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Missionaries Assimilate  
Through 'Being' Africans

By Jim Newton

BLANTYRE, Malawi (BP)--"They're not really Americans--they're Africans," according to Ruben Nkhata, pastor of the Chichiri Baptist Church, Blantyre, Malawi.

For 19 years, Buddy and Jean Albright have been missionaries to Malawi and Zambia in the heart of eastern Africa. For the past 11 years, they have been developing an agricultural demonstration farm and a pastors' training center in the eastern province of Zambia.

But they feel it's not what they do but what they are as missionaries that's important.

Albright has developed a school to help train and equip national pastors for their ministries. He's busy, but is always willing to drop his current project to spend an entire day in an African funeral in the village.

And no matter how big a rush he might be in, he always stops to offer help whenever he passes a broken-down car or truck on the highway. It's this characteristic that enabled him to obtain the 750 acres where his training center and the agricultural demonstration farm are located.

In 1970, the paramount chief of a chain of villages in eastern Zambia had given to Baptists a small piece of property for use by the Baptist mission, but the mission had to get permission from a Zambian rural council committee to use the property.

The chairman of the committee was opposed to Baptist use of the land, Albright learned, but he was never able to get an appointment to see the chairman, even though he tried repeatedly.

Finally one day as Albright waited in the office talking to the secretary, the chairman burst into the room. "He took one look at me and remembered immediately that several months earlier I had stopped and helped him when his car broke down on the highway," Buddy recalled.

As a result, Buddy's request to use 20 acres of land escalated into sudden approval for use of 750 acres of land previously set aside by the British as an "intensive cultivation area" for farming. The property is two miles deep and 3,300 feet wide, fronting the major highway from Petauke to Chipata, Zambia.

The Albrights live on the farm, close to the land they helped clear by hand. Their house has no electricity in the bedrooms--only candlelight. Mrs. Albright cooks over a wood-burning stove in a kitchen reminiscent of rural life in America during pre-depression years.

Outside the house the most prominent feature is a water tank sitting atop a wood-burning fireplace--a homemade hot water heater. Beside it sits an old-time washing machine with a hand-cranked wringer.

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Behind the Albright home stands a steel-frame building with walls of elephant grass and a thatched roof. There the pastors' training school meets one week each month. Nearby is a "dormitory" where preachers attending the school can spend the night.

Modern "necessities" are luxury items the Albrights do without. To them, having is not as important as being.

What being means to Buddy and Jean becomes apparent when they go into the villages not far from the farm. They are greeted immediately by scores of Zambians. Children flock around them, grinning and chattering.

As the women of the village approach, there are a few words of greeting, and suddenly the people burst into joyous singing. Clapping their hands and swaying to the music, Jean and the village women join in a welcoming ceremony. Love radiates from their faces.

Buddy chats quietly with the men, looking deep into their faces with obvious compassion and concern.

Buddy hardly looks the part, but he is an authority on cultural anthropology. He hopes to complete work on a doctor of philosophy degree in anthropology at the University of Kentucky while on furlough this year.

He feels strongly that Southern Baptists have not adequately applied anthropology to missions and have not grappled effectively with the problems of white Americans trying to win Africans to Christ.

"The basic problem is that we (Americans) have the wrong grandmothers, and we can't change that," he insists. "What we've got to do is to train and equip Africans to win their own people to Christ."

And that's what he has been trying to do through the pastors' leadership training school. For nine months each year, each Baptist pastor at 20 preaching points in the Petauke area goes to the training center for a week of intensive study taught by Albright.

He has established a similar program for pastors of churches east of Petauke near the Mozambique border. But Albright doesn't like to talk a lot about the training school or what he feels it has accomplished.

To him, the training school is "doing" and he's more concerned about "being" a loving, caring, concerned Christian in the everyday relationships with the people he and Jean obviously love deeply.

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Adapted from World Mission Journal, June 1979.

(BP) photos mailed to Baptist newspapers by Memphis Bureau of Baptist Press.

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Yesterday a Fighter;  
Today a Peacemaker

By Jennifer Anderson

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (BP)--War. Conflict. Unrest. However it's labeled, strife connotes negative aspects of life. And for Nicaraguan Julio Meza, things were no different.

As a high school student in Nicaragua, Meza was thrust into strikes and demonstrations, bomb throwing and protests. "I lived hating," he says of his teen years.

Because of his involvements, Meza's family was forced to move to Honduras. He r members, "They left in fear of repercussions. . .I was almost a wanted man in Nicaragua."

As fighting continued between Nicaraguan government troops and guerrillas of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, Meza went to neighboring Costa Rica, searching for a group with the idea of returning to fight.

He found his way to the Baptist refugee camp set up just outside San Jose where he met Luis Carlos Ramtrez, a young medical student who told Meza about his faith in Jesus Christ.

"To me it was like a light that lighted up my eyes with a few words," Meza says. "He spoke of my ideals, of all that I had inside of me, just as if he could see it. He told me that only by changing the heart of man could there be peace and happiness on this earth; that nothing was gained by fighting, with spilling the blood of your fellowman; that it was better to search for God."

It was at the Baptist camp that Julio Meza became a new man, accepting Jesus Christ as Savior.

"God changed my life," he says. "I did things that were not good in the eyes of God--much less in obedience to the commandment left by Christ--the one that says "love one another as I have loved you."

"Here I am seeing what God is doing in my life. He is totally changing my way of being and thinking. Today I'm beginning to feel peace and happiness and love for my fellowman and I pray to God it will go on."

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BWA Urges Travel Aid  
For Third World Delegates

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Robert S. Denny, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, has challenged Baptist churches in the United States to follow the example of many Canadian Baptists in helping delegates from Third World countries travel to the Baptist World Congress in Toronto, July 8-13, 1980.

Fifty-eight of the 115 national Baptist conventions and unions affiliated with the BWA have fewer than 10,000 members, Denny said. Most of these and several others are located in economically depressed countries of Asia and Africa or the currency controlled countries of eastern Europe.

"The Alliance wants to have every group represented at its congresses," Denny said. "In fact," he added, "their presence is essential if we truly have a world meeting."

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Mrs. Nancy Camplon of Toronto, chairman of the BWA's travel scholarship program, said she expects the goal of 200 scholarships from Canadian churches will be met or exceeded. Churches are asked to contribute \$1,500 for each sponsored delegate.

He said that smaller churches which feel unable to furnish a full \$1,500 scholarship may band with other churches in their geographical area to provide the necessary funds and jointly entertain a delegate.

Betty Lee Smith, BWA's conference coordinator, said that all scholarships will be assigned through the BWA's Washington, D.C., office, 1628 Sixteenth St., to avoid duplication and make sure that help goes to those individuals appointed by their respective conventions or unions.

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Families Urged To Protect  
Their 'Human Capital'

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ARLINGTON, Texas (BP)--Families should protect "human capital" in addition to financial savings, a life insurance counselor advised a Texas Baptist family life conference.

"Human capital is probably the best investment you have today," said K. Edwin Graham, director of education and community services for the American Council of Life Insurance.

Graham said that human capital includes job-related skills and knowledge. He said that a family should protect and maintain the professional skills of a wife during the years she remains at home with young children.

He said a wife can read and do volunteer work to keep current with her job field. This would protect her job skills from obsolescence and allow her to resume working when the children are older if she wishes.

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Bennett and Rogers Set  
For National TV, Sept. 23

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Adrian Rogers, new president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Harold C. Bennett, new executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, will appear on the NBC-TV network, Sept. 23.

The program, "The Thrust Toward 2000," will be produced by NBC in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. Rogers and Bennett will be presented in an hour long conversation moderated by NBC's Russell Barber. It will begin at 5 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, although air time may vary in different areas.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention at its Houston meeting last June. Bennett succeeded the recently retired Porter Routh, Aug. 1, 1979, as chief executive of the Nashville-based Executive Committee.

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Barber is expected to ask about such things as the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust to reach everyone in the world with the Christian message by the year 2000, and the inerrancy discussion (whether the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible word of God) taking place among many Baptists today.

"These men are two of our denomination's newest leaders, and when NBC approached the Radio and Television Commission about interviewing them, we felt it would provide the nation with additional insights into our denomination," said Robert B. Taylor, head of the Radio and Television Commission's broadcast division.

Taylor said the program would be taped in New York Sept. 21.

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