



## BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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77-25

'This Is Africa's Day'  
Mills Reports to Board

By Ruth Fowler

RICHMOND (BP)--"This is Africa's day. I see problems, but these result in progress for the gospel," said John E. Mills, area secretary for West Africa, in his report to the February meeting of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"I see great responsiveness to the gospel and to most mission efforts," Mills continued. "I see great unmet needs because of our crying need for preachers. I see most of all great fidelity and commitment on the part of our missionaries."

Mills told the board that work had begun in two new stations in Liberia, at Zwedru and at the Mano River, with couples working in evangelism and church development.

In Ghana, growth of work is reported in many areas. "Ghana is proof of the value of strategy studies about which this board has been concerned for so many months," Mills said. "The missionaries caught a new vision of possibilities and requested personnel, some of whom are already on the field. There is a more imaginative program of work with a new spirit of enthusiasm."

General Olusegun Obasanjo, an active Baptist and an ex-student of the Baptist Boys High School in Abeokuta, Nigeria, is the new head of state in that country. Mills reported that Obasanjo had led in the creation of new states, is planning a move from Lagos to a new capital city, has launched a new program of universal primary education, and has begun steps to have a new constitution approved in preparation for handing over authority to a civilian government by 1979.

"All of these changes present new challenges and opportunities," Mills said. "More than 10,000 were baptized in the Nigerian Baptist churches last year. To me, it seems evident that God is at work in Nigeria, and I'm optimistic for the future of Baptists in that land."

Each of the six organizations of missionaries in the Francophone (French-speaking) countries of West Africa has plans for expansion and clamors for additional help, according to Mills. "Significant progress has been made in recent months."

In Senegal, an overwhelmingly Muslim nation, a 15-minute radio program is being broadcast weekly over the government station. "It is bringing letters of response with Muslims asking questions about Christianity and requesting literature."

In the area of Koudougou, the newest station in upper Volta, Ray W. Eitelman has begun work as the first career agricultural evangelist there. Seven demonstration fields belonging to local farmers in a 20-mile radius, two or three-night evangelistic campaigns and several months of instruction have resulted in formation of six new churches and eight additional preaching stations in a year.

A preacher is still needed to lead Theological Education by Extension in Upper Volta. With that exception, the missionary staff there is complete.

Ivory Coast is the center for publications and mass media for the Francophone countries. In Togo, a new station will be opened at Tabligbo, new student work will begin at the University in Lome, an agricultural ministry will supplement the evangelism work, and theological education will be strengthened with the addition of new missionaries.

"I pray that this board and Southern Baptists will find ways to more completely obey our Lord's command," Mills said, "and to claim West Africa for Him."

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Agriculturist Badly Needed  
In Thai Refugee Camps

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RICHMOND (BP)--An agriculturist to assist in implementing self-help agriculture projects for Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees in Thailand is desperately needed by Southern Baptists.

"The sooner we could get someone out here the better," said Ronald C. Hill, Southern Baptist missionary and mission administrator.

In a letter to W. Eugene Grubbs, the Foreign Mission Board's consultant for laymen overseas, Hill said that vegetable and meat rations have already been cut down in refugee camps as a result of the United Nations' 25 percent cutback in aid.

The next three months are crucial, adds Southern Baptist missionary Daniel R. Cobb, who has been involved with the projects.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Thailand, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior of Thailand, are setting up the projects to help the refugees help themselves. The projects "will reduce expenses of upkeep, give the people something to do and give more experience to those involved," explained Maxine (Mrs. Robert R.) Stewart, Southern Baptist missionary press representative.

Southern Baptist missionary Douglas G. Ringer started some of the projects but is now in the United States on furlough. Cobb will be working with the agriculturist during the year he is there.

In some areas, land is being made available by the local government for new refugee camp sites which include a plot large enough for gardening and raising small animals for meat. Thus far, 10 acres of land have been made available for this purpose at one camp.

"We hope considerably more land will be made available in the near future as there are 3,610 people in the three camps," Mrs. Stewart said. Of those living in the camps now, 375 are Christians. Many more have been baptized during their stay in the camps but they have since moved out.

Hand gardening tools, including 30 grass knives, 30 hoes, rakes, buckets, baskets and 110 pounds of seeds have been distributed. Chicken houses and rabbit hutches are being constructed on a limited basis until other camps receive land.

A retired agriculturist is preferred but persons with degrees in agriculture and/or experience who are interested in serving for one year should contact W. L. (Wimpy) Smith, associate consultant for laymen overseas at the Foreign Mission Board (P. O. Box 6597, Richmond, Va., 23230), as soon as possible.

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Former Vietnam Journeymen  
Assigned to Thailand

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RICHMOND (BP)--Two former Southern Baptist missionary journeymen to Vietnam have been given special assignments to work with Vietnam refugees in Thailand.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, during its February meeting at its headquarters here, assigned Doug Kellum and Linda Jo Pegram to report to Thailand immediately and work there until February 1978.

Kellum will live in Chanthaburi and assist Southern Baptist missionary Daniel R. Cobb. He will be working with Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees, helping Cobb with discipleship and teaching. He also will assist in implementing self-help projects in vegetable gardening and meat raising until the urgent need for a qualified agriculturist is met.

His other duties will involve helping with purchasing and getting material aid to the refugees and writing follow-up letters to refugees who have gone to the United States and France.

Miss Pegram will be working part-time at Songkhla with Vietnamese refugees. She will also do purchasing and followup work in Bangkok and will minister to refugees passing through the immigration department there.

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Both former journeymen served in Vietnam from 1972 to 1974. The Foreign Mission Board journeyman program is a two-year missions opportunity for college graduates 26 years of age and under. Miss Pegram served as an English teacher and a Baptist Center director. Kellum was involved in youth evangelism during his tenure as a journeyman and was also stationed in Vietnam while in the U. S. Army.

After Vietnam fell, Kellum and Miss Pegram both worked with refugees at Fort Chaffee, Ark.

Prior to these special assignments, they were students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Miss Pegram is a West Virginia native but she moved to Maryland while growing up. Kellum was born in Mississippi.

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### Retired Missionary's Career Goes On & On

By Tim Nicholas

MERIDIAN, Miss. (BP)--The young seminary student who stood before Georgia Mae Ogburn's desk in Santiago, Chile, planned to organize a strike against the kitchen at the Chilean Baptist Seminary.

"I want to put some facts on you," Miss Ogburn told the young man. "In the first place this is a Christian institution and we do not have unions or strikes.

"And you're not going to be hungry. Money is being provided for you to be here; many others would like to be in your place.

"So you have a choice; you can go on strike or accept the facts and get what you came here to get. But if you choose to go on strike, you can walk out that door and keep going."

Years later, that same man, Arturo Fernandez, now associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Santiago, Chile, nominated Miss Ogburn, now of Meridian, for the highest award Chile gives to a foreigner.

Last spring in special ceremonies in Washington, D.C., she was presented the Bernardo O'Higgins award in recognition of "contributions to the moral, educational, and spiritual life of the Chilean people," during her 36 years as a missionary, 1940-1976.

"Georgia Mae," officially retired in late 1976, hasn't slowed "one whit," friends noted. In September, 1976, she returned to Chile to participate in the country's independence celebrations at the Chilean government's invitation.

She has been booked "fairly solid" to speak in WMU conferences, associational meetings and churches and was to return to South America early this year to help Baptists in Venezuela set up women's work at the associational level.

A native of Selma, Ala., Miss Ogburn at age 7 moved with her parents to Meridian where she grew up attending First Baptist Church. She was graduated from Blue Mountain (Miss.) College and the former WMU Training School in Louisville.

In Chile, she first reorganized and was head of the Woman's Bible Institute, which was later combined with the Chilean Baptist Seminary as a department.

"Our objective was to prepare Chilean women for working in their churches," says Miss Ogburn. She taught the men and women high school math, child psychology, and Bible.

"But education does not just include subject matter--it includes how to conduct yourself and adjust your attitudes toward life," she says.

In 1948, she became executive secretary of the South American nation's Baptist Woman's Missionary Union. "When I first took over, there were 13 members on the executive committee, but only three were Chileans. I said this is not good. Chileans should be in leadership roles."

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When she left Chile, of the 14 executive committee members only one was a missionary. "When I started in WMU work," she recalled, "I set a goal of trying to visit all the societies all over the country asking them information on their organization."

She always liked to keep close to people in her mission work, especially by teaching study courses. "When you do administrative work, you feel you're not in touch with the people," she said.

"I'd see so many women, despite their cultural background, finally find themselves and find an outlet for their talents and possibilities."

One young Chilean woman had confided she had not done anything in mission service simply because she had been putting it off. She told Miss Ogburn she had decided to begin work with teens and children in her own neighborhood.

The woman began teaching Bible studies to teens and started a class for children. The number of children grew to 25, and she bought wicker chairs to seat them. The number grew to 35, and her husband took crating and made benches and tables for them.

Parents became interested in having a Bible study for adults, and she and her husband cleaned out a storeroom out back of their house for the adults.

"She told me before I left that if the church didn't help them, they'd move in with their married daughter and give their home as a mission," said Miss Ogburn.

"When I went back for the Independence Day celebrations, the woman had 75 children once a week for Bible study. They had 30 adults on Thursday nights for worship services, and the week before we arrived, their church voted to take on the work as a mission of the church."

She reflected on her own missions career:

"If I had another life to live, I'd give it to the Lord in missions." But at this rate, Miss Ogburn's life of mission services appears far from over.

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Church Fetes 75 Years  
Of Ministry to Deaf

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BATON ROUGE, La. (BP)--First Baptist Church here celebrated the 75th anniversary of the congregation's ministry to the deaf, during a televised Sunday morning worship service.

Speaker was Carter Bearden, director of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Home Mission Board's deaf ministries. Bearden, a deaf person himself, preached in sign language that the "Love of Christ comes to break the veil of separation that keeps people away from Jesus . . . The deaf have the same liberty to believe in Jesus Christ as hearing persons."

Mrs. E. Roger Jones Sr. was recognized for her work with the church's non-hearing Sunday School since 1922, the longest of any First Baptist member. And Mrs. Alvin Pence, who is deaf and blind, interpreted a solo, "Sweet Peace, the Gift of God's Love."

Perry Webb Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, noted at the end of the service, that as the church celebrated a milestone of ministry, the hearing congregation had shared in a unique experience as they, for once, were the ones dependent on an interpreter.

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