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79-103

Zimbabwe Rhodesian Baptists  
Request More Missionaries

By Mary Jane Welch

GWELO, Zimbabwe Rhodesia (BP)--Although Baptists in some areas of this country have suffered for their faith in recent months, the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe Rhodesia has requested more missionaries, particularly church development specialists, from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Zimbabwe Rhodesian Baptists made their request through the Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries) just weeks after a young lay pastor in a rural area near Mozambique was murdered and the Baptist clinic and church at Sessami had been forced to close.

In spite of these earlier events, the recently elected mission chairman, Ralph L. Rummage of Oklahoma, expressed optimism about the future of Baptist work in Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

"Here in Gwelo I've noticed no extreme attitudes among black or white," he said in a letter written June 2, the day after the installation of the new majority government in Salisbury. The government, headed by Bishop Abel Muzorewa, a United Methodist minister, was elected in April under a new constitution which shifted power in the former British colony from a white minority to blacks. Guerrilla groups operating in the country oppose both the old white-dominated government and the new majority government which retains a degree of white power.

The lay minister killed by guerrillas, Kudakwashe, had been married about a month when he heard a knock on his door one night. Guerrillas demanded that he go with them, said Logan Atnip, former mission chairman now on furlough in Houston, Texas.

When they stopped walking they accused him of informing the security forces of guerrilla locations. They allowed him to kneel and pray before killing him.

"The martyr Stephen came to our minds when we heard of this young man who was killed out there in the African night with a prayer on his lips," said Atnip.

In the Sessami incident, the staff of the Baptist clinic and church, all Zimbabwe Rhodesians, were allowed to leave for Gwelo the Monday after Easter following a confrontation with guerrillas. No one was injured, but staffers said the clinic building was destroyed before they left. They didn't know the fate of mission residences and other buildings.

The clinic, believed to be the last Baptist clinic still operating in the country, was evacuated by missionaries in March 1977.

While Baptist work was curtailed in these areas, scores were making professions of faith in revivals in the Bulawayo area, said Southern Baptist missionaries Horace F. and Elizabeth Burns of Oklahoma and Missouri. One of four churches holding revivals using South African pastor D. K. Dube as evangelist reported 16 adult professions in one evening.

Freed Atlanta Man Dies  
After 45 Days of Freedom

ATLANTA (BP)--Mosie Alfred Harriell, alias Charlie Harris, lived only 45 days free from the threat of extradition before dying of a heart attack in mid-June.

Harris had been called "an ecumenical movement" by his public defender because Atlanta churches of all faiths rallied to his cause and quest for freedom.

Harris escaped 10 years ago from an Indiana prison work detail where he was confined for killing a policeman in 1943. He lived in Atlanta under the name of Harris on "borrowed time" according to doctors, because of a heart condition, diabetes and asthma.

When he was discovered and jailed last fall, Oakhurst Baptist Church in an Atlanta suburb offered its building as security for his \$30,000 bond, but never officially needed to sign the bond. Friends and church members instead raised money to pay the bond fee.

A request from Indiana for extradition was withdrawn in early May, freeing Harriell from the threat of extradition.

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SBC Exhibits Get  
BPRA Awards

Baptist Press

HOUSTON (BP)--Ten exhibits at the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in annual session received awards from the denomination's Baptist Public Relations Association.

First and second place awards were given in each category. Categories were divided according to the amount of money spent on each exhibit. Twenty exhibits entered the competition.

First place winner in exhibits costing up to \$500 was East Texas Baptist College. The second place went to Campbellsville College.

The Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission received the first place award among those exhibits costing from \$501 to \$1,000. Mississippi College received the second place award.

Among exhibits costing \$1,001 to \$2,000, the Baptist World Alliance won first place, and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board won second.

The Baptist Sunday School Board received the first place award in the \$2,001 and up category. Carson Newman College received the second place.

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Graham Draws Hope for Future  
From Missionary Dedication

By Linda Lawson

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Billy Graham likened today's world to an earthquake about to happen but said events such as the Houston Astrodome dedication of 1,100 missionaries during this month's Southern Baptist Convention give him hope for the future.

Speaking on the eve of his Nashville crusade at a dinner in his honor at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, the evangelist said the Houston dedication service moved him deeply.

"I cried that night," he said. "There's hope when we see something like that."

In an address frequently blended with anecdotes of conversations with world leaders over the last 30 years, Graham told his audience of 200 religious publishers and community and denominational leaders that the one unanimous note being sounded today is pessimism about the next decade.

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Graham cited political, economic, social, moral and spiritual problems which he compared to "fault lines" in the earth. "The spiritual fault line is the root of all our other fault lines," he said.

Noting President Carter's somber speech to the Congress following his return from Vienna to sign SALT II, Graham said Carter "has learned in the White House what weapons are being developed in labs around the world."

"I can't help but wonder if our world is headed for a nuclear holocaust," said Graham. "When have we ever heard so much talk of peace and seen so many threats of war?"

Graham called on his audience to help meet the world's spiritual crisis by first recognizing that a spiritual vacuum exists, especially among youth. "I'm not sure we've found a way to communicate our message yet," said Graham, "despite all the print and electronic media at our disposal."

The evangelist said that wherever he goes he sees signs that people are searching for answers, turning to the occult, drugs and "thousands and millions are turning toward God... Everywhere we go we find prayer groups and Bible study groups springing up across the country," said Graham, noting that despite world problems more people became Christians last year than in any year in the history of the world.

Finally, he said, "We must commit our lives again individually to God, changing our lifestyles to conform to Jesus Christ," he said. "We need to evangelize our own membership."

Graham said that while his evangelistic movement has been an independent one, that he is grateful for his ordination and membership as a Southern Baptist.

"You have let me stay in, put your arms around me and given me roots. That means more to me every day," he said.

Of the invitation from Nashville religious leaders to hold a crusade, Graham said neither he nor his team was initially interested in the idea. However, he called Nashville "almost the religious center of the United States" and said, "If God could do something in Nashville it might have an impact on the whole nation."

In his introduction of Graham, Sunday School Board president Grady Cothen said the evangelist has successfully weathered both abuse and the temptations of adulation "and gone on his way at the thing God has called him to do."

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(BP) photo mailed to Baptist state newspapers by Sunday School Board Bureau of Baptist Press.

'Complicated' SBC Raises  
Mrs. Fletcher's Ire

By Larry Crisman

Baptist Press  
6/21/79

HOUSTON (BP)--"I'm mad as heck and I'm not going to take it any more!"

Cleaned up a bit for the benefit of all good Baptists, this quotation from the motion picture "Network" could serve as a dandy capsule of Mrs. Jesse Fletcher's feelings on parliamentary procedure at the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Why do you twist all these things (debated issues) around so that nobody knows what's going on?" demanded the diminutive messenger from Long Beach, Fla., during the final morning session of the 122nd SBC.

After being ruled out of order by outgoing President Jimmy Allen, the riled-up, raven-haired member of Truett Memorial Baptist Church stormed back to her seat.

"It sure is hard to understand what's going on here," she told a reporter. "They ought to make it simple so regular folk can know how to vote."

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Mrs. Fletcher, who demurred when asked her age, speaks with authority. She said she's attended at least 90 separate conventions, ranging from religious gatherings to political rallies. "I made a big effort to get to this one," she said, "and now I don't even know what they're doing."

Mrs. Fletcher believes she speaks for a growing group of Southern Baptists who are becoming increasingly dismayed by the complexity of the sprawling annual meeting of the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

"Of all the conventions I've attended, this is the most complicated," she insisted.

What got Mrs. Fletcher's dander up was a drawn out discussion about the Internal Revenue Service and an issue which has been a longtime Baptist favorite--separation of church and state.

"Why can't I just say I'm for it or against it?" she demanded.

According to Mrs. Fletcher, she's also ticked off about "the way they word things (resolutions and motions) at the convention."

"I don't know whether I'm coming back or not. I've been coming to these conventions since 1941, but if you can't understand what they're talking about, what's the use in being here?" she asked.

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Ugandan Government Change  
Delays Volunteer Aid Team

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Departure of seven Southern Baptist volunteers for Uganda was delayed after the country's ruling coalition replaced President Yussufu K. Lule with Godfrey Binaisa.

An eighth volunteer, former missionary physician Lorne Brown of Lincoln, Neb., continued to Uganda, where he plans to assess medical needs and make recommendations for a medical missions program there.

Southern Baptist missionary G. Webster Carroll of West Virginia called the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board June 20 to request delay of all volunteers except Brown until Uganda missionaries could reenter the country and evaluate conditions.

When the government change occurred, Carroll and his wife, Betty, a Floridian, and James L. and Linda Rice of Virginia were in Nairobi, Kenya. They were participating in a mission meeting with James E. Hampton, the board's field representative for Eastern Africa, and Zeb V. Moss, mass media representative for Eastern Africa.

Carroll said he does not anticipate any adverse action, but is waiting to see what will take place. He said Southern Baptist missionaries are willing to work with the new government as appropriate.

The aid-distribution team--six East Africa Missionary Kids (MKs) and former East Africa missionary Jimmie D. Hooten of Dallas, Texas--were at the New York airport when word came for them to delay departure. They returned to Dallas to await further instructions. Carroll anticipated a delay of about a week.

Hooten and the MKs, all Swahili-speaking, were to help distribute aid poured into Uganda following the overthrow of former President Idi Amin, who had reduced the nation to poverty. MKs on the team are Jim and Tim Tidenberg, both of Clovis, N.M.; Will Partain of Fort Worth, Texas; James Boone of Friendswood, Texas; David Hooten of Dallas, and Randy Senter of North Zulch, Texas.

According to wire service reports, pro-western leader Binaisa, a former Ugandan attorney general who has been practicing law in New York and London for the past five years, was selected after Lule was forced to step down in a dispute over cabinet appointments.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

The official, up-to-date membership of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., where new Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian Rogers serves as president, is 10,407, as of June 20, 1979. Some stories have reported 11,000 and others, 10,000.