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Baptists Dig In  
To Fight Drought

By Mike Livingston

TENKOUDOUGOU, Upper Volta (BP)--South of the Sahara Desert in West Africa where drought is perennial, Southern Baptists are about to plunge in to bring the people a permanent water supply.

Villagers around Tenkoudougou in the central part of Upper Volta may depend more upon rainfall for survival than any other people anywhere. Enough rain falls in the area to make a crop...if the rain falls at the right time.

That's a big "if" in this area because the rain must fall at just the right stages as crops mature. Frequently nearly all the rain falls at once and the dry soil sucks it up so fast that everything shrivels and dies. No crops can be produced again until the next year...maybe.

But at its April board meeting the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board appropriated \$35,000 for two deep-drilled wells in the Tenkoudougou area.

The wells--one in the village and one several miles away where Southern Baptist missionaries in Upper Volta hope a dam can be constructed--are only the beginning of a project that could take years to complete and a million dollars to finance.

"After the wells are in we hope it proves feasible to construct a dam and make a sizeable lake," says John Mills, board secretary for West Africa. "If we do that there can be some irrigation, some fish farming, and some development of the villages around that area."

But the dam is not part of the initial plans.

First, a permanent water supply will have to be produced for the villagers and missionaries already living in the area and for volunteers Mills hopes will work on latter stages of the project.

"We're just going to take it one step at a time," he says. "We've got the money for two wells, we'll get the people to build them, then we'll go on to the next step. We feel like the project offers all kinds of opportunities to help people while we're growing churches in the process."

The Sandwabo area has 13 churches, all of which grew out of earlier Southern Baptist relief efforts in years when there were no crops. No one, however, can give a very accurate estimate of how many people the wells in Upper Volta will affect because of mobile population and indistinct village perimeters.

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Mills says many wells have been dug by hand throughout Upper Volta, some as deep as 85 feet, but "what we've found is that the wells will go dry in a year or two. Then you have to go back in and deepen them and you may get one that will last, but none of them have been there long enough for us to know."

He recalls that during a speaking engagement at a church in a similar area a woman invited him to see one of the hand-dug wells. "She was so proud of the well because that was the first dry season she and her children had not had to carry water on their heads six miles to their home."

Besides funding the wells, the board will transfer agricultural missionary Larry Cox and his wife Cheryl from Ivory Coast. They will arrive in Upper Volta about the first of next year.

"When possible we're hoping to appoint a civil engineer who has some know-how about water resources, building and development," says Mills, adding, "he would also coordinate the project when we start bringing in volunteers from the States to work with our field evangelists and agriculturist."

When the project reaches that stage it will need many volunteers and the cost could approach \$1 million or more.

But for now, Mills says, the area needs "those two wells because with them we can begin pulling the people away from that fine line between life and death upon which they live all the time."

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Mike Livingston, associate editor of Probe magazine, SBC Brotherhood Commission, wrote this during a special assignment at the SBC Foreign Mission Board in Richmond.

Record Louisiana Crowd  
Sees Mission Appointment

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press  
4/9/80

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--The largest gathering of Louisiana Southern Baptists in history saw 22 young adults named missionaries in the first Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board appointment service held in the state.

About 7,500 persons gathered in the Rapides Parish Coliseum in Alexandria April 8 to see the new missionaries appointed and hear an address by R. Keith Parks in his first appointment service since becoming executive director of the Foreign Mission Board in January.

"The one thing you're called of God to do...is to give a clear witness that Jesus Christ is Lord and...share with a lost and dying world that Jesus loves them," Parks said to the missionaries in an address based on Paul's statement in Acts 22:14-15.

When he extended an invitation at the service's conclusion for others to heed God's call, 85 responded. Of those, 65 expressed an interest in exploring possible foreign missions service.

Parks also announced that giving to the 1979 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions has already surpassed the total given for the 1978 offering by more than one and a half million dollars. As of April 8, the board has received \$37,425,201, Parks told a group including representatives of both the Woman's Missionary Union and the Brotherhood Commission which promote the yearly offering.

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With 92.4 percent of the 1979 goal of \$40.5 million already met, Parks called the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering "the greatest single offering ever brought together for spreading of the gospel around the world." He said it suggested a good future for Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust plan for sharing the gospel around the world by the year 2000.

The Louisiana Baptist Convention, host for the special service, arranged for it to coincide with the annual meeting of the Louisiana Woman's Missionary Union so that the Baptist women could attend the appointment service.

Following special music from a combined choir of more than 500 voices under the direction of Jerome Malek, minister of music at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, new missionaries gave testimonies.

Mark L. Yeast, who will go with his wife to Venezuela, told the near-capacity crowd that the road to his appointment began not with his running to God, but with his running from God by joining the U.S. Army.

But while serving in Vietnam, Yeast said he realized that the Vietnamese and the Thai people had as much claim on God's love as he did. While completing study at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Yeast has worked with people from around the world as assistant chaplain at the Baptist Seamen's Center, New Orleans. The Yeasts are natives of Georgia.

Another new missionary, David L. Cheyne, is the son of former missionaries who were appointed in the first appointment service of Parks' predecessor, Baker J. Cauthen, 26 years earlier. Cheyne's father, John R. Cheyne, is now associate consultant for relief ministries at the Foreign Mission Board. Cheyne, a Texan, and his wife, a native of Tennessee, will go to the Windward Islands.

Others named missionaries include Mr. and Mrs. Dennis O. Brotherton from Missouri and Mississippi, respectively, assigned to Korea; Mr. and Mrs. Samuel W. Carmack V, Oklahoma and Texas, to Equatorial Brazil; Mr. and Mrs. James O. Hare, Mississippi and Arizona, to South Brazil; and Mr. and Mrs. John L. Hopper, California and Texas, to Korea.

Also appointed were Mr. and Mrs. Dwight W. Jackson, Missouri and Ontario, Canada, to Burundi; Mr. and Mrs. Landon B. Jones, Texas, to South Brazil; Gerry Odom, Arkansas, to Taiwan; Linda Pegram, West Virginia, to Hong Kong; Mr. and Mrs. Larry A. Pumpelly, Ohio, to Uganda; and Mr. and Mrs. Fred H. Sorrells, Texas, to Burundi.

Three other persons were named special project medical workers for one year in the board meeting the following day. They are Joseph H. Burch Jr., North Carolina, to Jordan, and Dr. and Mrs. Hal Browning Boone, Texas and Pennsylvania, to Uganda. Dr. Boone is the son of former medical missionaries to Uganda and brother of Susan Goodgame, missionary to Uganda, and Cathy Schellenberg, missionary to Kenya.

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Foreign Board Reorganizes,  
Names Seven To Major Posts

Baptist Press  
4/9/80

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--Seeking a more functional structure, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has elected seven staff members to new executive management positions and given a new title to its executive director.

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The board, during its April 7-9 meeting in Alexandria, La., changed the title of R. Keith Parks to president and named William R. O'Brien as executive vice president. O'Brien, a former missionary to Indonesia, has been secretary for denominational coordination since 1976.

Parks' executive staff also will include Homer Beaver, a retired U.S. Air Force logistics expert, as administrative assistant; Winston Crawley, a 33-year veteran of Southern Baptist missions, as vice president for a new office of planning; and a director of development, yet to be named.

Four other vice presidents were elected to head up new offices under which the board's functions will be grouped. They are Charles W. Bryan, vice president for overseas operation; William W. Marshall, vice president for human resources; Johnni Johnson Scofield, vice president for communications; and Sidney C. Reber, vice president for management services.

The six vice presidents, administrative assistant, director of development and the board's treasurer will meet with Parks as the executive management group. All these changes will take effect May 1.

Parks said he hopes to have all major executive positions filled and his new administrative team functioning at full strength by October.

A board committee on staff reorganization, which worked with Parks in recommending the new management plan, said the new design is aimed at grouping like functions in a more cohesive organization. The terms "president" and "vice president" were chosen because the committee felt they would be clearer to the general public than present terminology.

To avoid confusion, the officers of the elected board are expected to be changed to "chairman" and "vice chairmen" at a subsequent meeting of the board, which will allow time for the required constitutional changes to make this possible. The elected board of approximately 80 members represents Southern Baptists in supervising the denomination's overseas mission work.

The new organization places greater emphasis upon strategy and planning, pulls together personnel-related functions that previously have been handled by different divisions or departments, and brings all communications functions into a more coordinated unit.

Emphasizing the importance of the new planning office, Parks said a plan must be developed to carry out the overall objectives of the board. "We must develop a simple, yet comprehensive plan that can give guidance to the staff and missionaries--a plan that can be communicated to Southern Baptists," he explained. "Once this has been done, we can project more realistically the future financial needs."

A planning consultant and one or more researchers are expected to assist in this planning aspect, with furloughing missionaries perhaps rotating in the research role.

The new office of human resources will process and give orientation to both missionaries and volunteers and also care for missionaries' furlough needs and ministries. It will perform these functions in close cooperation with the office of overseas operation, Parks said.

The office of communications will bring graphic arts and news and information services into closer alignment with other communications aspects of the board in what Parks described as a "lean, responsive team" designed to tell the global missions story more effectively to Southern Baptists.

As executive vice president, O'Brien will continue to carry many of the responsibilities he has had as secretary for denominational coordination and will represent the president in his absence. He also will function as liaison to the Baptist World Alliance and non-Baptist missions bodies and sending agencies and represent Parks at his request.

A native of Fort Worth, Texas, the 46-year-old O'Brien is a musician and composer who has also served as a pastor. He and his wife, the former Dellanna West of Odessa, Texas, were missionaries to Indonesia, 1963 to 1974. He is the author of "Missions for Tomorrow," the 1980 adult mission study book.

Beaver, as administrative assistant, will manage the executive offices; assist in administration, management, budget and organization; plan and implement administrative and logistical support for the board; and represent the president and executive vice president in their absence.

Now 55, Beaver retired from the Air Force as a colonel in 1976 with 33 years' service. As deputy chief of staff for logistics with the Alaskan Air Command, he was nominated as outstanding logistician in the Air Force and received the Legion of Merit in 1976. Active as a church lay leader while in service, he pursued this interest by taking seminary training after retirement. Since 1978 he has been manager of media resources in the board's communications department. A native of Cushing, Okla., he is married to the former Anna Sue Denton of Danville, Ark.

Crawley, 59, has served since 1968 as the director of the overseas division, which today administers the work of almost 3,000 missionaries in 94 countries. Earlier he had worked 14 years as secretary for the Orient. He and his wife, the former Margaret Lawrence of Lufkin, Texas, were missionaries to China and Southeast Asia, 1947 to 1954. A native of Newport, Tenn., Crawley is the author of two mission study books and a Christian doctrine book in Chinese.

In his new role Crawley will represent broad overall concerns of the executive office not limited to any part of the organization, Parks said, and will bring recommendations as the basis for decision making by the president and executive management group.

Crawley's former duties as administrative head of the overseas missionary force will be assumed by Bryan, a 57-year-old native of Whitesboro, Texas. For the past 12 years Bryan has been area secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean, administering the work of missionaries assigned to 25 countries and to the Baptist Spanish Publishing House in El Paso, Texas.

Bryan and his wife, the former Martha Christian of East Point, Ga., served 18 years as missionaries--first in Costa Rica, then Peru and later in Colombia when Bryan was named field representative for the Caribbean and northern South America. In his new post, Bryan will supervise the work of area secretaries as well as consultants who assist in specialized areas.

Marshall, 48, has served as secretary for furlough ministries since 1976. A native of Frankfort, Ky., he served as a pastor in Kentucky and Virginia and for more than five years was an associate secretary for missionary personnel at the board.

In 1969 Marshall and his wife, the former Alice Gardner of Owensboro, Ky., were appointed as missionaries. He served as field representative in the Middle East for seven years and later as a missionary in Germany. He is the author of "To Be Free," the 1969 mission study book for young people.

Mrs. Scofield, 57, has served as planning specialist in the denominational coordination department for more than three years. Born in Huntington, W. Va., she grew up in Ashland, Ky. Before joining the board's home office staff in 1954, she was a missionary to Japan, 1951 to 1954, and had previous experience as an assistant editor of "The Student," a Baptist Sunday School Board publication.

A frequent contributor to Baptist periodicals, she is the author of five books, all carrying her byline Johnni Johnson. In 1977 she married Fon H. Scofield Jr., who pioneered the board's audiovisuals program. He died in 1978.

Reber, 61, is a native of Jackson, Miss. Since 1969 he has directed the board's management services division. He and his wife, the former Alwilda Montgomery of Missouri, were missionaries to Malaysia, 1962 to 1969.

Earlier Reber had worked with U.S. government agencies for 20 years. These included the Veterans Administration, Civil Service Commission, the War Department (later the Department of Defense), and the Internal Revenue Service, where he was regional training officer.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Dual Pioneer Hamilton  
Has Music, Gospel Heart

By Renee Wash

Baptist Press  
4/9/80

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Whether it's bringing country music into areas where it's not played or introducing Christ to people who haven't heard the gospel, entertainer George Hamilton IV is a "hopeless pioneer at heart."

Hamilton is currently appearing as guest host on "Country Crossroads," the country music interview radio program produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. He joins regular host Jerry Clower, country comedian, and Bill Mack of Fort Worth, country music disc jockey.

During an interview while in Fort Worth to tape "Country Crossroads," Hamilton said he likes the subtle approach the program takes to tell people about Christ. He called it a "gentle way to get the word across."

Hamilton talked about the many places his concerts have taken him and said he witnesses to people wherever he is. "I just pack up my guitar and my Christian beliefs and I'm ready to go."

"I'm not a preacher or an evangelist," Hamilton confessed. "I'm just pickin' and grinnin' and singin' the truth."

Hamilton has introduced both country music and Christ to areas where both are strangers. He was the first American country music singer to perform in the Soviet Union.

"It was a kind of a groundbreaking exercise to see if the Russian people would accept country music," Hamilton said. "I went in March 1974 with just my guitar and the tape of the Grand Ole Opry and toured universities over there. By September a whole group of country singers had organized concert tours in the Soviet Union."

Although Hamilton called country music a "distinctly American art form," he said he wasn't surprised that it's been accepted so well in other countries. "After all, country music is a form of folk music and folk music gets its name because it is the music of the people. It's simple, direct and easy to relate to," he explained.

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Hamilton, who has recorded such hits as "Truck Driving Man," "Abilene," "Break My Mind," "Early Morning Rain," and "She's a Little Bit Country," developed his love for country music, like his strong religious beliefs, as a child growing up in North Carolina.

"We were typical mountain folk," Hamilton recalled. "We listened to the Grand Ole Opry on Saturday nights, and went to church on Sundays."

But unlike his straightforward way of witnessing for Christ, Hamilton "snuck into country music through the back door."

His first hit, "A Rose and a Baby Ruth," was classified as a rock and roll song, so he was stereotyped as a rock and roll singer.

"Country music people are some of the friendliest people in the world, but they were suspicious of a so-called rock singer trying to break into country music and I don't blame them. I was considered a Johnny-come-lately by them because I hadn't started out in country music," Hamilton said.

It took some time but he was finally accepted by the country music world and became a member of the Grand Ole Opry in 1960.

"At some point, it becomes clear you have a commitment. I love country music and I wouldn't quit trying until I was accepted as a country music singer," he said.

Hamilton's commitment to Christ is also clear. He does not let his success as a singer interfere with his devotion to his Saviour or his efforts to tell others about Jesus.

"I just want to be what I believe," he said. "The danger in being an entertainer is using your faith to help your public image. I don't want that to happen to me. All I want to do is use my music to tell the world about Jesus Christ. That's the responsibility of all communicators, as long as you're using your talents for God's purpose, not for show."

Hamilton shares his faith with his fellow performers as well as to his audiences. He called his co-workers "sensitive, creative people," but said many of them just don't believe.

"Being on the road all the time, it's easy to fall from the Way because you run into all sorts of people. It takes a person with a strong commitment to hold onto his faith and to spread that faith to others," he said.

There are many ways to witness, Hamilton said, but he found the subtle approach was best for him. Often, he said, he lets his music witness for him because "music is the international language." "Everyone understands it," he said.

So when Hamilton travels on concert tours or sings at the Grand Ole Opry or appears on "Country Crossroads," he's not just pickin' and grinnin', he's also singing for Christ.