



BAPTIST PRESS

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Massive Drought Relief Planned for West Africa

RICHMOND (BP)--A massive drought-relief project is being started by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to assist in relief efforts for parts of West Africa where another widespread famine appears to be developing.

The first appropriation for cereal grain to be delivered to hunger-affected people in Upper Volta was made at the board's November meeting here. W. Eugene Grubbs, the board's coordinator of hunger relief and disaster response, brought the recommendation after a survey trip to the area early in November.

Grubbs visited Upper Volta, where large-scale efforts will start immediately, as well as Ghana, Niger, Senegal and Mali.

In Upper Volta, Grubbs cited grain shortages of 35 to 50 percent in some sectors. This means that, in some areas, grain equal to as much as 50 percent of the usual harvest must be found to keep the people at a mere subsistence level.

Senegal in the next few months is expected to experience a shortage of 35 percent of its usual harvest, Grubbs reported. Refugees, such as those who lived in cornstalk huts near towns during the 1974 famine, have already begun to move into areas around Senegal's cities with the hope of finding food.

If conditions worsen, volunteer medical teams may be needed for two to three weeks at a time to provide basic medical treatment for these refugees and other malnourished persons.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Upper Volta are already working in cooperation with other evangelical groups to arrange for food distribution. Grubbs said this distribution will be one of the biggest challenges in the West Africa relief effort.

In Ghana, the government has made efforts to meet the needs of the people, but as in other nations in West Africa "serious shortages do exist," Grubbs said. Southern Baptists, through their missionaries in northern Ghana, are cooperating with the government in storing and supplying grain in the area around Nalerigu where the Baptist medical center is located.

Grubbs reported that only one nation in the desert region of West Africa, Niger, had excellent rains and good crops this year. Niger was one of the hardest hit in the famine of three years ago when thousands of children and elderly starved to death. But in this latest drought, Niger has been spared.

The \$106,000 appropriation for Upper Volta, approved in November, utilized \$26,000 from relief funds which donors designated for Africa and another \$80,000 from other hunger relief funds. This leaves about \$160,000 available in the hunger relief fund.

Total requests for drought appropriations, including this initial \$106,000, may reach \$300,000 during the next six months as missionaries make plans to meet more of the physical needs of the people in these countries.

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Although these West Africa drought efforts primarily deal with emergency needs, attention is being given to long-term development projects such as food production, nutrition, pure water sources, grain storage and village-level preventive medicine.

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Missouri Baptist Church
Ordains First Woman

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ST. JOSEPH, Mo. (BP)--Miss Kathaline Thom, the first woman known ordained by a Southern Baptist church in Missouri, will begin her training for accreditation as a chaplain at the Trinity Lutheran Hospital in Kansas City Nov. 28.

The news of Miss Thom's ordination only recently came to light, three months after Ernest White, pastor of the Wyatt Park Baptist Church here where she was reared, led an ordination service for her and two other Wyatt Park members, William Gaylon and Greg Meuller.

Although Miss Thom said she and White knew they were "pioneering new territory for Missouri Baptists," they felt ordination was a "natural step," despite the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) that currently surrounds the ordination of women. Only about 30 of over 35,000 SBC churches have ordained women.

"God called me into the ministry and ordination seemed like the natural response, just like baptism is the natural response to one who becomes a Christian," she explained.

White, who said news of the ordination service was carried in the church newsletter, the local newspaper and in the associational bulletin, said he has had "no direct adverse reaction" and "not a single word of criticism" spoken to him about ordaining Miss Thom.

"In order for a student to enter seminary a church must approve that student for ministry," he said. "We approved Kathy for Southern Baptist Seminary and for Midwestern Baptist Seminary. Ordaining her to the gospel ministry was a natural event. It was what she had prepared for . . . The church was giving its blessings to what we had seen happening in her life since high school."

Miss Thom said she first felt called to missions through the Girls' Auxiliary (GA) missions education program in her local church. She served as a summer missionary in New Mexico during her college years, on the staff of Portland Bridge Mission in Louisville, Ky., on the staff of Wyatt Park Church, and in the St. Joseph Baptist Association as associate Baptist Student Union campus minister for Missouri Western College.

"At age 20 I made a public commitment of my life to missions," she said. "As I grew in understanding of who I was before God and who I should be as a minister, ordination seemed the natural step to follow."

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Portugal Missionary Still
Improving in N. Y. Hospital

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NEW YORK (BP)--Southern Baptist missionary C. Ernest Harvey is now out of the intensive care unit in a hospital here and is conscious most of the time. He is recovering from encephalitis.

J. D. Hughey, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's secretary for Europe, said in Richmond, Va., that Harvey was continuing "to improve remarkably."

Harvey is assigned to Portugal and formerly served in Mozambique. He became ill at his home in southern Portugal, was taken to Portugal's capital city of Lisbon, and then to St. Luke's hospital here October 23.

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November 15, 1977

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'Rainmaker' Leaves Pagan
Worship to Accept Christ

By Ruth Fowler

GATOOMA, Rhodesia (BP)--For more than 20 years Amai Shingai led her tribe in the strange rituals of its pagan worship.

As its svikiro, or rainmaker, she would fall into a trance while the chief and leaders listened to and obeyed the "spirit voice" which they believe spoke through this religious leader.

Today, after six years of patient witness by a Southern Baptist missionary doctor, all this is changed. Amai Shingai has become a Christian and is demonstrating a new kind of power--her own witness in Christ.

When Dr. Frances Greenway first met her, the rainmaker wore dull black robes, the mark of her office. Long before this meeting she had left her husband and children, since custom dictates that the svikiro is supposed to remain chaste. But after many years of service in her religious role, the rainmaker had given birth to a son, Shingai. Because she believed the ancestral spirit wanted the child dead, she refused to feed him.

Dr. Greenway, who devotes much of her time to the nutrition and feeding of undernourished children, saw Shingai's pathetic state and invited the rainmaker and her son to come live in her home.

The tribespeople did not believe the rainmaker would be allowed to come. She had been warned never to associate with Christians, for fear that her powers in the spirit world would be lost. But in answer to Dr. Greenway's prayers the chief granted permission for a visit.

It was the first of many visits. In spite of the rules against it, the rainmaker even accepted some of Dr. Greenway's medicine for herself. But she wouldn't accept Christ. Fear that the ancestral spirit would kill her kept her from responding to the plan of salvation.

The rainmaker kept coming back, although months often passed between visits and her relationship with Dr. Greenway wasn't always smooth. She once became angry with the doctor for trying to influence her religion and pronounced curses of snakes, lions and fire against the Greenway home. The spirit she worshipped failed to deliver because Dr. Greenway saw only a single cobra, not unusual for Africa, and no lions nor fire appeared.

Year after year, Dr. Greenway worked with the rainmaker. She cared for and fed little Shingai and rejoiced when he finally learned to walk. He is permanently damaged from the neglect but at the age of four his speech finally began to develop. Today at age seven he is mentally slow, but still alive and growing.

This spring the ancestral spirit left the rainmaker and inhabited a new svikiro. The spirit voice "speaking" through the new svikiro said that Shingai's mother had been too close to the Christians.

So now Shingai's mother was free from the spirit voice, free to rejoin her family. She visited Dr. Greenway and listened to cassette tapes prepared especially for her.

From dawn to midnight she listened to the plan of salvation over and over again. At last she accepted Christ as her Savior, and Dr. Greenway stopped calling her rainmaker. She is now called Amai Shingai (translated: "mother of Shingai").

The doctor knows the battle is not yet over. Amai Shingai was too important in the tribal worship hierarchy for her pagan tribesmen not to give her a difficult time.

For several weeks the tribe's chief kept her confined to her house to keep her away from Christians. The tribe still holds much respect for a former svikiro and it was a great threat to their ancient belief for this former rainmaker to continue to profess faith in Christ.

But Amai Shingai's spiritual loyalties have completely changed. She continues to have the Bible read to her, listens to her tapes, and visits the pastor's wife about once a week. As a part of her witness she has begun to wear brightly colored clothes, instead of the black that symbolized her pagan worship.

The tribe of 8,000, whose worship she once led, cannot understand this change and Amai Shingai has come under physical attack for her stand.

Dr. Greenway, now in the States on leave, said a "fierce spiritual battle" is being waged between the forces of good and evil in her village. The pastor's wife there said she "fears for Amai's physical safety."

The pastor and his wife are the only people in her village who will allow her into their home. Amai Shingai has literally given up family, friends and social position and risked personal safety to follow Christ.

But with the prayer support of other Christians, Amai Shingai can withstand the pressure of persecution, Dr. Greenway believes, and someday may be able to lead her tribe in a new kind of worship--worship centered in Christ.

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(BP) Photos mailed to state papers by the Richmond Bureau of the Baptist Press.

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East, West Experience
'Oneness' In 'Joint' Service

By Lee Hollaway

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NASHVILLE (BP)--A church in Japan and a church in Tennessee overcame obstacles of space and time to participate in a "joint" worship service recently, using a little ingenuity to bridge a gap of about 6,000 miles and two weeks of time.

While on a special assignment for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in East Asia, Morton F. Rose, director of the office of planning at the denomination's Sunday School Board, preached at the Shibuya Baptist Church in Tokyo. His sermon was interpreted into Japanese for the congregation.

Rose brought a cassette recording of that service back to Nashville with him and integrated it into a Sunday evening service at Alta Loma Baptist Church in suburban Madison, Tenn., where he serves as interim pastor.

The order of worship for the service was printed in Japanese and translated into English. Hymns were sung simultaneously in Japanese (on tape) and in English. The special music was presented in Japanese by the Woman's Missionary Union choir of the Shibuya Church. And true to Japanese tradition, the offering and announcements came at the conclusion of the service.

Rose's sermon, which Alta Loma Church members heard with the Japanese interpretation still included, was entitled "That We May Be One," stressing the oneness of fellow believers despite differences of language and culture.

For members at Alta Loma, who have experienced that oneness, the Southern Baptist Convention's Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions in December will have new meaning.

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Lee Hollaway, a member of Alta Loma Baptist Church, Madison, Tenn., is associate director in charge of communications for the Southern Baptist Seminary Extension Dept.