Acting Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

December 22, 1976

76-225

**Work Continues in Angola
Say Baptist Missionaries**

SALISBURY, Rhodesia (BP)--Baptist work in Angola continues in spite of renewed fighting and the absence of Southern Baptist missionaries.

The South West African and Zambian governments have confirmed reports that new floods of refugees, mostly African women, children and old men, are spilling over the southern and eastern border, said Betty (Mrs. Curtis) Dixon, Southern Baptist missionary awaiting entry to Angola.

Mrs. Dixon said the churches continue to meet. Third Baptist Church in downtown Luanda, closed for a time after members fled the country, has reopened for Sunday afternoon services. Curtis Dixon, after a recent visit to Angola, said the building is usually packed because of the influx of Africans moving into the downtown area, many of whom do not have transportation to attend First Baptist Church, which is some distance from downtown.

Neither church in Luanda has an ordained minister, but each is led by a layman, as are churches in Lobito and Luso. Church members of First Baptist Church in Luanda and also in Lobito are making plans to ordain their two lay leaders. Churches in Uige (formerly Carmona) and Huambo (formerly Nova Lisboa) areas are still open, Dixon said.

Dixon also reported pastors and laymen who were formerly students of the Baptist Bible Institute continue to express a desire for further training. When asked what they need most, one pastor replied, "Bibles." Bibles are available through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, if permission can be obtained to import them, Dixon noted.

The Dixons plan to return to Angola as soon as they can get visas from the Angolan government.

-30-

CBS, NBC Plan Programs
On Southern Baptists

Baptist Press
12/22/76

NASHVILLE (BP)--With President-elect Jimmy Carter's coming inauguration, a Baptist in the White House could cast a spotlight on the denomination for several years.

As a result, two national television networks have scheduled January programs about Baptists. Both programs are produced by the networks in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, which released the information.

Porter Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee, will be interviewed by Alex Kendrick on CBS's "Lamp Unto My Feet" series January 16.

The 30-minute program, produced by Chalmers Dale, will be seen on the networks at 10 a.m. (EST). Pamela Ilott, vice president of religious and cultural broadcasts, CBS News, is executive producer.

Routh will answer such questions as who Baptists are, what they stand for, why the denomination has become the largest Protestant group in the nation, and something of the general mood of Baptists as the nation inaugurates a President who is a Baptist.

A week later, January 23, NBC will feature Kenneth and Mrs. Cooper of Dallas on one of its hour-long conversation programs. The program will be seen from 4-5 p.m., EST.

Cooper's world-famous program for physical fitness will be discussed with both he and Mrs. Cooper, who have written books on Aerobics for men and women.

The Coopers are Baptist lay people who have traveled and lectured widely on Aerobics.

The NBC production will be under the direction of Doris Ann, manager of network religious productions for the television network.

-30-

W. Herschel Ford
Dies at Age 76

DALLAS (BP)--W. (William) Herschel Ford, long-time pastor and denominational leader and a well known Southern Baptist author died here at age 76.

Ford was a vice president of both the Southern Baptist Convention (1960-61), and the Baptist General Convention of Texas (1949-50) was a former president of the Southern Baptist Pastor's Conference (1961-62) and former member of the denomination's Home Mission Board.

He retired from the pastorate of First Baptist Church, El Paso, Tex., in 1963 after 16 years there. He made his home in Dallas but served several interim pastorates until declining health confined him to writing.

He had been in bad health several months. He suffered a heart ailment on Sunday, Dec. 19, and was pronounced dead in the emergency room of a local hospital.

A native of Monroe, Ga., Ford wrote about 40 books, most of them in a series, entitled, "Simple Sermons." He was an honor graduate of Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C., and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He was awarded the doctor of divinity degree by Carson-Newman College, a Baptist school in Jefferson City, Tenn.

Prior to El Paso, he was a pastor in Jacksonville, Fla., Knoxville, Tenn., Atlanta, and at Hendersonville and Andrews, N.C.

Survivors include his widow and a son, Robert, who is a professor at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.