



-- FEATURES
produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
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September 15, 1983

83-139

Yise Yougbare Takes
First Step Toward Hope

By Charlie Warren

SANWABO, Upper Volta (BP)--Hope of ever walking or even standing alone dwindled with each of Yise Yougbare's seven birthdays.

Hope, in fact, had all but vanished when Tennessee Baptist volunteer Jane Laster miraculously transformed his way of life.

Yise (pronounced Yee-say), a polio victim from an impoverished family in a famine-stricken village in Upper Volta, rarely forced a smile to brighten his forlorn, distressful face. Calluses on his hands and legs betrayed a life of dragging himself across the hot, sandy plains of Sanwabo, his helplessly frail, withered legs trailing behind his small frame.

That was Yise's condition when Laster, a physical therapist at Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis, first encountered him this year after a Sunday morning worship service at Yise's village.

"After church, kids flocked around, waiting to shake hands," explained Laster, a member of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis. "I happened to look over my shoulder and I saw this little boy scooting through the field, coming through the millet stalks.

"I walked over there, bent down, shook his hand and asked him his name," she continued. "All the other kids yelled out his name, 'Yise.'" She spent the afternoon alone, with Yise on her mind, praying, "Lord, there's just got to be something I can do."

Laster was not in Upper Volta as a physical therapist--there was no such request on the volunteers needed list for the Tennessee Baptist Convention's hunger relief project. She went as a literacy worker, teaching three classes of students to read and write the More language.

Since missionaries had advised the volunteers to avoid "handouts" which would create dependence and encourage begging, she asked missionaries Jim and Dorothy Foster if trying to make a brace and crutches for Yise would fall under the "handout" category. Recognizing an opportunity to provide new mobility for the young polio victim, they encouraged her.

The next day Laster asked Kelly Eplee, a long-term volunteer from North Carolina, and Nedra Benson, a volunteer from Michigan, to help her find Yise so she could examine his legs and measure for some hand-crafted crutches and a brace.

As they arrived, darkness had begun to creep into the village, which is arranged in little compounds. The volunteers did not know where to go first.

They spotted one of the literacy students, an older child who is a Christian. With limited use of the language, they demonstrated the way Yise crawls and communicated they were looking for him. "That's my brother," the child responded.

Yise's brother, Maurice, rushed ahead to lead the Americans to the family's small mud hut. "Poor little Yise was so scared," Laster recalled. "Here I was messing around with his legs, and I was a white person and I was much bigger than he was. He didn't smile the first couple of times I was there.

After examining the twisted legs and, "I knew then there was something I could do because both legs were contracted (bent up so much they could not be straightened)," she said.

The following day, Laster initiated an intense scavenger hunt.

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A missionary kid donated a shoe. George Grimes, a volunteer veterinarian from First Baptist Church, Memphis, contributed some ankle braces which could be reconstructed to fit Yise's leg. Lether straps, straight sticks and thread completed the search.

With assistance from Ray Long, a volunteer from Southwestern Baptist Church, Johnson City, Tenn., and other volunteers, Laster created the temporary brace and crutches.

Her month of volunteer service almost completed, she knew she needed to begin exercising Yise and teaching others to continue the exercises after she left. She demonstrated the needed exercises to Maurice, instructing him to exercise Yise four times each day. She also taught Benson, who would still be in Upper Volta to check the progress.

A few days later, Laster went to the village to see how Maurice and Yise were doing. "Nobody knew I was coming," she explained, "but there they were working. That just thrilled my heart. I cried."

By this time, Yise knew he would someday walk. His countenance began to change. "When I would go out there in the van, Yise would see me coming and would just be smiling from ear to ear, waving his hands," Laster related.

Ironically, the compassionate physical therapist returned to Memphis before Yise was able to stand along or take his first step--but Yise took that first step two weeks from the day she gave him the brace and crutches.

Her involvement, however, had not ended.

After several weeks, she received a letter explaining the leather straps were tearing and they had taken the brace to the market to have it repaired.

"I knew I wanted to do something," Miss Laster said. "I knew my job wasn't completed."

She visited Otis Petis, an orthotist in Memphis, who often makes braces for the Baptist hospital. She showed him three pictures of Yise and told him her story and of the need for a permanent brace. "Tears came to his eyes, he was so joyous," she recalled. "I want to be the one to make that brace," he responded.

Bill Crawford, a member of Bellevue Baptist Church, was scheduled to go to Upper Volta the next week. Petis gave Crawford a crash course on how to measure for a brace and how to make a drawing of Yise's foot.

Within three weeks after Crawford returned with the measurements, Petis called Laster and said, "I have the brace."

"When I saw that brace, I just burst into tears," Laster said. She asked how she would be billed for the brace, which would be valued at about \$500. Placing a finger to his lips, Petis responded, "Sh! Don't worry about it. This is what I wanted to do."

Next, Laster delivered the brace, which is adjustable height-wise as Yise grows, to Donna Collier, a member of First Baptist Church, Memphis, who will take the brace to Yise when she goes to Upper Volta in September.

"It was just the neatest blessing for me to know that one little child was able to take his first steps," Miss Laster concluded. "Most kids walk by the time they're 11 months. This child has finally learned to take his first step at seven years."

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CORRECTION

In Baptist Press mailed 9/9/83, in story "Seminary Course Introduces Students to Urban Evangelism," please change first sentence of fifth paragraph to read: "They also took them to the Windy City because of a firm conviction that "evangelism is better caught than taught," Roberts explained In the sentence as sent, the underlined phrase was reversed.

Thanks, BP

Ghanaian's Expectations Drop;
He Asks Only a Little Salt

By Mary Jane Welch

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--"Lord, we don't expect meat--but help us get some salt for our soup today," prayed the Ghanaian man.

He, like most of his countrymen, has found it increasingly hard to have even the necessities of life in the once-prosperous West African nation of Ghana, reported missionary Gene Verner to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in September.

Many Ghanaians, said Verner, now eat only one meal a day and he knows of a woman who went from a size 14 dress to a size 8. Verner is president of the Ghana Baptist Seminary, Abuakwa.

Early this year, the Foreign Mission Board allocated \$352,500 to buy food, fertilizer and machetes and to provide a truck and driver to deliver them in Ghana. In late summer, the Baptist mission in Ghana requested an additional \$574,000 for food and fertilizer for the country strained by drought, brush fires and about one million refugees expelled from Nigeria earlier this year.

Initially hampered in responding by low hunger relief reserves, the board found that other groups have food and fertilizer available for Ghana, but cannot ship or deliver it, says John R. Cheyne, the board's senior human needs consultant. The board is seeking government permission to ship the goods into Ghana and acquire fuel for the truck and driver already in the country to deliver the goods, said Cheyne.

The country's fuel shortage is the most critical problem in getting food to Ghanaians, Cheyne said. Verner reported missionaries can get rationing coupons which entitle them to three gallons of gas twice a week. But they are pleased to get half or a third of that after waiting in line for two or three days. The Ghana Baptist Convention had to cancel its most recent annual meeting and missionaries are just about down to a walking ministry because of the fuel shortage, said John Mills, the board's director for West Africa.

The situation in Ghana has not always been critical, said Verner, who has experienced five coups since his missionary appointment in 1959. When he first went to Ghana, he took little because he could buy anything there he could buy in the United States. But the last time he returned from furlough, he took "the kitchen sink," knowing the store shelves would be bare.

Mills said he cautions missionaries going to other countries against taking too much with them, but makes an exception for those going to Ghana. They can't take enough.

But in spite of hardships, the Ghanaians have remained responsive to the gospel and are generous to missionaries, even sharing vegetables from their gardens, said Verner. The convention has accepted increased responsibility for Baptist work, now providing half the financial support for the seminary.

The Ghanaians' attitude became evident, said Verner, in a prayer service for the seminary students. The teachers, who were concerned for the many hardships the students face, were surprised to hear some praying for the missionaries who were having a hard time living in their society.

HMB Appoints 33 Missionaries,
Names Prayer Line Director

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP)--Directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in their September Executive Committee meeting appointed 33 missionaries, approved purchase of property to expand the Baptist seminary in Puerto Rico and named a national director of the Board's Intercessory Prayer Line Ministry.

Ben Atchison, 54-year-old retired accountant for Shell Oil Co. in Atlanta, was named to head the prayer line ministry as a Mission Service Corps volunteer.

Atchison, who is taking early retirement after 30 years with Shell Oil Co., will be responsible for recruiting other volunteers to work four-hour daily shifts answering the HMB'S national prayer line.

The "prayer line" is a national incoming WATS telephone line which enables Baptists to call the Home Mission Board toll-free to learn of home mission needs and requests for prayer, and for missionaries of the board to call to request prayer for their work and concerns. It was started March 1 as a part of the board's Pentecost Sunday effort to start 3,000 new churches and missions during the next year. Since mid-June, the prayer line has been answered by a recorded message rather than by volunteers.

Atchison will seek 50 to 60 Atlanta area Christians to answer the telephone calls personally. His goal is to enlist and train the volunteers to start daily service, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern time, beginning Oct. 4. Nation-wide telephone number for the prayer line is 1-800-554-PRAY, or 1-800-282-SEEK for calls within the state of Georgia, Atchison said.

In other actions, the Home Mission Board's Executive Committee approved the purchase of property for additional classroom and dormitory space at the Baptist seminary in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The HMB bought the property for \$125,000 spread over three years.

About 90 students are enrolled in the seminary in San Juan, which now offers an associate of divinity degree in conjunction with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Eleven missionaries and 22 missionary associates were appointed by the board for service in 13 states, most of them under joint appointment with the state Baptist conventions.

Appointed as missionaries were Richard and Patricia Alford of Clinton, Miss.; Michael and Mary Hendrick of Harlingen, Texas; James ("Bo") and Patsy Holland of New Orleans; Elias and Martha Pantoja of Jefferson City, Mo.; Bob and Peggy Rooks of Poway, Calif., and Marilyn Prickett of St. Louis, Mo.

Prickett, a home missionary from 1970-80, was re-appointed director of Christian social ministries for the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and director of the Johnning Baptist Center. Her husband, Ken, is taking disability retirement as a national consultant for the board's special mission ministries department. He has suffered complications due to diabetes, including kidney failure and degenerating eyesight, during the last few years.

She recently completed her master of social work degree from Washington University, St. Louis, and has been a missionary in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, N.M. The Pricketts helped plan and coordinate Baptist ministries at the 1980 Olympics in Lake Placid, the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville and other such special and experimental ministries.

The Alford's were promoted from missionary associate to missionary status after five years of work with the board. He is Mississippi Baptists' language missions program leader and consultant for the Cooperative Missions Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention.

He is a former pastor and minister of education for churches in Alabama, and former minister to the deaf for First Baptist Church, Gulfport, Miss. He is a graduate of Louisiana College, Pineville, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

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The Hendricks, natives of North Carolina, were appointed teachers at Valley Baptist Academy, Harlingen, Texas, after working the past three years in Shreveport, La. He was minister of education for Shreve City Baptist Church and she was a public school teacher in Shreveport. He is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and Gardner-Webb College, Boiling Springs, N.C.

The Hollands, recent graduates of New Orleans Seminary, were appointed as church planters for Frisco Baptist Association in Oklahoma. Before entering the seminary, they were US-2 missionaries of the Home Mission Board in Tulsa, Okla., where he was ordained as a minister by Bowen Indian Baptist Chapel. For the past two years, Holland has been assistant pastor of Flat Top Baptist Church, Picayune, Miss., while studying at New Orleans Seminary.

The Pantojas, catalytic language missionaries in Memphis, Tenn., for the past six years, were promoted to missionary status as language missions program leader for the Missouri Baptist Convention, working in the convention's associational missions department.

Pantojas, a Texas native, was previously pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista, Carrollton, Texas, associate pastor of Iglesia Bautista Calvario, Dallas, and youth worker for Primera Bautista Iglesia, Dallas. He is a graduate of Dallas Baptist College and Southwestern Seminary.

Rooks, a California Baptist pastor for 23 years and current first vice president of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, and his wife were approved as new metropolitan missionaries. Rooks will serve as director of associational missions for Central Coast Baptist Association which includes Monterrey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties.

For the past 12 years Rooks has been pastor of First Baptist Church, Poway, Calif. Previously, he was pastor of churches in Redwood City, Richmond, Arcata, and Redway, Calif. A graduate of Bob Jones University and New Orleans Seminary, he was pastor of Crestview Baptist Church, Petal, Miss., as a seminary student.

In addition to the 11 missionaries, the board appointed 22 missionary associates, all but two of whom were assigned to start churches through the board's church extension division.

Dick and Lila Risas of Worcester, Mass., were appointed missionary associates. He will be director of metropolitan missions for Massachusetts Baptist Association. For the past 12 years, Risas has been pastor of First Baptist Church, Shrewsbury, Mass., and has been moderator of the association he will direct. Both are natives of Massachusetts.

Len and Carol Morgan of Beckley, W.Va., church planter apprentice missionaries there for the past two years, were appointed on a permanent basis as missionary associates. They will remain in the Buckley area to work in starting new churches.

Nine other couples were appointed as missionary associates under the church planter apprentice program, which enables recent seminary graduates to spend two years starting new churches as home missionaries.

Six couples have yet to be assigned to a specific geographic area. They are Garry and Cyndi Lee of Atlanta, and Marvin and Janet Foltz of El Paso, Texas, recent graduates of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.; Floren and Barbara Fisher of Jacksonville, Fla., recent graduates of New Orleans seminary; Sean and Sarah Lee of Maryland and Virginia, recent graduates of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.; Jim and Nancy Ann Townzen of East St. Louis, Ill., recent graduates of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and Franklin and Susan Beam of Tennessee and Oklahoma, recent graduates of Southwestern Seminary.

Two other couples who recently graduated from Southwestern Seminary were appointed. David and Katherine Edmonds, both natives of California, were assigned as church planter apprentices in San Jose, Calif., and James and Mary Holloway of Pascagoula, Miss., were assigned to start new churches in Eastwick, Pa.

Terry and Sandra Minchow-Proffitt, natives of Michigan and Utah, were appointed as church planter apprentices in Richfield, Utah.