



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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August 5, 1983

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Missionaries To Sri Lanka  
Live Amidst Racial Unrest

By Marty Croll

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (BP)--Missionary Mike Stroope and his family live in the midst of civil unrest which has taken the lives of more than 250 people since July 23.

The neighborhood around Stroope's home has been the scene of tear gas, arrests, burning homes and streets littered with looted cars since unrest between the minority Tamils and majority Sinhalese erupted into open fighting in late July.

Stroope, his wife, Kay, and their two children are the only Southern Baptist missionary family living in Sri Lanka--formerly known as Ceylon. The other missionary family, the Art Bunces, left on furlough to Ishpeming, Mich., July 10, before the current fighting began.

The around-the-clock curfew imposed on residents of the capital city has curtailed the activities of the Stroopes, as well as of the churches and businesses.

Although the Stroope family is well supplied with food now, he told his parents in a recent telephone call to Dallas he waited four hours in line to buy it. His call was made during the time the government allowed for grocery shopping.

Baptist churches, like businesses, have been closed during the curfews. Most Baptist work is in or near Colombo, where about 15 churches are located. About 2,000 of the nation's 14.5 million people are Baptists.

A bitter rivalry has existed for centuries between the Buddhist Sinhalese and the Hindu Tamils, dating to the migration of the Tamils from India and their collision with the island's rulers, the Sinhalese. Currently, some 68 percent of the population is Sinhalese 22 percent Tamil and 10 percent other.

The rivalry intensified during colonial days, when the ruling British often placed minority Tamil people in power positions, and they brought thousands of Tamils from India to work in rubber and tea plantations.

Until two years ago, Stroope and Bunce worked to evangelize those plantations, now virtually self-supporting communities and strong Tamil areas. But Sri Lankan Baptists asked them to stop because white people traveling to those areas were suspected of supporting an emerging terrorist organization called the Tigers.

The Tigers are accused of ambushing government soldiers and Sinhalese in the northern jungles of Sri Lanka, where Tamil population is strongest. The latest fighting was touched off by the ambush of 13 soldiers July 23.

Bunce likened the racial tensions in Sri Lanka to that experienced between American blacks and whites. "Just before I left, we were talking with national leaders about healing the division between these people, by showing Christian love and ideals."

Two of the 30 to 40 members of the executive committee of the Baptist Union are Tamils. The number varies according to the number of representatives sent from national churches.

Sri Lanka President Junius R. Jayewardene, himself a Sinhalese Buddhist, has repeatedly called for religious tolerance to ease the unrest, according to Bunce.

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But Bunce sees no hope in that. "He keeps saying we need religion," Bunce said. "But what we need is a change of people's attitudes. And that will come only through Christ. The only solution to it is Christ and Christianity."

Although only a small percentage of the island's population is Baptist, Bunce sees Baptists making a difference. Most Christians in Sri Lanka were educated in Baptist schools and nationals look up to them as models of success. "Most have nice houses and color television sets and are in positions of key leadership," said Bunce.

He believes the Christian community has the opportunity now to show the way of love, despite differences, works in the world. In fact, he said, the prejudice between the Tamils and Sinhalese presents a challenge that, overcome by Christ's love, could strengthen the Christian community.

"God often uses the church in times of unrest to make a difference in the situation."

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HMB Names 90  
To Mission Service

By Charlene Shucker

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ATLANTA (BP)-Home Mission Board directors approved 90 persons for assignment in 16 states at their August meeting, including 12 missionaries, 33 missionary associates and 45 persons to receive pastoral aid.

Ramon C. and Ildelisa Alemon of Guymon, Okla.; William M. and Carol J. Fulkerson of Stone Mountain, Ga.; Mary J. High of Riverdale, Md.; Dianne M. Jones of New Orleans, La.; Antonio and M. Renee Rengifo of El Paso, Texas; Moises A. and Marilyn J. Valdes of Immokalee, Fla., and George T. and Donna L. Russ were appointed missionaries.

Missionary associates are Thomas L. and Mindy Cobb of Chicago, Ill.; William Michael and Janice L. Elliott of Louisville, Ky.; Dennis E. and Sarah E. Gabriel of Raleigh, N.C.; R. Alan and Sean S. Gilley of Lilburn, Ga.; Richard M. and Deborah A. Hale of Louisville, Ky.; Warren L. and Mary Ann Hart of Universal City, Texas; Hickman and Gladys Johnson of Jackson, Miss.; Forrest W. and Betty Jo Smith of Corpus Christi, Texas; Dorothy L. Williamson of Richmond, Va.; Richard E. and Linda A. Blount of Wake Forest, N.C.; Tommy L. and H. Diane Brown of Fort Worth, Texas; Byron and Deborah Glenn of Mill Valley, Calif.; Robert L. and Carol M. Hodges of Kansas City, Mo.; M. Jeffrey and Kathy Hoppe of Mill Valley, Calif.; Michael O. and Mary Sue McLarren of Sapulpa, Okla.; Ricky and Sharon Ogston of Fort Worth, Texas, and Richard and Cynthia Wallin of New Orleans, La.

The Alemans will remain in Oklahoma to begin language missions work. He is a graduate of Miami-Dade Community College, Florida International University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been pastor of Ouyrron's First Mexican Baptist Church since 1980.

The Fulkersons will continue to live in Stone Mountain, Ga. He is the new language missions director for the Atlanta Baptist Association. He is a graduate of Southern Illinois University, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and has attended the Kent School of Social Work also in Kentucky. Presently, he is a writing consultant for the Christian social ministries department of the HMB. She is a graduate of Southern Illinois University and is a medical transcriptionist at Emory University.

High will move to Florida as a language missionary. She is a graduate of Mars Hill College in North Carolina and Southern Seminary. She is a substitute teacher for the deaf in Washington, D.C.

Jones will remain in New Orleans working as a social worker in the Sellers Baptist Home and Adoption Center. She is a graduate of Xavier and Tulane Universities and has worked as a social worker at the Sellers home since 1978.

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The Rengifos will move to Oklahoma as language missionaries. He is a graduate of four Texas institutions, including LeTourneau College, Stephen F. Austin State University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Texas Christian University. He is department director and editor for Spanish Baptist Publishing House and a history teacher at El Paso Community College. She has attended Stephen F. Austin State University and El Paso County Community College. She is a secretary for the publishing house.

The Valdeses will move to Georgia as language missionaries in Augusta. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is pastor of the Spanish mission in Immokalee. She is a graduate of Appalachian State University.

The Russes will remain in New York as urban evangelism consultants. He is a graduate of State University of New York at Stony Brook and Southern Seminary. He is pastor of the New Life in Christ Chapel in East Patchogue, N.Y.

The Cobbs will remain in Chicago working in language missions. He attended Central Missouri State University and graduated from the University of Missouri. He is a job developer for Indochinese refugees.

The Elliotts will remain in Kentucky as pastor and director of the Jefferson Street Baptist Center. He attended Georgia Southern College and graduated from Southern Seminary. She attended Georgia Southern College and is secretary at the Long Run Baptist Association in Louisville.

The Gabriels will remain in North Carolina. He is a graduate of the University of South Carolina and Southeastern Seminary and is interim missions ministries director for the Raleigh Baptist Association. She is a graduate of the University of South Carolina and teaches at the Oxford Orphanage in North Carolina.

The Gilleys will remain in Georgia as pastor/director of the Legend Heights Center Noonday Association in Marietta. He is a graduate of Mercer University in Atlanta and Southern Seminary. She is a graduate of Baylor University and attended Southern Seminary.

The Hales will move to Alaska where he will be pastor in Ft. Yukon. He is a graduate of Campbellsville College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, both in Kentucky. She is a graduate of Southeastern Christian College and Campbellsville College. She is a teacher at Highview Christian Academy in Louisville.

The Harts will remain in Texas working as Christian social ministries director for the Bell Baptist Association. He is a graduate of Oklahoma State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is minister of education for First Baptist Church, Schertz, Texas. She attended two Texas colleges, Pan American and Hillsboro, as well as Texas Woman's University. She teaches sign language at a public high school.

The Johnsons will remain in Mississippi where he will become dean of Mississippi Baptist Seminary. He is a graduate of Tennessee State University, Morehouse School of Religion in Atlanta and Mississippi College. He is pastor of the Farish Street Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss. She is a graduate of Fort Valley State College, Atlanta University and George Peabody/Vanderbilt University. She is a librarian for the Jackson Public Schools.

The Smiths will remain in Texas where he is director of Christian social ministries for the Corpus Christi Baptist Association. He is a graduate of the University of Corpus Christi and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Williamson will remain in Virginia as church planter for the Richmond Baptist Association. She attended Wake Forest University and is a graduate of Houston Baptist University and Southeastern Seminary.

Named church planter apprentices are the Blounts, to work in New Haven, Ind.; the Browns, to work in Stevenson Village, Calif.; the Glens, to work in Dickerson, N.D.; the Hodges, to work in Kansas City, Mo.; the Hoppes, to work in Bismark, N.D.; the McLerrrens, to work in New Salem, N.D.; the Ogstons, to work in Buford, Ga., and the Wallins, to work in Columbia, Ind.

To receive pastoral aid are Vernon L. and Linda J. Blair of Colorado Springs, Colo.; Joseph C. and Jennifer Blalock of Camillus, N.Y.; David Allen Bonney of Logan Lake, British Columbia, Canada; Daniel H. and Gail Brogdon of Riverton, Ill.; Roger K. and Debra A. Criser of Fremont, Nev.; Richard T. and Martha L. Daley of Punta Gorda, Fla.; L. Clayton and Shirley F. Dunsmore of Battle Creek, Mich.; J. Robert and Gloria Gellerstedt of New Haven, Conn.; Patrick C. and Catherine Ann Heard of Kremmling, Colo.; Philip and Dorcas Huang of San Diego, Calif.; Shin-Hyuk and Su Ja Moon Kang of Baltimore, Md., and Arthur D. and Drucilla Kriedel of Worcester, Mass.

Also named to receive assistance were Jackson W. III and Lila M. Landham of Stockton, Ill.; Michael G. and Cheryl A. McCoy of Bowling Green, Ohio; Lyndall and Penny McElhane of Bend, Ore.; Anthony and Twila R. Mattia of Wamego and Fostoria, Kan.; Ronald F. and Cynthia L. Miller of Spencer, W.Va.; Joseph D. and Ellen D. Shaler of Mt. Pleasant, Mich.; Donald E. Jr. and Carri Shannon of Modesto, Calif.; Ricardo Sinisterra, of South Sioux City, Nev.; Randal T. and Lorene A. Stovall of Warner Springs, Calif.; Alton M. and Johnie Walters of Milton, Fla.; John Albert and Delma Wilkes of Aberdeen, Md., and John H. McNeese of Paw Paw, Mich.

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Wyoming, Missouri Mission  
Leaders Honored By HMB

By Michael Tutterow

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Two associational directors of missions were honored as the rural-urban and metropolitan mission directors of the year for the West during Home Missions Week at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

O.R. Delmar, director of missions for Wyoming, was named rural-urban missionary of the year for the West; T.O. Spicer Jr. of Joplin, Mo., was honored as metropolitan missionary of the year for the West.

Delmar went to Wyoming in 1951 as a pastor in Casper. He later was area missionary in four states, including a stint in Wyoming, before accepting a pastorate in Arizona. In 1968, he returned to Wyoming as director of missions for the Wyoming North Area. He assumed duties as state director of missions in 1979.

Quentin Lockwood, director of the HMB's rural-urban missions department, said 130 churches had been born from Delmar's "conviction there ought to be a Southern Baptist church where anyone could go and learn about Jesus Christ."

Jere Allen, acting director of the HMB's metropolitan missions department, told of Spicer's efforts to meet churches' needs in the Spring River Baptist Association in Joplin, Mo. Spicer led the association to begin two black Baptist churches, a church for the disabled, which now averages 35 and 45 in attendance, and started doctrine studies for the association. He also helped secure a center for the Joplin Baptist Student Union.

Spicer was a pastor of churches in Arkansas, Texas and Missouri before becoming director of missions for Spring River association in 1977.

In a separate ceremony, a Joplin, Mo., pastor and a Texas director of missions received awards as the PACT church and the PACT consultant of the year for the West.

PACT (Project: Assistance for churches in Transitional Communities) is an effort of the HMB's metropolitan missions department to lead associations and churches in developing strategies for responding to racial, socio-economic or other changes in their communities.

HMB President William G. Tanner presented Johnny Wilkins, pastor of the Oak Grove Baptist Church in Joplin, Mo., the award for PACT church of the year for the West. The church, in an economically depressed area, declined to an attendance of eleven people. Following the consultation in 1981, Wilkins led the church to an average attendance of 47 in Sunday school and a high attendance of 107 persons.

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The PACT consultation resulted in a turn-around for both Wilkins and Oak Grove, said Tanner. A door-to-door survey revealed 1,800 prospects; the church purchased a van to reach out to nearly 200 mobile units nearby. Oak Grove members also began a ministry to shut-ins, a three-phase building program and a women's Bible study meeting.

Jimmy Garcia, director of missions/ministries for the San Antonio Baptist Association, was recognized as the PACT consultant of the year for the West for his leadership among San Antonio churches. At least 60 percent of San Antonio churches are experiencing some form of transition. In 1981, Garcia attended a PACT consultation training session and began working with San Antonio Baptists, helping them re-evaluate their community ministries and outreach.

Garcia also coordinated a PACT Blitz involving six San Antonio churches and has led the association to adopt PACT as a key strategy for reaching the city for Christ.

The association, which has 140 churches, plans to use PACT in their efforts to reach a goal of 200 churches by 1990, added Garcia.

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Upper Volta Government Ousted;  
Baptist Personnel Believed Safe

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OUAGADOUGOU, Upper Volta (BP)--Former prime minister Capt. Thomas Sankara overthrew head of state Maj. Jean-Baptiste Ouedraogo in a violent overnight coup Aug. 5 in Upper Volta, where 19 Southern Baptist missionaries and five volunteers are living.

Early news reports said five people--two soldiers and three civilians--were killed and 15 injured. But American Ambassador Julius W. Walker Jr. said no Americans were injured.

The Foreign Mission Board was unable to contact any missionaries by phone the morning after the coup. The missionaries in Ouagadougou where the coup took place are Jim and Sue Wilkins of Missouri, Bob and Dixie Schrier of Alabama and Monica Keathley of Missouri.

Volunteers Floyd and Helen Choate of Greenbrier, Tenn., host and hostess for Tennessee Baptists' development project in the Diabo Circle region, also live in the capital.

The coup took place on the eve of the anniversary of the country's independence from France 23 years ago. In May the conservative Ouedraogo ousted Sankara, a junior army officer, from the government, reportedly because of Sankara's ties with Libyan leader Col. Muammar Qaddafi.

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