



--FEATURES

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Christian Social Ministry
Key to Micronesian Witness

By Norman Jameson

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--Southern Baptist missions work in Micronesia could best be started in the form of Christian social ministries according to a husband-wife team that did an extensive survey of the islands last summer.

Douglas and Ruth Clark, professors at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, conducted the survey in response to requests by the Hawaii Baptist Convention and in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign and Home Mission Boards. They were to survey Micronesia and bring back a report on which to base decisions about establishing Southern Baptist work there.

The Clarks found that work begun by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregational) in 1852 has evolved into what could be considered a "state-church" with a firm grip on religious activity in the islands.

"Existing churches are extremely strong," said Clark, assistant professor and chairman of the department of sociology at OBU. "The families are so tightly tied into the church that competing churches would be almost impossible to get started."

The church, now simply called the Protestant Church, is totally run by Micronesians. Clark said the people appear to have no strong convictions about doctrine, but family ties in the church are so tight that only rarely will an individual move out of the family's preferences to join a different church.

This, combined with the attitude of local leaders that there are already too many "religions" in the islands, would make any kind of "church planting" effort extremely difficult according to Clark. On some of the islands, dominance by the Protestant Church gives way to Roman Catholicism, which has at least an equally strong grip in those areas.

"Some islands are so totally dominated by the Roman Catholic Church that it is impossible for any of the protestant missionaries even to get to them," Clark said. "In fact, they have a field ship that goes about the area and they look over the passenger manifesto. If there are any protestant missionaries on board, they won't let them on (to the island)."

Because of these kinds of hinderances, the Clarks feel that social ministries directed to the overwhelming youth population would be the most likely accepted. Governmental consent is required for any program and the Clarks say permission is granted only if the district government feels the newcomers have something to offer which will fill a need--new religions not being a necessity.

Because of increasing alcoholism and unemployment among the young, the Clarks feel a sort of "goodwill center" that encompasses youth programs, family, mother's and children's activities and possibly vocational training is the most promising way to establish a Baptist witness on the islands.

The islands, which stretch 3,000 miles east and west and 1,800 miles north and south, have a population of about 118,000. People are concentrated in the seven district centers, each ranging in population from 7,000 to 12,000.

This far reaching string of islands is currently a trust territory of the United States, and has to make a decision of self termination by 1982,

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Leadership among the seven district centers is divided concerning whether to seek total independence at that time, or become part of the commonwealth of the U. S., sharing a status like that of Puerto Rico. Each district must decide for itself. The Mariana district has opted for commonwealth status.

Those not living in the district centers, are strung out among the atolls. When the young people are educated, they tend to move into the district centers--where unemployment is high. Consequently, the Clarks found a very serious alcohol problem among the young people, a high suicide rate and a lack of security among those who have left their strong family ties and leadership for the first time.

Mrs. Clark said that with the possibility of U. S. armed forces withdrawing from Korea, Micronesia may be considered as the site for construction of a military base.

"I think Southern Baptists need to be in on the ground floor if that happens," the assistant professor of English said. "They are also considering building a huge port in Palau. If they do, there will be about 15,000 workers coming in for that. In that situation, the workers will be mostly from Korea, Japan, Okinawa and the Phillipines. That would be a ministry that Southern Baptists could be ready for."

The U. S. government says there are no plans to build a military base in Micronesia, but according to Clark, the radical student element in the islands says that is precisely what is in the works. But it's pretty certain nothing major will be done in the islands until after 1982 and it is seen whether the population there wishes to continue their association with the U. S.

The Clarks have already delivered a preliminary report of their survey orally to directors of the Home Mission Board and to Hawaii Baptists, and they are now preparing a detailed, written report. It will be gleaned from the 2,500 slides, 711 pages of journal notes, 800-item bibliography and 20 cassette tapes of notes they accumulated during their three-month survey.

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Wake Forest Trustees'
Role May Be Ambiguous

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WINSTON-SALEM, N. C. (BP)--The question of whether the Wake Forest University trustees violated their charter when they refused the mandate of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina "would not be terribly easy to resolve," says the dean of Wake Forest's law school, Pasco M. Bowman.

North Carolina Baptists told the trustees they would have to return the \$85,000 earmarked for construction of a biology department greenhouse from a federal grant of \$300,000, because it would not "render a service" back to the government, a convention requirement for accepting government funds. But the trustees voted to use the money for that purpose anyway.

According to C. Mark Corts, president of the state convention, the trustees violated their charter which says they must operate as an agency of the convention and "in accordance with the policies adopted by the convention."

But Bowman finds an ambiguity in the role of the trustees. "On the one hand there's something that seems to say the trustees are subject to the overall will of the convention," he says. "On the other hand, you have the generally applicable legal norm which says trustees are legally responsible for the affairs of the corporation. How you balance these two confusing statements, I just couldn't say."

He also notes that the university charter says the trustees "own and operate" the university and have "full power and authority generally to do and perform all acts which may be deemed necessary or expedient for the proper and successful carrying out" of the school's purpose. According to Bowman, that statement is so broad that it could be "construed to encompass almost any decision the trustees would have to make."

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**Historic Middle East Peace Moves
Are Rated No. 1 News Story By RNS**

NEW YORK (BP)--Middle East peace initiatives between Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin constituted the top religious news story of 1977, according to Religious News Service (RNS), an international, non-denominational service covering religion news around the world.

Moves toward schism in the Episcopal Church resulting largely from the official ordination of women priests ranked second in the annual polling among the news and photo staffs of RNS.

Other top stories were, in order:

3. National conventions of every major U. S. denomination tackled the issue of homosexual rights, as Anita Bryant's campaign against anti-discrimination ordinances stirred widespread controversy.

4. An historic conference in Kansas City, Mo., brought together charismatic Christians from every theological tradition.

5. Human rights became an international issue through speeches of President Carter and the Belgrade Conference examining the implementation of the 1975 Helsinki Accords.

6. Federal funding of abortions was a storm center, resulting in a deadlock in a Congressional appropriations measure that lasted for several weeks.

7. (tie) a) Historic national women's conference in Houston focused attention on the rights of women, specifically the Equal Rights Amendment.

b) Dissident Catholic Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre continued to defy the Vatican and announced plans to establish a seminary in the United States.

8. Churches and civil-rights movements were persecuted in several African countries, including Uganda, where Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum was killed, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Rhodesia.

9. (tie) a) Several court cases involved churches regarding such issues as unionization of teachers, infringement of copyrights, and testimony before grand juries.

b) Ecumenical advances during the year included an historic Anglican-Catholic theological statement on papal primacy and talk of eventual reunion between Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians.

10. Implementation of affirmative action policies drew controversy, particularly in regard to the Bakke case before the U. S. Supreme Court.

Other major developments and events listed were:

--Approval by the Vatican of communion in the hand for U. S. Catholics as an option.

--Television programming drew fire for its emphasis on sex and violence, with particular Church criticism of the program, "Soap."

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--A study of human sexuality issued by the Catholic Theological Society became a source of controversy for its suggestion that no sex act is intrinsically sinful.

--Stewardship of finances on the part of churches and religious agencies, particularly the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, came under increased scrutiny.

--A Vatican document reaffirming the Catholic Church's traditional ban on women priests stirred controversy.

--Repression of religious leaders and movements increased in several Latin American countries, including El Salvador and Argentina.

--John Nepomucene Neumann was canonized the first U. S. male saint.

--President Carter's announcement of his plans to return the historic Crown of St. Stephen to Hungary was criticized by several organizations of East European refugees.

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Preacher's Day Often
Begins In Local Bar

Baptist Press
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CHATHAM, Ill. (BP)--Early rising citizens of Chatham may think they are still dreaming if they happen to see the pastor of the First Baptist Church walk into Lloyd's Lounge some morning about 6 a.m.

But he's not there to get a head start on his day's drinking.

"In all my ministry, I've stopped in local taverns to meet people, to drink coffee, to make myself visible in the community," D. L. Scott says. "And when I go in a tavern, I don't take a big Bible and lay it on the bar and preach a sermon to everyone. At Lloyd's Lounge, for example, I drink coffee, or eat breakfast, maybe twice a week. I go early, for then I meet a lot of working men who drop in before work. I quietly jot down names and addresses, and often follow up on my contacts."

Scott's church is one of four Illinois churches listed by the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Home Mission Board as one of the 425 fastest growing SBC congregations in the nation. He says his members don't criticize his visiting in taverns.

"I've done this in all my churches, and frankly, got some criticism, but not here in Chatham. I told the folks what I was going to do, and they understand it," he says.

"And when I visit anyone, whether in a public place or in homes, I don't argue, or try to have the last word; nor pressure or embarrass folks. I'm not afraid to admit I don't have all the answers. I like a low-key approach. That kind of attitude says I'm available and open."

Scott, who describes himself as a 9th-grade drop-out, became a Christian as an adult. He then enrolled in Southwest Baptist College in Missouri, where he took GED tests to qualify for his high school diploma. He went on to graduate from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City in 1967.

"I'm not a great preacher," Scott says, "nor a profound Bible scholar. But preaching isn't what wins converts--it's the personal witnessing. Preaching builds up the believers, and then the believers do the winning."

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