



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

-- FEATURES

produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

June 30, 1981

81-100

Missionary Nurse's Childhood
Was Preparation For Africa

By Irma Duke

MOROKWENG, Bophuthatswana (BP)--Carolyn Roberson's difficult childhood in Henrietta, Texas, had to be preparation for her adult life.

She and her twin sister were born two months after their father died. Then, two step-fathers died before she finished the first grade, leaving her mother and five children.

At age 12 she took her first real job, as church janitor, after doing odd jobs for several years. Later, it took her 10 years to work her way through college.

Now, she is a Southern Baptist missionary nurse in an area of southern Africa, 90 miles from the nearest city and closest Americans. It's not easy in Morokweng, Bophuthatswana, either.

Roberson lives in a four-room block house with bare concrete floors and no electricity. She has telephone service, but only from 8 to 5 Monday through Friday when the community store is open. Her mailbox is a shipping crate at the same store and is shared by the whole community.

She sees 60 or 70 patients a day during regular hours at the government clinic she runs. Then she shares after-hours emergencies with her assistant, Sindolfa Matebele. Many times she opens her home to sick patients who have nowhere else to go.

Often she has to perform medical procedures that only doctors do in the states. Last fall, she delivered six babies in one night. Her clinic only has two beds; so she had to put four of the mothers on the floor.

On Saturdays she holds a youth club which 60 to 90 children attend. Then once a month in her front yard she shows a Christian film, followed by a sermon by a fellow missionary. When time permits she also likes to visit in the homes of her patients and of the children in the club.

Like other Christians, it's not easy for her to always do the things she thinks she should. When they first opened the clinic, she and Matebele worked until 10 p.m. and still had to turn people away. She said it wasn't easy "turning people away in a manner that honors him (Christ)."

She has to struggle for patience when people don't follow the directions she gives them or when parents bring in children who have been suffering for days. She struggles to do what's honorable, but admits, "I don't feel love" toward those parents.

It is also difficult for her to deal with people who wait until closing time or early morning hours to come to the clinic. Tears glisten in her eyes as she relives one experience when she says she "let the Devil get the best of me."

A family that had caused her much trouble and had faked being ill brought in a 22-year-old girl late one night. For Roberson, the day had been long and rough; she had just gotten back to bed after delivering a baby. Knowing the family's history, she halfheartedly examined the girl. She criticized the family for waiting so late to bring her and told them she would call

-more-

the ambulance the next morning to take the girl to the hospital.

"I didn't even mention the Lord's name," she confesses. The ambulance came, and Roberson again showed little patience.

When the hospital called the following day to report the girl had died from severe anemia, Roberson was appalled.

"I went to the family and apologized, but I couldn't do anything for the girl. I had been so cruel," she recalls tearfully.

It's not easy being a missionary. "Geography has nothing to do with spiritual growth," she declares. If she is a good Christian, it's not because she's in Africa; it's because she works at it wherever she is.

People need to pray for missionaries, she pleads. "The battle is on 24 hours a day."

-30-

(Adapted from the June-July issue of The Commission magazine, publication of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board)

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

Baptist School Must Comply
With EEOC Demand For Data

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
6/30/81

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Southern Baptist college lost a legal battle when the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a lower court ruling that the school must provide employment data to a powerful federal agency.

Mississippi College, owned and operated by the Mississippi Baptist Convention, must supply data subpoenaed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) so that the federal agency may determine if the school violated the rights of a former part-time faculty member.

Five years ago, Patricia Summers, a part-time assistant professor in the psychology department at the Clinton, Miss. school, filed a grievance with EEOC after she was denied a full-time faculty appointment. The school chose instead a male, William Bailey, for the job, noting that the school's first criterion for faculty appointments is that the candidates who are Baptists are given preferential treatment over non-Baptists. While Bailey is a Baptist, Summers is not.

Summers' grievance first alleged sex discrimination but was later amended to accuse the college of systematic discrimination against both women and blacks.

Acting on Summers' allegations, EEOC issued a subpoena seeking detailed information on the college's hiring practices for both faculty and administrative personnel. The document sought information on the characteristics of each member of the faculty and administration, including race, sex, religion, job classification, department, date of hire, education and pay.

In addition the subpoena demanded to know the sources from which the college recruited faculty members, any studies of faculty pay for the 1975-76 school year, all promotions of faculty and administration for 1975-76 and 1976-77, all employment application forms for those two years, and the most recent EEOC reports filed by the school.

-more-

After seeking but failing to have EEOC revoke the subpoena, Mississippi College declined to comply and an action to force compliance was taken by the federal agency to the U.S. District Court for Southern Mississippi.

That tribunal determined that an investigation of the school's employment practices by EEOC would result in excessive entanglement by the federal government in the affairs of a sectarian institution, thereby violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The proposed investigation also would violate the college's free exercise of religion, the court ruled, by inhibiting faculty selection based on religion.

But the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the district court order, instructing the lower panel to determine what portions of the EEOC subpoena should be enforced. The fifth circuit's decision was based on its view that because federal law specifically provides for sectarian schools to discriminate on the basis of religion, the threat of violating the Establishment Clause was hypothetical rather than real. In addition, the panel concluded, the burden on the college's free exercise of religion in the course of an investigation based on charges of sex and race discrimination would be minimal.

By declining to disturb those findings, the June 29 action by the Supreme Court means that Mississippi College must now comply with the EEOC subpoena.

If in the course of its investigation, EEOC, in the view of the college, oversteps its authority under law, school attorneys could once again take the agency to court.

At stake in the battle are sections of two federal laws, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, both of which prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion and national origin.

Both laws provide an exception to the ban against religious discrimination to church institutions, declaring that schools such as Mississippi College may legally choose members of their own faiths over those of others.

But both statutes also declare emphatically that religious institutions are not exempt from the bans on race and sex bias.

-30-

Scanlon Affirms Missions
In Revolutionary Societies

By Bill Webb

Baptist Press
6/30/81

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (BP)--The church in a revolutionary society must continue to minister to those in the revolutionary situation as it did in a non-revolutionary society, international missions secretaries of the Baptist World Alliance were told.

A. Clark Scanlon, executive assistant in the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board office of overseas operations, spoke to missions leaders representing British, Swedish, Danish, Jamaican, General Baptists, and other groups.

Scanlon told the leaders at the San Juan meeting that the gospel can prosper and grow in any kind of society. Rather than withdraw from revolutionary situations, the church must face challenges to minister in nations facing the prospect of revolution, those already experiencing revolution and those caught in the aftermath of revolution.

-more-

"The making of a new person in Christ Jesus is the central message that the church has to offer to a revolutionary society or any other society," he emphasized. "Its challenge is to produce the new person that society cannot.

"The gospel can bring about change that can provide a peaceful alternative to violent revolution by speaking in word and deed to conditions of poverty, injustice, corruption, racial discrimination, cruelty and suffering that often trigger revolutions, Scanlon said.

When one or more of these conditions does trigger revolution, the church "can contribute a spiritual quality to the revolutionary society that keeps the perspective of the Lord in the world," he noted.

"In Nicaragua after the revolution, Baptist churches have experienced something of a spiritual revival. Donatilo Garache, the national evangelism promoter for the Baptist convention, reported 800 baptisms in 1979. He reflected the people's desire for the eternal, 'The gospel is the only thing that gives them someone real in whom they can deposit their faith.'"

After that revolution, Scanlon said, some national Christians questioned whether American missionaries should continue service there. "The consensus was that their presence and continued ministry would be a witness to the universality of the faith and fellowship," Scanlon added.

But those who choose to work in such situations face obvious pressures and dangers. "In addition to physical danger, they are often emotionally drained, for they are called upon to live amid hostility and suspicion of their motives and presence," he explained.

Scanlon noted the responsibility of mission administrators in such situations is to "balance the call of the cross with the responsibility for the safety of the missionary." The administrator must be aware of world affairs and be informed of local conditions of unrest, turmoil or possible danger.

Scanlon recounted an occasion when the sister of a missionary about to enter one of the world's trouble spots asked how the Foreign Mission Board could send her brother to a place of danger and possible death. The area director responded, "We have not sent him there. We will apprise him of the situation and take all precautions possible, but if he feels that he must go, we will back him in his decision."

-30-

(Webb is staff writer in News and Information at the Foreign Mission Board.)

Largest Volunteer Project
Ends With Center Dedication

Baptist Press
6/30/81

IRINGA, Tanzania (BP)--The largest volunteer project ever undertaken by a single Southern Baptist church came to a close June 21 with the dedication of the Huruma Baptist Conference Center in Iringa, Tanzania.

Over a two-year period, First Baptist Church of North Augusta, S.C., sent 21 teams, totaling 161 volunteers, to help Tanzanian Baptists build a badly needed conference center. Aided by other volunteers, the North Augusta crews completed an assembly hall with cafeteria, lounge and kitchen, three dormitories to sleep 300, and a residence for Carlos and Myrtice Owens, missionary coordinators of the project.

-more-

"Ten years ago we dreamed a dream of a conference center like this one, but we had no money," said John Kupaza, chairman of the 25,000-member Baptist Convention of Tanzania. The need for the center stemmed from the convention's difficulty in finding a meeting place. Twice, the annual convention had to be called off at short notice because its reservations were canceled. And the convention had never found a facility large enough for messengers from all churches to attend.

"We were like a poor man who dreams of owning a big car," said Kupaza. "His friends only laugh at him. If he persists in talking about the car, they will laugh more. But God gave us that dream and he sent help through our brothers in Christ in America."

He said Tanzanians were deeply impressed by the Baptists who came and labored with their hands for long hours to build the center. "Words are totally inadequate to express our gratitude," he said. "We have seen the love of God in action through you who came."

He presented ceremonial spears to Charles Page, pastor of the 2,900-member North Augusta church; R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board; and Davis Saunders, the board's director for eastern and southern Africa.

The story of giving goes deeper than North Augusta. Volunteers from eight other Southern Baptist churches and several Tanzanian associations also helped, and local Tanzanian Baptists gave one day of free labor each week. Nearly all Tanzanian associations contributed financially and Baptist women of Tanzania gave their special offering to the center for several years.

The women also made dozens of mats for floor coverings and wall decorations. Missionaries sewed hundreds of napkins, curtains and other linens to equip the center. The 17-acre site was donated by the city council of Iringa, a city of about 60,000 in a mountainous area of central Tanzania.

Page said the project was the greatest thing that has ever happened to his church, which postponed construction of its own educational building to undertake the project. The church's total budget has grown from \$560,000 to \$800,000 since 1979, and Cooperative Program giving has climbed from \$84,000 to \$110,000.

A baptism service after the dedication service demonstrated another result of the project. Buddy Baynham of North Augusta was baptized along with six Tanzanians from the Iringa Baptist Church. Baynham had come to Tanzania with his wife, a member of the North Augusta church, and accepted Christ as a result of his experiences during his volunteer work.