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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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August 9, 1978

78-131

**Two-Years Makes Big
Difference to Eskimo Boy**

By Jerilynn Wood

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Two years ago he had never seen a Bible.

This summer he's the Alaskan representative for the Bible drill demonstration during the Church Training Leadership Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Tom Odom, a native Eskimo, lived in the town of Kotzebue, Alaska, until January of 1977. During that January two men from the Faith Baptist Church in Anchorage--Farrell Mills, pastor, and Phillip Odom, music director--came to Kotzebue to lead a revival.

"When the revival was in town my grandmother asked me if I wanted to go to church with her, and I said yes," Tom recalls. "I met Phil at church and we became friends. Later on that week Phil asked me if I wanted to accept Christ as my Savior, and I said yes and was soon baptized," Tom said.

"Throughout that week Phil and I had grown very close so that each of us hated to say goodbye," Tom continued. "While we were going to the airport Phil began to talk about the possibility of my coming to live in Anchorage. I thought he was joking until I received a telephone call the next week from Phil saying that he wanted my brother, Burt, and me to come to Anchorage."

The two boys, Tom, age 14, and Burt, age 12, left for Anchorage and have been living with Phil and his wife, Marty, since that time.

"My parents were pleased that Burt and I had the opportunity to live with the Odoms, and I still keep in touch and visit my parents and seven brothers and sisters," Tom said.

When the boys moved to Anchorage both became active participants in the church's activities, including the Bible drill competition.

"Faith Baptist Church has Bible study for the youth with a fellowship afterwards," Tom said. "One evening during the fellowship one of the leaders talked about the possibility of starting a Bible drill in our church, and I was interested."

Bible drill is a skill activity coordinated by the youth section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department. It includes four areas of competition--locating the books of the Bible, locating specific Scripture passages, identifying Scripture, and memorizing Scripture passages.

"I won the Bible drill competition in my church and association, and Burt placed third," Tom said. "There was no competition on the state level so I became the Alaskan representative and received the trip to Glorieta.

Tom, now 15-years-old, will enter the ninth grade in the fall. He and Burt will soon leave Alaska to go to Mississippi with the Odoms, where Phillip Odom will complete his master's degree in music at Mississippi College.

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Nigeria Responsiveness Linked
To Years of Trust-Building

OGBOMOSHO, Nigeria (BP)--Nigerians respond today more than ever before to the Christian message. And John E. Mills attributes this openness, in large part, to the longevity of missionaries.

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Baptist Press
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Mills, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board secretary for West Africa, noted that in 1977 Nigerian Baptists reported 14,000 baptisms and an increase of 55,000 in Sunday School enrollment.

This record responsiveness "didn't just happen," Mills believes. "Tie these results to the longevity of missionaries, to missionaries paying the price and staying when times were hard, to missionaries establishing a real trust relationship with the Nigerian people," he explains.

As an example, Mills points out that eight Southern Baptist missionaries to Nigeria, who will retire within the next year, have a combined total of 268 years of Christian witness in that country.

And 15 other Nigerian missionaries this summer received service pins representing 335 years of work as missionaries.

Mills says one of the retiring missionaries, Elizabeth Truly of Texas, has spent 40 years in one spot, Abeokuta, teaching at the Baptist Women's College.

"She was originally stationed there only temporarily," Mills says. "But she stayed 40 years. Think of the number of young women who were students there, the lives she has helped change."

Mills points to the work done by the other seven retirees. "You can't begin to say all they've done. Who can count the churches they've started, the people they've touched."

Also retiring are Wilfred and Esther Congdon of Colorado. New church buildings designed by him and her former students will be lasting reminders of their combined service of 81 years.

"She'd say she is just a homemaker," Mills adds. "But she has headed schools, taught, raised a family and had guests in her home for many years."

Dr. and Mrs. William F. Williams from Georgia and Oklahoma have given a combined total of 58 years in medical work. Williams is a pathologist at the Baptist Medical Centre in Ogbomosho, where he has been stationed since appointment. Mrs. Williams has been involved in nursing education for many years.

"Mrs. Williams has recently taken over student work and developed it to become a responsibility of the Nigerian Baptist Convention," Mills explains. "Her years of service allowed her to go to Nigerians who trusted her and approach them about the need for student work."

The Carl F. Whirleys have served in Nigeria since 1947. During those years Whirley has worked himself out of several jobs as trained Nigerians took over different responsibilities. He is currently principal at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, where Mrs. Whirley helps with secretarial and bookkeeping work.

The eighth Nigerian missionary to retire, Frances Hammett, came to Nigeria just two years ago, but had served in medical work in Tanzania in Eastern Africa for 25 years.

"Work is finally booming because someone stayed and paid a price," Mills says. "It wasn't easy to be a missionary to Nigeria at times, but they stuck it out, stayed with their call."

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Farmers Attend Field Day--
Learn Agriculture and Love

Baptist Press
8/9/78

SERENJE, Zambia (BP)--Seeing is believing for Zambian farmers, whether it's better farming methods or a visible demonstration of the love of Christ.

More than 125 farmers and their families attended an annual field day on the Kalwa Farm near Serenje, Zambia, sponsored by the farm's staff of missionaries and local Baptists.

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The Malcolm Moffat family, pioneer missionaries in Africa and related Scottish missionary and African explorer David Livingstone, gave the farm to Southern Baptists for use in developing local farming methods and production.

Southern Baptist missionary Thomas A. Waddill can't visit every farmer in the course of his agricultural work. So once a year he holds a field day, asking the farmers to come to him. This year's guests also included several dignitaries.

Another missionary, evangelist Jerry A. Hubbard, works with Waddill and local Baptist pastor Moses L. Chimfumpa in planning the spiritual emphasis of the day.

Waddill's demonstrations showed the difference fertilizer can make in the yield of maize crops. Local farmers took particular interest in this, Hubbard said. Maize, used to make a local dish of meal, is the mainstay of the Zambian diet.

Farmers also saw how to use soybeans as a cash crop and a soil improvement method. Farming in Zambia is much less advanced than the American agriculture industry, and the ideas of fertilizer and crop rotation are new to Zambian farmers.

Missionaries use demonstration plots to grow varieties of vegetables, including tomatoes, cabbage, beans and potatoes. They serve as teaching aids and help supply the local people, the Malcolm Moffat Teachers Training College, a boys school and two hospitals.

But agriculture wasn't the only demonstration Zambian farmers saw. "The day was a success because the people returned home with spiritual food," Hubbard says. "They have learned that Baptists want to help in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

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

Church Raises Funds For Bold Mission Thrust

Baptist Press
8/9/78

PASCAGOULA, Miss. (BP)--Calvary Baptist Church has launched a pilot project to raise funds for the Southern Baptist Bold Mission Thrust above regular contributions.

The church in Pascagoula, Miss., may be the first Southern Baptist church to involve itself in a fund-raising campaign for Bold Mission Thrust, the SBC plan to reach the world for Christ by the year 2000, says John Alexander of Jackson, Miss.

"We can't reach the current Bold Mission Goal (which calls for significant increases in funds and personnel) at the current rate of giving," says Alexander, director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention's stewardship department, which is directing the Missions Challenge Campaign at the church.

Alexander bases the campaign on a modified version of the Together We Build fund raising plan for church construction promoted by Southern Baptist stewardship leaders. But he said it adds a prayer emphasis, a missions education emphasis and an emphasis on Mission Service Corps, the Southern Baptist Convention effort to place 5,000 short-term mission volunteers on home and foreign mission fields.

"And an advantage is that we're reaching top financial leaders in the church with a missions education program whom we aren't usually able to reach through regular missions education programs," says Alexander.

The church hopes to raise over \$100,000 for Bold Mission Thrust. "We have had a growing concern about our need for a greater commitment to missions," said Byron Mathis, pastor of the Pascagoula church. "This new campaign gives us the tool we have been searching for to inform and commit our people."

Alexander says such a program will do no damage to regular giving, citing examples where churches have continued to give over and above regular offerings after they were challenged to give for a special purpose.

"Giving begets giving," he said. "Any time you can lead a person to a deeper commitment of himself and his possessions to the Lord, you'll find that his giving breaks out in a variety of ways. When he learns the real joy of Christian giving, he wants to do more and wants his friends to do more. This has been proven again and again."

Man Breaks Gambling Chain,
Now Helps Others Get Free

By Jim Newton

RENO, Nev. (BP)--Five years ago, Bob Anderson walked home late one night from work as a 21 dealer at a Reno, Nev., gambling casino, too broke even to ride a bus.

He had lost almost everything he valued in life--his house, his car, his television, and most of all, his wife and son.

Like an alcoholic, he was hooked on gambling. It had destroyed his marriage, ending in divorce.

That night in 1973, Anderson walked into his tiny rented room and turned on a cheap transistor radio. A program entitled "Unshackled," produced by the Chicago Rescue Mission, was playing. Anderson listened. Then he asked himself, "If Jesus Christ could unshackle the lives of alcoholics, why couldn't he unshackle me from the chains of gambling?"

It was the beginning of a new life that has led Anderson into the ministry at Rock of the Comstock Baptist Church in Steamboat, Nev., a fast-growing suburb south of Reno. A bi-vocational pastor, he supports his new family by working in the warehouse of the B. F. Goodrich plant in Reno, leading a Bible study for the other men at the plant.

Whenever he meets someone caught in the vicious cycle of gambling, he is quick to share his personal testimony. He quickly learned the ways of the world when his parents abandoned him in Reno at age 14.

"I was a wild young man," he confided. "I tried everything--gambling, drinking, girls. I traveled all of the country trying to find happiness, but it always eluded me."

Because he had been rejected even by his parents, he had a bad self-image. "I thought I was no good. When I gambled and won that made me feel good. But when I lost, it made me even more depressed and I felt like a bum.

"So I would go back to the tables and try that much harder to win. It was a never ending cycle. Every time I lost, my bad self-image was intensified, and I gambled that much more," he said.

For 15 years, Anderson was a dealer at several casinos in the Reno area, gambling away 90 percent of what he earned. He got involved in drugs and finally lost everything.

Anderson made his faith decision public at the First Southern Baptist Church, Reno, where he was soon elected Church Training Director.

Less than a year later, Anderson enrolled at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., to prepare for the ministry.

Although he had once said he never wanted to return to Nevada, Anderson realized that God could use his personal experience with gambling to help others caught in the same cycle. He contacted Bob Wells, the director of missions for Northern Nevada Baptist Association, who suggested the need for a new church in Steamboat.

Anderson started the Steamboat church "from scratch" on Nov. 6, 1978. Within a few months, he had baptized four people, and by May attendance was averaging 20 to 25.

At age 39, Anderson feels life is just beginning for him. "Now, I have a purpose for living--to help others like me."



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