



March 9, 1978

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**What's So Different
About Arthur Clarke?**

By Robert O'Brien

BLAINE LAKE, Saskatchewan (BP)--Diminutive Arthur Clarke--in his crisp, precise, quite British way--has triumphed in this picturesque Canadian farming community with gentle persuasion.

He knows Blaine Lake intimately, from its "skunk bins," odorous habitations he has fervently routed as a public service, to its town council, which he has served with distinction.

He loves it deeply, from its children who return that affection and whom he sees as its future hope, to the Doukhobors ("spirit wrestlers"), a small sect which practices its own peculiar synthesis of Christian and other beliefs.

But what makes Arthur Clarke, who came to Blaine Lake six years ago with his tiny gray haired wife, so different?

It's not just that he's the only resident pastor in a community, where the residents of Ukrainian, German, Russian and English descent either have no faith or worship as Doukhobors, Ukrainian Orthodox, Mennonites, Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses or Baptists.

Nor is it just that he counts himself among a growing number of Baptists in Canada who identify themselves as Southern Baptists and affiliate with the Northwest Baptist Convention, which covers Southern Baptist work in Oregon and Washington.

For those still shackled by the stereotype that only youth conquers all, the difference seems plain: He's a 74-year-old retired accountant--theologically trained by correspondence at age 65 and ordained to the ministry at age 73--who somehow made it to Blaine Lake as a missionary despite obstacles.

But all that's no mystery to Clarke or the people at Faith Baptist Church, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, who sent him to Blaine Lake to start a mission, which meets in the basement of the town hall.

"God is no respecter of age," Clarke explained, sitting reflectively in his small and cozy home, typical of those which dot Blaine Lake and vicinity. "God gives the necessary strength for anyone to follow the course that he would lead them in.

"The work here is not what you would term easy," said Clarke, a Canadian citizen and former resident of England. "It is a mission work, and with the ethnic backgrounds of the people here, we find it sometimes very hard to get them to accept the ideas and principles of our Lord and Savior."

But quietly during the six years in Blaine Lake and a preliminary period of holding prayer meetings there, Clarke's gentle, down-to-earth, low key warmth has won a respect that shows what's really different about him.

Not a home or a church--of any ethnic or religious description--is closed to him among the 1,300 usually clannish, cautious and tradition-bound residents of Blaine Lake and vicinity. They have called on him to preach, conduct weddings and funerals, console the bereaved, counsel the troubled, provide the Bible for oaths taken at the coroner's inquest, and, amazingly, serve as a town councilman and deputy mayor.

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Even with the respect they have gained, the Clarkes haven't yet led many adults, who fear ostracism, to Christianity. But parents have been increasingly influenced by their children, who have responded with about 30 professions of faith in the Clarkes' children's Bible study club, Vacation Bible Schools and Royal Ambassador groups, which all use Southern Baptist literature.

"We are particularly pleased to see the response of the children, because I believe that the future of this town lies with the children," Clarke explained. "We are what you call a third generation town. The older people are still here, but the younger ones who have grown up have left to find employment. Consequently, we are left with the children."

While dealing with the everyday needs in his community for children and adults, Clarke also has a concern for the struggle 35 other Southern Baptist oriented churches face throughout Canada. That's why he's glad the Southern Baptist Convention, after much pre-convention pro and con discussion, voted last June to allow its national agencies to send direct aid across the border to Canadian Baptist churches.

Although Baptists outside the States technically aren't called "Southern" Baptists in SBC tradition--and use of that term in Canada causes concern in certain quarters in the SBC and Canada--Arthur Clarke, Southern Baptist-oriented since the 1930s, sure talks like one.

There's that Southern Baptist ring, with its own Canadian vibrations, whether he's talking about the SBC Seminary Extension Department, the new SBC Mission Service Corps or the denomination's Cooperative Program unified budget for world missions to which his small congregation sends five percent of its meager receipts.

After retirement from his accounting career, Clarke developed his concept of ministry through completion of 60 church study courses offered by the SBC Sunday School and also through a two-year course of study which, he said, "earned me a diploma from the SBC Seminary Extension Department and opened my understanding to the deeper aspects of the spiritual life."

The concept of Mission Service Corps, the SBC plan to place 5,000 short term volunteers on home and foreign mission fields by 1982, energizes the already dynamic little man, who feels Canadians should volunteer to serve and who sees Canada as a wide open field in which others may serve.

"We have so many isolated areas in Canada even today where people do not receive the word of God," he said, "that we need the kind of help Mission Service Corps volunteers could give."

Meanwhile, Clarke, involved in a similar labor of love himself, keeps on despite low attendance and contributions at the mission. "I'm glad we have the Biblical record that Jesus was willing to meet with even one person," he said. "We seek to follow that same principle."

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Robert O'Brien, news editor of Baptist Press, wrote this article after a recent trip through the five provinces of Western Canada.

(BP) Photos will be mailed to Baptist state papers by Atlanta Bureau of Baptist Press.



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Baptist Famine Relief Getting Grain To People

By Ruth Fowler

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist hunger relief in the Sahel Desert region of West Africa is aimed at the greatest need--getting grain from the port to the people.

W. Eugene Grubbs, hunger relief and disaster response coordinator for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, says grain is arriving in the ports of many of the hunger-stricken nations, but is "hundreds of miles from the places where it is most critically needed." Baptists are joining with other evangelical groups to provide trucks to transport the grain to the people who need it most.

Changing weather patterns left harvests up to one-third below normal levels in areas of six countries, including Senegal, Upper Volta and Ghana, where Southern Baptist missionaries work, and Martinia, Chad and Mali, where no Southern Baptist missionaries serve.

The people have only small amounts of grain in storage and government supplies are limited. As the grain runs out, hunger will take over. Southern Baptists saw the problem developing and began working more than three months ago distributing grain and setting up distribution systems. Plans are being carried out on schedule, according to Grubbs.

One of the earliest relief programs began in Upper Volta where agricultural missionary Ray W. Eitelman has extended his regular work to include hunger relief and long-term developmental programs. These include teaching methods of increasing food production, improving food preservation and preparation, plus securing pure water supplies and employing culturally appropriate farming methods.

In Ghana nutrition programs include distribution of cereal mix to school children. And in Senegal Paul H. Grossman has been named by the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries to coordinate efforts with other groups.

The hunger situation developed as changing weather patterns forced farmers to plant grain they had saved for food. Rains didn't come when expected and a second planting was required. This planting was late and irregular rainfall continued, resulting in a poor harvest. Families now have insufficient grain for planting, for food and for maintaining livestock.

"Although the Sahel area's emergency needs are being met, other needs still exist," Grubbs said. "Among the needs are seed for planting and medical assistance."

The people affected by the poor harvest have been living at a level below recommended nutrition guidelines, but were moving toward self-support after the drought of 1974. If help is received so they can survive this crisis and if developmental work continues, the people will be able to become self-supporting.

"We have to look at the long-range possibilities," Grubbs said, "and work toward feeding the hungry now and giving them better ways of feeding themselves in the future."

"Relief efforts can contribute to meeting people's spiritual needs as well as physical needs if done as an integral part of a total missions effort," said John E. Mills, the board's area secretary for West Africa.

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"Southern Baptist money is being administered by Southern Baptist missionaries," Mills said. "This insures a maximum return both in terms of physical aid and opportunities to share Christ."

Grubbs expects at least \$200,000 is needed for this crisis and substantial amounts of additional money will be needed over the next two years for development relief programs.

Mills pointed out that relief funds are not budgeted, but appropriated from special gifts over and above contributions through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

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(BP) Photos to be mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond Bureau of Baptist Press.

Baptist Agency Protests
Israel's Conversion Law

By W. Barry Garrett

Baptist Press
3/9/78

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Baptist agency representing nine major Baptist bodies in North America took steps to protest a new law in Israel which restricts Christian missionaries and makes conversion to Christianity more difficult in that nation.

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, told the committee in semi-annual session the hardships which face Christian missionaries in Israel since the passage of the law by the Knesset (parliament) late last year.

The law makes it a criminal offense, punishable by up to five years in jail, to give money or something worth money with the intention of tempting another person to change his religion. Persons accepting bribes in return for changing their religion also will be prosecuted. The law takes effect April 1, 1978.

The law is so broad that some fear even a gift of a Bible, rosary or religious medal could be considered as a material inducement to conversion. It could endanger the traditional support Israel has enjoyed from evangelical Christians.

The United Christian Council of Israel, composed of 20 groups including the Israel Baptist Mission, believes the law offers opportunity to trap Christians and accuse them of bribery. Many responsible Jewish leaders in Israel join the Christian forces in opposition to the new law.

The Baptist Joint Committee appointed a special committee to work with its staff and Baptist foreign mission agencies with missionaries in Israel to protest the law. The committee will attempt to meet with the Israeli ambassador in Washington to express disappointment and concern over this apparent anti-conversion movement in Israel. It will also consult with American Jewish leaders who maintain a close relationship with the national leadership of Israel.

The special committee is composed of Jimmy Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Melvin G. Cooper, a Baptist layman who is executive director of the Alabama State Ethics Commission; and William F. Keucher, pastor of the Covenant Baptist Church, Detroit, Mich.

In other actions the Baptist Joint Committee:

--Voted to submit an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in support of the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Chicago in its battle with the National Labor Relations Board to decide if the board can force Roman Catholic dioceses to allow lay teachers in their parochial schools to unionize.

--Reaffirmed its position against a proposed lobby law that would require all groups seeking to influence legislation to register as lobbyists and to disclose financial and other information about their operations. The law would include churches and their agencies as well as secular pressure groups.

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--Instructed its staff to oppose proposed legislation that provides tax support for church directed education; specifically the Moynihan-Packwood-Roth tuition tax credit proposal now before the U.S. Senate that would provide federal tax aid to private and parochial school education.

--Took steps to defend the religious liberty of sabbatarians and other religious persons who encounter employment problems because of their religion. The committee will provide information for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's hearings on work schedule conflicts and problems faced by sabbatarians and others when their employment conflicts with their day of worship.

The EEOC hearings are to gather information helpful in formulating a regulation to implement Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 regarding religious discrimination, work scheduling and employee religious needs.

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Missionary Wilma Hampton
Dies After Long Illness

Baptist Press
3/9/78

NORBORNE, Mo. (BP)--Wilma Rodenberg Hampton, 45, Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil, died March 8 in Ellis-Fishell Hospital in Columbia, Mo., following a long battle with cancer.

The Hamptons returned home in May of 1976 for a medical furlough related to her illness.

Born in Norborne, Mrs. Hampton was educated in Missouri and lived there until she and her husband, Robert A. Hampton, were appointed as Southern Baptist missionaries in 1965. They served in Brazil as field evangelists for 11 years. In addition she taught English at a local high school in Brazil.

Survivors include her husband; her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charley Rodenberg of Norborne; two grown children, Cara (Mrs. Steven) Scott and Melanie Hampton of Missouri; and three younger children, Lisa, Regena and Robert; four sisters and two brothers.

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NOTE TO EDITORS

On page one of the Southern Baptist Convention program, mailed 3-7-78, change the theme at the top of the page to read: "Let the Church Be Bold in Mission Thrust." In graph five of the following story, beginning, "The multi-media sessions....."etc., delete the word convention before theme. You may want to insert the convention theme, "Let the Church Be Bold in Mission Thrust," somewhere in the story.