



BAPTIST PRESS

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Rhodesian Work Continues Amid Increasing Tension

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Baptist work is continuing in Rhodesia even though political tensions are gradually increasing there, Davis L. Saunders reported after visiting the country on a tour of Eastern and Southern Africa.

Saunders, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for that part of Africa, said that black nationalist guerrilla attacks such as that which killed 11 and injured 76 in Salisbury, Aug. 6, are sporadic and have no predictable pattern.

In very sensitive areas of Rhodesia, Saunders said, missionaries are concentrating their work in the cities, but in other places are continuing their work while "using discretion" in rural areas where attacks have been most frequent.

Rhodesia, whose white minority government has been increasingly challenged in recent months by black nationalist activity, has been a Southern Baptist mission field since 1950. A total of 84 Southern Baptist missionaries are assigned to that country.

"No Southern Baptist missionaries or church members have been injured in the guerilla attacks as far as we know, Saunders said, "although relatives of some church members have been reported killed or injured."

The area secretary made his statements while here for the Foreign Missions Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

He said representatives of all areas of the country took part in the Rhodesian annual Baptist Convention in July.

"There was not quite the air of optimism that prevailed at last year's Rhodesian Convention," Saunders said. "Tension is gradually increasing. But with travel restrictions placed on them by potential guerrilla activity, the Rhodesian Baptists are carrying on their work as best they can."

The convention voted to ask the mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Rhodesia) to furnish a secretary of evangelism and stewardship. This missionary would not only carry out the duties of such a position, but also train Africans to fill the responsibility, Saunders said.

Southern Baptist work in Rhodesia is largely with black Africans. Only one out of every 18 Rhodesians is European. The Baptist Convention of Rhodesia has 68 churches with 10,287 members.

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African Opportunities Open;
Uganda Personnel Needed

By Bob Stanley

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GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Although doors to Southern Baptist work in Ethiopia have been temporarily closed new prospects for missionary witness in Eastern and Southern Africa are opening up, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board official reports.

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Davis L. Saunders, the board's area secretary for this part of Africa, said on return from a tour of his area that the two couples remaining in Uganda are planning to ask for additional personnel to assist in the work there. Saunders, along with other board staff members, was here for the annual Foreign Missions Conference

Other opportunities are opening in Burundi, the Seychelles, South West Africa, and in Bophuthatswana, an African homeland within South Africa which is expected to gain its nominal independence in December, Saunders reported.

Conditions in Uganda are not ideal, Saunders said, and it will be necessary for personnel going there to be able to live with conditions as they exist, to be willing to minister where they can.

Younger or older couples without children would be best for the work there at this time. These should include persons with a needed skill who are also evangelists. Major needs include someone to go in for a one-year project just to repair boreholes or deep water wells with equipment that has broken down, Saunders pointed out.

"The Ugandans lack skilled personnel and materials," he said. "We would have the resources to get the materials in with government permission."

He mentioned teachers, doctors and nurses as other persons whose skills are needed in Uganda at this time.

Both Southern Baptist couples presently in Uganda, Mr. and Mrs. James L. Rice and Mr. and Mrs. G. Webster Carroll, are stationed in Jinja where Southern Baptists have a Bible school. Mr. and Mrs. Harry B. Garvin, who also have been working in Uganda while living in Kenya, have returned to the United States on furlough.

Southern Baptist missionaries remained out of Uganda for some time earlier this year as President Idi Amin asked all Americans to report to him. The president was accused of murdering a Ugandan church official but denied the charges.

Saunders, who plans to visit Uganda in October, met with the Rices and Carrolls while they were visiting in Kenya in July. The couples reported that no travel restrictions exist in Uganda and that there's no government interference with Southern Baptist work.

A one-week leadership training meeting is planned in the southwest area of Uganda in October for 25 key leaders from all over the country.

Ugandan Baptists are carrying on their work fairly well, Saunders reported. But the work is not growing as fast as it would if times were normal.

During his recent tour, Saunders received warm invitations for Southern Baptists to enter new areas or send additional personnel to countries where some missionaries are already stationed.

In Burundi, a small country adjoining Rwanda and Tanzania, Baptists have asked Southern Baptists to assist them in urban programs in Bujumbura, the capital. Danish Baptists, who already have work there, joined in the invitation.

Farther to the south, in Bophuthatswana, the leaders of the Tswana people, who have as many of their tribe in South Africa as live in the neighboring country of Botswana, are asking Southern Baptists to provide missionaries with technical skills to assist in the development of their people.

Saunders sees this as an opportunity for persons who have the needed technical skills and who are strong lay witnesses. He expects this new opportunity for Baptist witness to open up early next year if plans to grant nominal independence to this tribal area are carried out.

An invitation also has been received from the Baptists of South West Africa (also known as Namibia) to be prepared to send in more missionaries. A missionary associate or volunteer pastor and a general evangelist are needed, Saunders said. Four Southern Baptist missionaries already are assigned to South West Africa.

In addition, Saunders noted that the official transfer of the William P. Steeger family from Ethiopia to the Seychelles will mark the opening of the 88th country or territory where Southern Baptists have work.

The action came after Saunders received a letter from the minister of education in the Seychelles, where a coup recently resulted in a change of government in the former British colony off the eastern coast of Africa.

Steeger has been asked to help develop craft-training centers for unemployed youth who will be trained to make items for sale to tourists, the islands' major industry.

Looking to the western side of his area, Saunders said, "We still haven't given up" on the prospects of possible future return to Angola. Southern Baptist missionaries withdrew temporarily from this country on the Atlantic side of Southern Africa following the outbreak of civil war in 1975. Angola became independent in November 1975.

Earlier this year, Angola Baptists voted to ask for return of Southern Baptist missionaries but are awaiting the appropriate time to seek a government answer to their request.

In the meantime, the Angola Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Angola) remains intact, Saunders said. Missionary Curtis Dixon is preparing material in Lisbon, Portugal, for use in Angola. In July, the board approved \$2,500 as Southern Baptists' share in the printing of 10,000 more Portuguese Bibles for Angola.

In a report to the board on the Ethiopian situation, Saunders indicated that Southern Baptist missionaries have no plans to go back into the unsettled eastern African country. An Ethiopian administrator has been appointed to act on their behalf and maintain contact so that it can be determined when missionaries might be able to return.

This administrator also will be in charge of the nine missionary residences and other mission property left in the country.

Mr. and Mrs. V. Lynn Groce will remain in Nairobi, Kenya, where Groce will continue to serve as treasurer of the Ethiopian Mission and maintain contacts with the Ethiopian administrator in Addis Ababa.

Saunders gave the following account of the other Ethiopian personnel:

Mr. and Mrs. Ron D. Bodenhamer and Mr. and Mrs. William D. Curp are transferring to the East Africa Mission; Mr. and Mrs. Steeger have been transferred to open up work in the Seychelles.

Also, three families--Mr. and Mrs. Jerry P. Bedsole, Mr. and Mrs. Dale E. Beighle, and Mr. and Mrs. R. Clifford Staton Jr.--are still unsure of their assignments. The Statons are temporarily in Tanzania, and the Bedsoles and the Beighles are looking into the prospects of working in Southern Africa.

Dr. Samuel R. J. Cannata Jr., who was detained 16 days by Ethiopian officials in April pending investigation on a firearms technicality of which he was cleared, plans to go to Kenya after he and his family return from a six months leave in the States.

Missionary Journeyman Larry F. Whitten has been transferred to Blantyre, Malawi. Five other families are in the States but are not sure of their plans at this time.

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How to Convert Boiled Okra
Into Aid for World Hunger

By James M. Dunn

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DALLAS (BP)--My mother encouraged her scrawny little kid to eat everything on his plate by reminding him of the hungry children in India. (It used to be China.)

Even then I knew that it didn't make sense. Once, I modestly suggested that if she wanted those children to have my leftovers she could cram that boiled okra in an envelope and mail it to them.

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Many Southern Baptists are determined to do something about those hungry children. They know that cleaning one's plate or missing a meal does not help unless a way is found to get food to that hungry child.

So, Baptists voted with their dollars in the most dramatic referenda in our denomination's history.

We had given \$56,000 to world hunger in 1972 and \$74,000 in 1973. In 1974, we gave \$299,925 to world hunger relief. In 1975 and again in 1976, we gave over \$1,600,000 each year to feed hungry people. These gifts were over and above contributions to Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program unified budget and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

By plebiscite, a direct vote of the people, foreign missions policy was affected. Southern Baptists have a great deal of confidence in our Foreign Mission Board. We understand correctly that we get the most for our money through our own structure of missionaries on the field. We see a disproportionate impact for good as our missionaries share bread for life as they tell of "the bread of life" (Jesus Christ).

The Foreign Mission Board has taken this money channeled through your church or state convention office and used it for three types of aid. World Hunger monies go for emergency aid, intermediate relief, or development and rehabilitation.

Baptists know that money given through their church for world hunger will, in fact, feed hungry people. Starving persons are around the world. They will not eat unless we or someone else respond. Over 500,000,000 children will literally go to bed hungry tonight.

In July, 1977, Jimmy R. Allen, Southern Baptist Convention president, learned that little boys were climbing to the tops of trees in Honduras to pick the tenderest leaves to eat.

In May, during a trip through drought-stricken Sahel in West Africa, I saw villagers with protein poor diets. Sadly, they live just a few miles down the road from piles of peanuts as big as football fields. The peanuts had exactly the protein they needed, but peanuts are the cash crop sold for export and poor people cannot afford them.

Baptist church folks who give money for world hunger are beginning to learn the specific ways in which the money is spent. We know that food and medicine can be the difference between life and death in the first hours after a crisis. We also understand that hunger needs are met with various programs of food-for-work, farm improvement, rural farming projects, water wells, population control centers and health and hygiene clinics.

Development made simple is: "Give a hungry man a fish and he'll be hungry again tomorrow. Teach him to fish and he'll help feed others tomorrow." Baptists who give money for hungry people expect it to be spent for food or for the public health-nutrition-food production process that helps people eat and eat right.

Southern Baptist Missionary Carl Ryther's fish hatchery in Bangladesh, the upgrading of sheep herds in the Menz district of Ethiopia and the digging of wells in Senegal all pass the development test.

Christians in this land have indicated repeatedly that they are willing to help others have enough to eat. Further, informed followers of Jesus Christ know that it is not enough to give band-aid relief, but that it's necessary to help the hungry to help themselves through development.

It's good to know that you don't have to stuff the leftover boiled okra or green peas in an envelope and mail them to Bangladesh. But there is a channel through which Southern Baptists can give to help feed the hungry.

When someone says, "My missing one meal can't make a difference for someone overseas who is hungry," he's wrong. If you give the financial equivalent of that meal as a gift through your church to world hunger, it will make it possible for some child to eat.

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James Dunn, executive director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission and co-author of the Broadman Press book on hunger, "Endangered Species," recently returned from a trip through the drought-stricken Sahel in Senegal and Mali, under the auspices of the Overseas Development Council, where he studied the hunger problem.